

Report on PNB in-person meeting in NY Feb 22-25, 2013

It was my intention to provide a report full of facts and figures. But then on evening before I left NY to come back to California I accidentally left my PNB notebook in a cab (in a bag along with my umbrella, my winter gloves, the novel I was reading and my subway map). So this report, while not intentionally nonfactual, will be more impressionistic.

The PNB met for 4 days. The first day was spent mostly in closed session discussing PNB governance issues. We broke briefly in the afternoon for public comment and heard from a number of mostly disgruntled listeners from WBAI and WPFW. At some point it was reported out that the PNB had in closed session voted to seat the directors from WPFW who were elected from that station in January. There was a publicly voiced challenge to those 4 directors from others at WPFW who said that because nominations had not be submitted before the 12/31/12 deadline they were not eligible to serve as directors.

Friday evening we had a chance to see a great 3 minute video about the Pacifica Radio Archives (available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV7NWrazwhs>) and a full length documentary about Bob Fass of WBAI – info here: <http://www.radiounnameablemovie.com/>

Most of the next 3 days were spent in executive session with brief public sessions to hear public comments and engage in business that had to be done in public – a report from Summer Reese, PNB Chair and Pacifica iED, election of officers and a discussion about PNB committees including PNB assignments to some committee.

At least one of the executive sessions was in my opinion probably held in violation of the law governing public vs. executive sessions for non-profits. A presentation was made by someone not affiliated with Pacifica and there were questions and discussion by board members. None of it was proprietary, none of the information or discussion needed to be held in executive session. The matter was handled in this manner I believe to keep the identity of the presenter and the matter under discussion from members of Pacifica and the public.

We received no written reports from Summer in her role as either PNB chair or iED of Pacifica. The finance report which was a statement of PNO expenses for the first quarter of FY 2013 had no budgetary info or comparisons to previous years making it pretty hard to evaluate. It was never presented (except for being handed out) or discussed.

The PNB officers elected were: Summer Reese, chair; Heather Grey, vice-chair and Richard Uzzell, secretary. I challenged Summer for chair. Summer was elected -- the margin was about 2-1. As I stated at the time I ran because I felt that it was both inappropriate and impractical for Summer to function as PNB chair and iED. I believe that as PNB chair I could have relieved her of day to day chair responsibilities. Furthermore, I believe that the chair of the PNB should be both a support for and critic of the ED - whoever holds that position. I lost the vote. Heather Grey was elected vice-chair unchallenged. Brenda Medina from KPFK ran for secretary against Richard Uzzell from KPFT. There was some discussion around the issue of a board secretary vs a recording secretary. Apparently there have been both - the recording secretary was someone who was not a member of the PNB, who took minutes and was paid for his time. Both candidates agreed that they would serve as board secretary and take minutes. Uzzell was elected.

On PNB committee assignments - there was some discussion on the committees themselves. Some committees have recently been "downgraded" from committees to task forces. It was agreed to determine PNB director assignments to committees clearly mandated in the by-laws. This was chiefly accomplished by folks volunteering for committees. There was little conflict except for the National Finance committee. This committee is described in the by laws as one director from each station and the local treasurer from each station. At the four stations (KPFA, KPFK, WBAI and WPFW) where there clear divisions on the LSB there were 2 directors put forward from each. Currently the by-laws direct the PNB to choose between the two candidates. At KPFA the two candidates were Tracy Rosenberg and Brian Edward-Tiekert. Tracy was elected.

In the end we never voted on an agenda - we simply decided what we would discuss session by session - while maintaining our commitment to public comments at times certain on each day. We did not consider or take any action on any of the motions from the various committees as listed in the printed agenda (copy attached here). And in spite of the fact that we all know the finances of Pacifica to be very dire, we never discussed that issue directly.

On Monday morning as the agenda states there was a discussion of a new CFO for Pacifica. No decisions were made at that time.

The most positive thing accomplished was a general agreement to make extraordinary efforts to support WBAI which is currently threatened with the eviction of its transmitter tower from the Empire State Building.

I have attached the original agenda which includes motions from various committees on which there was no discussion and no votes ever taken.

Thanks for reading this far.

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