

The meeting was called to order by Board President Rich Liebert at 6:33 p.m. Present at that time on the teleconference call were board members Joe Moll, Thomas Risberg, Matthias Schalper and Diane Stinger. Guests present were station manager Tom Halverson and Dan Manella, formerly with Cherry Creek Radio. Board member Janice Driver joined at 6:39 p.m.

Rich Liebert asked for secretary's report. Diane responded that Rich had requested the secretary's report from the last meeting be read at next Monday at the regularly scheduled April 20 meeting.

Rich then gave the financial report: \$84,000 in the Missoula account, \$6,000 in the checking account, \$2,000 in savings account. Rich explained that Anderson ZurMuehlen, GFPR accounting firm, is currently mailing the checks needing signed to Rich, and although they initially mailed them to the wrong address that problem was being corrected and all bills are being paid. Rich noted payroll is not interrupted.

Rich stated the MTPR pledge drive was postponed and is tentatively set for June. Rich asked for ideas on how that might affect our income. Joe said it depends on people's income, it may be hard for some of our listeners to donate this year, easier for others. Rich noted everybody will get their \$1200 stimulus checks soon and some may be able to donate some of that money. Thomas said it is a good time to play off of the stimulus money, it is a subject that is being discussed a lot in the nonprofit community.

Janice Driver came on at this point, 6:39 p.m. Rich briefly recapped the financial statement and our discussion and steered the conversation to the Cares Act and our status as a small business. He asked Tom H. if anything related to Covid19 was occurring with the station. Tom responded he has conducted a couple of great interviews, including with the Great Falls Mayor. He has contacted Jane Weber from the Cascade County Commission and the Senior Center for an interview, and Lisa Schmidt has continued Land of Grass. Tom has built a list of restaurants to give an on-air shout-out, some have or will call back. Tom is not producing shows such as On Point or Voices and Views. The core of DJ's are still pitching live; T.C. Hirsch, Matt Donnelly and Elizabeth Jennings. There is no Community Calendar, but there are Covid19 updates. Mayor Kelly is doing a weekly update. Tom stated that now is a bad spot for everyone but it is KGPR's time to shine. In the studio he is wiping everything down after use by himself or DJ's. He noted that T.C.'s wife is a surgeon and made recommendations for keeping the studio safe. Everyone is trying to observe the 6 foot safe distancing rule. Matt does the streaming reports from home with Tom on the phone. An underwriter is coming on board for Land of Grass soon. New volunteers are coming soon also. Someone is volunteering to do office work and there will be new radio host(s). Tom said he will provide details in the station manager's report next week.

Rich asked who the Doctor was that Tom had on? Tom said it was Dr. David Price, who is nationally known.

Rich stated that the complete Engineer's report would be on the agenda for next week but noted three new CD players had been purchased and installed.

Rich went on to Old Business and said it was not applicable, would be addressed next week.

Under New Business:

Rich said we have all heard about the CARES act recently passed by Congress, including in it a SBA 7A loan which is now being done through FDIC lenders. Rich has approached First Interstate Bank, the bank with which GFPR does business, about an SBA 7A loan for GFPR. He was told GFPR would need to provide payroll and financials for last 9 months. AZ came through with everything we need for that.

As an aside Rich noted that Jeremy Trebas has not sent a proposal for coming on as accountant for GFPR, most likely is very busy with Covid19 issues at the Rescue Mission, and times being what they are AZ is the best option for continuing with this loan. Janice and Diane expressed their agreement.

Matthias noted this is an interesting time for people who keep on working; that his employees are better off applying for unemployment.

Rich noted this loan is considered a grant if it is used for payroll. Utilities and rent are a grey area. At KGPR utilities exceed payroll, basically the loan could possibly cover 25% of utility bills but the application does not ask for utility bills. Joe Moll pointed out if we had the loan for payroll it would leave more of our own money for utilities.

Rich said if he can get a board action GFPPRA is eligible for monthly payroll times 2½. Monthly payroll is \$2992, times 2½ is \$7480, for which we are eligible. He noted that we are required to keep account of our staff hours, and the intent is to keep employees on the payroll. That way we are following the absolute intent of the loan/grant. Rich asked Thomas how many they are employing, Thomas replied 9. Rich noted some in Congress are asking “why are we funding the arts, or Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Kennedy Center?” Rich reminded the reason is: jobs, employees.

Rich noted he had emailed some read ahead material concerning our gross payroll. Rich asked for a motion to approve applying for an SBA 7A loan/grant of \$7480. Matthias moved to apply for the loan, Janice seconded the motion, Rich asked for further discussion. Diane asked what kind of accounting are they asking for? Rich replied that is the board’s duty to determine. Rich noted that once we get it AZ will have everything “locked down.” Rich can prepare it on a program called DocuSign and have it for everyone to see next week. Rich called roll for the question, all board members voted yes, Rich deferred. Motion passed.

Rich said he will file everything tomorrow and update as soon as possible.

