



From: Broadcasting Board of Governors
Date: April 11, 2013
Subject: **Minutes of the BBG Meeting of April 11, 2013¹**

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) met today at BBG Headquarters in Washington, D.C. As a quorum was not present, the Governors were not able to make any decisions at the meeting. The meeting was attended by members of the public (as seating capacity allows) and was also open for public observation via streaming on the BBG website.

The following Board members were in attendance:

Governor Michael Meehan
Governor Victor Ashe

Governor Michael Lynton, Governor Susan McCue, and Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Tara Sonenshine were not in attendance at the meeting.

Other persons in attendance are listed at the end of these minutes.

The meeting agenda is set forth in Attachment 1.

Governor Meehan announced that Governor Mulhaupt had stepped down from the Board, and that he was asked by his colleagues to preside at this meeting. He gave brief remarks thanking and honoring Governor Mulhaupt for his service on the Board and recognized Governor Mulhaupt's expertise on governance matters. He noted the absence of Presiding Governor Lynton, Governor McCue, and Under Secretary Sonenshine.

Governor Meehan stated that a quorum of the Board was not present, and therefore, the Board cannot make formal decisions. He added that meeting would be made available by webcast on the BBG website and open to public attendance.

Governor Meehan paused to mark the death of Mohammed Ali Nuxurkey, a Somali journalist who worked for Voice of America (VOA) as well as a private radio station in Mogadishu. He then highlighted recent threats to BBG journalists and to the mission of the Agency: (1) In Pakistan, Fayaz Zafar, a regular contributor to VOA's Deewa Radio and other local stations, narrowly escaped injury during an attack by suspected Taliban gunmen; (2) In Azerbaijan, Yafez Hasanov, a correspondent for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Azerbaijani Service who covers events in the Nakhchivan exclave, is again under pressure from officials there; and (3) In Cambodia, the Cambodian government exerted unacceptable private and public pressure

¹ Adopted by the Board at the August 21, 2013 BBG Meeting.

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

on Radio Free Asia (RFA) to self-censor their reporting of issues sensitive to the government and resorted to threatening legal action against the individual investigative reporters involved. Governor Meehan also noted that there has been no news on the fate of Alhurra reporter Bashar Fahmi, who has been missing in Syria for more than seven months.

Governor Meehan commended Office of Strategy and Development (OSD) employee Joyce Ngoh, Regional Marketing Officer for West Africa, for her extraordinary efforts in securing the FM license to enable the launch of VOA French to Africa programming on the BBG's newest 24/7 FM in the Malian capital of Bamako. He also commended Joan Mower, Director of Business Development for OSD, for securing \$600,000 in new funding for special programming for Mali and the Sahel which will be distributed on an affiliate FM station, as well on affiliate stations throughout the Sahel, enabling VOA to stand up a Bambara-language program for Mali. He said that their efforts have directly contributed to advancing the BBG mission and strategy to expand its reach and impact in places where people are living under repressive regimes and in conflict zones such as Mali. He added that these efforts, achieved in concert with other government agencies such as U.S. Africa Command (Africom), were examples of government agencies working together and leveraging resources where possible. On behalf of the Board, Governor Meehan expressed his appreciation for their work.

At Governor Meehan's invitation, Governor Ashe gave a report on the recent Governance Committee meeting. Governor Ashe stated that, as a result of Governor Mulhaupt's resignation, the Committee recommended Governor McCue to serve as chair of Governance Committee. He noted there was a discussion of the impact of sequestration and that the Committee urged the VOA Director to find a way to restore funding for *Issues in the News* program. The Committee instructed the Agency's directors to provide a financial analysis of the money that could be saved by the Agency by furloughing categories of non-union employees, and a legal opinion whether there are any restrictions with regard to furloughing categories of management employees due to the effects of sequestration. The Committee considered and recommended adoption of a protocol for allowing members of the public, on a first-come, first-served based, to attend open meetings of the Board and to speak for up to three (3) minutes each at the end of the meeting, subject to a limit of ten (10) speakers. Governor Ashe announced that members of the Strategy and Budget Committee will hold a town hall meeting on the FY 2014 budget on May 15.

Due to lack of a quorum, the Governors voted to fix a time for an adjourned meeting and agreed to resume the April 11, 2013 meeting on the afternoon of April 24, 2013.

Governor Meehan provided highlights of the March 14 and April 10, 2013 meetings of the Strategy and Budget Committee. In March, the Committee discussed the importance of research and supported continued funding of Agency research projects and heard a discussion of Africa mobile strategy involving a panel of subject matter experts which was led by the Director of the Office of Digital and Design Innovation. Recently, the Committee had a discussion with RFE/RL and VOA about the current political situation and the challenging media landscape in Russia. At Governor Meehan's request, Bruce Sherman, Director of Strategy and Development, confirmed that meetings with the broadcast entities on the 2013 Language Service Review (LSR)

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

were already underway, and that the LSR results and recommendations would be provided to the Strategy and Budget Committee in the coming months.

