

## Summary Minutes

WFCR Advisory Committee  
June 30, 2006

Willets Hallowell Center  
Mount Holyoke College  
South Hadley, MA

The meeting convened at 9:45 AM and was called to order by Jim Miller. Attending were Martin Miller, Sharon Fross, Karen Smith-Emerson, Sara Lawrence, Dan Velleman and Jim Miller. Lorna Peterson was attending a deans' retreat, and Patricia Wright has submitted her resignation from the committee.

Sharon reported the decision that the station will remain in Hampshire House rather than building or leasing new facilities. UMass Facilities Planning estimates the costs of renovating the Maple St. building would be too high; in any case, the building is available for lease, and it is also for sale.

Dan asked about the space implications of renovating Hampshire House and expanding to the second floor. About 600 sq. ft. will be gained, from the current 3800 to 4200. Martin explained that the third floor layout will remain the same, with the addition of one more studio and control room and news edit suite. There will be some more space for storage and a technical operations room. There may also be upgrading of the air conditioning and some wall coverings. Better carpeting and furniture will be included. The roof leak will be repaired; some asbestos will be removed - all in several stages, starting with the second floor. The station's administrative and development offices will be relocated there. This will slightly relieve the current overcrowding of the third floor. Renovation is expected to start next January. Exact costs will be estimated during July by Facilities Planning.

Martin said he was redrafting the capital campaign to focus on program fund, rather than building a new structure. New equipment is needed as well. Martin will return to those who contributed \$600,000 towards the new building, and ask their preference regarding the spending of their contributions. Martin will also discuss this situation with the colleges, which had made tentative commitments (Smith's is definite) based on the earlier capital campaign plans.

In response to a question from Jim, Martin said that since the renovation will not create the studio space that was planned for the new facility, the station will do more outreach. For example, it may work with the new Amherst Cinema Arts Center or the UMass Fine Arts Center to produce activities for school children. These events might precede a performance in the area, and be edited and broadcast ahead of the actual performance. The soon to be hired program director will be the executive producer of this series. Outreach will go beyond Amherst, to Springfield and Holyoke, Connecticut, southern Vermont, the Berkshires, etc.

Dan and Karen commented about the station's promoting performances before they occur, and recording local live performances for later broadcast. Martin mentioned the former is done regularly, and that the later requires something like the old mobile-unit truck. To do a dozen such recordings would require about \$20,000 to pay an engineer; a substantial program fund could produce such an amount annually.

Martin mentioned the desire for the colleges, which cut by 10 percent their annual contribution to the station a few years ago, to give more, if possible.

Sara felt that most contributors to the capital campaign would tell the station to use their donations as needed. Martin said he felt that there is a prospect of major donors in Berkshire County.

Sharon said that she wishes to forge closer connections between outreach units and academic departments at UMass. There was discussion about paid internships at the station for university students in music, news and marketing. Sharon said she had spoken with the vice chancellor for student affairs about funding for this, and that she will meet with relevant administrators.

Dan commented on Amherst College's interest in experiential learning opportunities. He also asked whether the professional station staff might be distracted by additional internship activity. Martin said they would like to hire an internship coordinator/instructor, and that sometimes the students' experience is so rich that they contribute to actual programming. He pointed to the former Hampshire student Tina Antolini, who is now a regular staff member. Currently, about three students intern each term. There might be as many as seven paid UMass interns under the new plan. Sara wondered whether additional funds from the colleges could be used to pay non-UMass interns; Martin said this is possible.

Sharon reported on the continuing letters from retired UMass professor Henry Lea. She had responded to a recent letter, to which he wrote with more criticism of the station. He then contacted the university ombudsman, who talked with Martin and Sharon and then wrote a detailed response to Lea. The ombudsman believes the station has been attentive to Lea's complaints, and that all has been done to address his concerns, which have to do with programming (reduced classical music), staff size (allegedly too large), use of funds, etc.

Karen commented that Lea's suggestion that the station's financial information be made more accessible has merit. Martin said he is in the process of putting it on the station's website.

Martin then gave his manager's report:

- A revised report on revenues and expenses shows a balanced budget. It appears to be in deficit, however, due to an accounting procedure that doesn't allow revenue put aside in previous years to be shown as current revenue. This has to do with one-time salary payments from a previous contract but only recently released by the state, translator money put aside earlier but only recently spent, etc. Expenses were less as well because there has been no development director or program director. Planning projections done to 2018 are based on 3 percent annual revenue increases. The actual figure has averaged 7 percent during the past 10 years.

- The owner of WPNI has sold its FM sister station WRNX, and WPNI is now on the market. WFCR has the right of first refusal, but sees limited value in the station. WFCR is talking with a Springfield AM station with better signal coverage, though it would cost more. It is possible that WAMC might buy WPNI as a local repeater of its programming.

- Regarding the new Berkshire translators, the North Adams one is on the air; Williamstown is next, then Pittsfield, Lee and Great Barrington. Two more will be on the air before the fall, with the rest by year's end.

- An audience handout shows a decline in Afro Pop and Tertulia, but nationally WFCR is categorized in a recent study as a "climber" in its overall audience growth.

- Martin provided a copy of the station newsletter with the new HD broadcast schedule, and he demonstrated a Boston Acoustics HD radio.

- The search for a development director was unsuccessful, with the job offered and refused. The search will resume, this time using a search firm. Program director finalists will visit in August or September. There is one leading candidate in the pool.

- An anonymous \$75,000 contribution has been made for expanded regional news coverage. Tina Antolini's part-time position has become full-time for three years.

- The station has sent invitations to a Hampshire Shakespeare performance, and there will be a major-donor event at the Delaney House in September.

- Martin distributed a report to the Friends that proposes making some changes in their structure and procedures and a Five Year Plan, which he recently sent to Sharon. It was suggested the committee return to these documents at its next meeting.

- Martin also distributed a short list of staff-generated station goals for the next twelve months.

After circulating a number of relevant press articles, correspondence and other materials, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:  
James Miller  
Chair

**WFCR 12 Month Goals July 2006- June 2007:**

Bring more local voices to our air which reflect the diversity of the communities which we serve

Increase AQH (key to increasing fund raising)

Prepare for reduced CPB funding and increased NPR, APM and PRI programming fees

Prepare for possible loss of WPNI with no replacement/possible purchase by public radio competitor

Prepare to restart Capital Campaign

Friends Board Development