Governor Meehan welcomed Dan Sreebny who is now representing the State Department's Office of the Under Secretary Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Joining the meeting by video conference, Carlos Garcia-Perez, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), gave his report. Mr. Garcia-Perez highlighted a special visit at OCB headquarters by Yoani Sánchez, blogger for *Generación Y*. He publicly expressed his condolences to Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen for a recent loss of her father who was a strong supporter of freedom in Cuba, and noted the Congresswoman's continued support for U.S. international broadcasting to Cuba. He then showed a video of the various programming content generated by OCB's journalists based in Cuba. Governor Ashe commented on a case involving the reductions-in-force of employees at OCB in 2009. Governor Meehan commended Mr. Garcia-Perez on the consistent growth of traffic on OCB's website.

VOA Director David Ensor informed the Board that VOA had been focused primarily on budget issues dealing with sequestration and Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request. He noted his recent briefing (with IBB Director Lobo and OCB Director Garcia-Perez) to all Agency employees on workplace engagement and action plan. He presented a slide show of VOA's Persian Service celebrating Nowruz (Persian New Year), children of Pakistan raving VOA Deewa Radio's new children program called *Jump Jump Camel*, and his trip to Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal of Africa to assess developments and to take part in agreement signing of new affiliates in those countries. Governor Ashe suggested some improvements to letters to contractors when notifying them of their contract termination due to sequestration. Governor Meehan congratulated U.S. Department of State, VOA and IBB staffs on the successes in Africa as a result of their collaborations.

RFE/RL Acting President Kevin Klose briefly described the work of journalists from the Vaclav Havel Journalism Fellowship program, thanked the IBB Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI) for timely meeting their transmission needs, emphasized the constant need for change while maintaining the highest journalism standards, and encouraged collaboration among U.S. international broadcasters where it makes sense best described as a "parallax" concept. Governor Ashe announced that, as a result of Dennis Mulhaupt's resignation, the RFE/RL Board of Directors had recently approved the appointment of Susan McCue to serve as Chair and Victor Ashe as Vice Chair of RFE/RL corporate board. He noted Governor McCue's interest in visiting RFE/RL's Moscow office in May and expressed the Board's desire to meet in Prague in June. Governor Ashe also stated his intention to visit RFE/RL's Moscow office following the June Board meeting, and described his plans to visit RFE/RL's offices during a personal trip to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

RFA President Libby Liu referred the Board to her written monthly report in the briefing book for details on the month's activities and announced the appointment of Mr. Tenzin Namgyal Tethong as RFA's new Tibetan Service Director. Ms. Liu played a video footage that was posted on Facebook by RFA regarding the communal violence in Meiktila, Burma.

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

Brian Conniff, President of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), highlighted MBN's coverage of President Obama's trip to the Middle East, coverage of the 10th anniversary of the Iraq war, coverage of the Arab Summit in Doha, Qatar, and interviews with the Libyan Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. Mr. Conniff announced that Alhurra's Facebook page had surpassed a major milestone – one million fans from all over the Middle East.

Noting the Governance Committee's guidance on a protocol for allowing members of the public to speak at meetings, Governor Meehan invited Ann Noonan, Executive Director of Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting (CUSIB) to speak for three minutes. On behalf of CUSIB, Ms. Noonan congratulated Governors McCue and Ashe on their appointment on the RFE/RL corporate board, Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Ms. Noonan also congratulated Mr. Tenzin Namgyal Tethong on his selection as RFA Tibetan Service Director and noted that CUSIB remains concerned for the self-immolations in Tibet. She said CUSIB is opposed to the proposed elimination of VOA radio broadcasts to Iran and the reduction of radio broadcasts to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that funding for these programs can be found within IBB's resources. She added that CUSIB is also opposed to the current sequester cuts to VOA Cantonese and Mandarin Services, and stressed the importance of maintaining short wave and medium wave radio transmissions to China. She urged RFE/RL to settle its pending overseas discrimination lawsuits brought by former foreign employees in Prague. In conclusion, Ms. Noonan stated that CUSIB remains hopeful that RFE/RL employees who were let go in Moscow would be brought back to work. Governor Ashe thanked Ms. Noonan for her inquiry that resulted in the Board's development of a protocol for allowing members of the public to speak at meetings.

Tim Shamble, President of American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1812, also spoke. Mr. Shamble raised three issues of concern: (1) A case involving the reductions-in-force of employees at OCB in 2009, including the Agency's appeal to the Federal Labor Relations Authority's decision; (2) A proposal in the FY 2014 budget to shift funds from the Edward R. Murrow Transmitting Station in Greenville, North Carolina, to OCB; and (3) A request by Agency management to remove any reference to "fairness", "dignity", or "respect" in the AFGE contract that was currently being negotiated. Governor Ashe expressed his desire to see the AFGE contract negotiations come to closure and urged employees to attend the town hall meeting on May 15 to address their issues of concern.

IBB Director Dick Lobo reported on the progress in the implementation of the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act that goes into effect on July 2 and invited Ms. April Cabral to summarize the work completed to date, including the collaboration among broadcast entities for a draft of internal policy and external regulations. Governor Ashe asked for a short summary and a copy of the draft internal policy and external regulations to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. He suggested that there be a period for public comment on the drafts. Governor Meehan expressed his appreciation for a public comment period, but urged that the progress continues accordingly as this provides new opportunities for the Agency to highlight and showcase its capabilities as a global media organization.

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

IBB Deputy Director Jeffrey Trimble announced that the President's budget for FY 2014 had been posted on the BBG's website and noted the President's continued support for U.S. international broadcasting in light of difficult financial environment. He noted that the President's had proposed \$13.9 million for new investments and \$12.5 million for the BBG's Internet Anti-Censorship (IAC) program. Governor Ashe pointed out that the FY 2014 budget includes a legislative proposal to establish a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for U.S. international broadcasting. In response to Governor Ashe's question, Ms. Lynne Weil, Director of Communications and External Affairs, confirmed that there will be customary hearings on the FY 2014 budget but that there might be some interests on the Hill in the future to hold a hearing on the BBG's budget. Governor Ashe felt that the Board would certainly welcome a private hearing on the BBG's budget but that Congress may wish to hold a public hearing to enhance the public's knowledge of the proposals presented in the FY 2014 budget. Governor Meehan expressed his approval for the increase in funding for the IAC program and stated that the efforts by TSI, RFA and Open Technology Fund are essential to 21st century communications environment.

Andre Mendes, IBB Director for TSI, recognized the extraordinary work by TSI's frequency team for reprogramming the network in response to the sequestration and FY 2014 budget, namely Steve Bratcher, Terry Balazs, Connie Stephens, Veris Burton, and Dannetta Dominick. In response to Governor Ashe's question whether the sequestration and FY 2014 budget would adversely impact the Edward R. Murrow Transmitting Station in Greenville, North Carolina, Mr. Mendes replied that there are sequestration transmission reductions, and that the station would be responsible for the transmissions for OCB in FY 2014.

Ms. Weil gave a report on the activities of the Office of Communications and External Affairs. She noted the hard work by the Office to pull together materials for the roll-out of the Agency's FY 2014 budget submission and the town hall on May 15, and thanked Mr. Trimble and the Office of Chief Financial Officer for their cooperation. At Governor Ashe's request, Ms. Weil updated the Board on Jeff Shell's paperwork for his nomination as BBG Chairman and Member to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and noted that there might be other BBG nominees in the near future.

Due to lack of a quorum, Governor Meehan announced that the Board plans to meet on April 24 to continue and adjourn today's meeting, and that the Strategy and Budget Committee plans to meet on May 15 and June 19.

Other Attendees:

The following persons were also present during all or part of the meeting: International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) Director Richard Lobo, IBB Deputy Director Jeffrey Trimble, IBB Chief of Staff Marie Lennon, Deputy General Counsel and Board Secretary Paul Kollmer-Dorsey, Director of Communications & External Affairs Lynne Weil, Director of Board Operations Oanh Tran, Director of Strategy and Development Bruce Sherman, Director of Public Affairs Letitia King, Senior Policy Advisor April Cabral, Director for the Office of Technology,

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

Services and Innovation Andre Mendes, Director of the Office of Performance Review Kellu Chao, and Associate Director for Program Support Gary Thatcher; David Ensor, Director of the Voice of America (VOA); Carlos Garcia-Perez, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting via video conference; Kevin Klose, Acting President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Libby Liu, President of Radio Free Asia (RFA); Brian Conniff, President of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN); Barbara Brady, VOA Chief of Staff; Rebecca McMenamin, VOA Acting Associate Director for Language Programming; Jay Tolson, VOA Chief of French to Africa Service; Kyle King, VOA Director of the Office of Public Relations; Norman Thompson, RFA Vice President of Administration and Finance; Kelley Sullivan, MBN Vice President of Administration; Dan Sreebny, Senior Advisor for BBG, Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs; and Elizabeth A. Whitaker, Inspector, Office of Inspector General.

Witnessed:

Paul Kollmer-Dorsey
Secretary

Attachment:

1. Agenda for April 11, 2013 Meeting

Minutes of April 11, 2013 Meeting

ATTACHMENT 1

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS April 2013 Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 11

12:30 – 2:00 Broadcasting Board of Governors' Open Meeting

I. Open Session

Chairman Pro Tem Remarks

- A. Adoption of Minutes of December 14, 2012 Meeting
- B. Adoption of Minutes of February 22, 2013 Governors' Briefing
- C. Governance Committee Report
(Governor Mulhaupt)
- D. Strategy & Budget Committee Report
(Governor Meehan)
- E. Programming Initiatives/Program Development
 - OCB Director's Report
(Carlos Garcia-Perez)
 - VOA Director's Report
(David Ensor)
 - RFE/RL President's Report
(Kevin Klose)
 - RFA President's Report
(Libby Liu)
 - MBN President's Report
(Brian Conniff)
- F. IBB Director's Report
(Dick Lobo)
 - Strategy & Development Director's Report
(Bruce Sherman)
 - Technology, Services and Innovation Director's Report
(Andre Mendes)
 - Fiscal Report
(Jeffrey Trimble)
 - Communications & External Affairs Director's Report
(Lynne Weil)
- G. Public Comments
- H. Governors' Comments
- I. Other Items for Consideration at Next Board Meeting