The issue of social distancing and interviews was raised. Tom is doing his interviews by phone, the landline connections are clear, cell phone connections are not always clear. Janet asked whether interviewees are aware of that, Tom said yes. Rich noted some interviews are clear, some not.

Rich asked Tom H. whether he had a cell phone, Tom H. replied no, Rich said he (Rich) intended to ask the board to purchase a cell phone for station manager use and asked Tom H. what he thought of the idea. Tom H. replied he had not considered it. Rich asked Tom H. whether he thought he should have one for personal use or for business or both, Tom H. replied business. Rich asked Tom H. to check into providers for discussion at next Monday’s meeting.

Rich stated he had invited Dan Manella to our telephone meeting because of Dan’s extensive experience with and great insights into radio. Rich asked Dan to introduce himself.

Dan stated his name and explained he had known Rich Liebert about three years, beginning when they worked together on a live broadcast for the Veteran’s Memorial. Rich had told Dan about his own connection to Public Radio and Dan had offered to assist any way he could. Dan has been with Cherry Creek Radio until recently as Senior Vice President overseeing markets. He has been in radio broadcasting since the early 80’s. He said Rich had told him he was looking for ideas to generate more revenue for local public radio. Dan said he himself was passionate about what he was about to tell us, and can prove everything he is about to say.

Dan said when he got to Great Falls Cherry Creek was operating eight commercial stations in this area and none were doing any public service. Dan said he tried to change that and 2 years ago won a Montana State Broadcasters Best Public Service Campaign award. He noted that as he was watching Olympics on television a civil emergency bulletin was broadcast, and he has heard important public service broadcasts on the radio about snow storms and flooding. He said that is the kind of public service he is passionate about, and without him at Cherry Creek there will be a void which KGPR now has a huge opportunity to fill, becoming community radio for Great Falls.

Rich stated the listener demographic information he brought to the board at recent meetings was provided by Dan. Dan said in response that he could show us how taking the local approach could increase listenership and revenue.

Dan then played a radio clip from December 8, 1941 of Franklin Roosevelt speaking about the Pearl Harbor attack. Dan noted that 1941 radio broadcast and Walter Cronkite announcing the death of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 are two moments etched into our memories, and we heard it on radio or television. He noted that on March 13, 2020, when the President declared a national emergency not one Great Falls radio station carried his speech live, and when Governor Bullock held a press conference and shut down the state not one radio station carried it live. He said he knew when he left KMON there would be no local focus, as currently there is no focus on COVID 19. Dan said radio today is the same as in 1941; it is bringing content to distant places. He noted it is evident from inane comments people make on some Facebook pages there is an absence of good information.

Dan asked, "How can we generate revenue?" and answered "By serving the local community." He said what KGPR can do is be the local community radio station. He reminded us of what Tom H. said earlier in the meeting, "This is where we have to shine."

Dan said there is more that can be done. In listening to radio stations ask "where is the busy work?" He said a lot of busy work is on Friday night. (Dan did not clarify what he meant by "busy work") Dan said for the future and for right now it is in the "want to'.

Dan commented that to update a Facebook page 3 times a day does not take much time. He said go to GTF Community Information Network and see what kind of information you can put together. Another example: Real Clear Politics-go there and find information and point listeners to it. He said he was talking with the Mayor of Conrad who said radio stations are not getting information out. Dan noted that today on GTF Information page was a notice about the GFPS board meeting tonight.

Dan noted a lot of people listen to public radio, and it is about how we take this to the community. We already have a niche audience, right now in the current crises we can grow it.

Rich asked Thomas whether we can use our Facebook page and link it to what Dan mentioned? Thomas said yes, he has shared already.

Dan went on to say the current crises will end, now is the best time to reach out to businesses with "how can we help you?" We could get people from businesses to talk about how they are solving their problems now.

Rich said we need to all think about what would it be to leverage our Facebook better? Thomas said we could look for interesting stories, and he just went on Facebook and asked his friends to like our Facebook page. Thomas said what will drive it is when people share it.

Rich noted we can do an interview for as long as we want. Tom H. said it was a great point; that one thing he hears from people he interviews is we take the time to do in- depth interviews. We need to continue talking to restaurants in town to see how they are doing. He said when he approached them many ask what station he is from and are surprised we will help them out for free.

Dan said it is the "mafia heroin" sales technique; offer them something for free they will not want to go without and be willing to pay for later because they see its value. It increases revenue and audience. He said commercial broadcasters in this community are lazy and that leaves an opening for KGPR. If someone claims to be the local voice that ties them to that identity.

Rich reminded that KGPR says "keeping it local, keeping you informed." Tom H. concurred.

Janice said we could spotlight local companies and what they are doing for employees with regard to compliance with safe social distancing, PPE etc.

Rich noted that Matthias has talked about how nobody does a call-in any more. Dan noted that with regard to quality of sound the quality is not always good even on national television these days, the content is more important

than quality right now. We can think about how we can use KGPR to get more people to spend at someone's business. We can plant our flag, "own the moon."

Rich asked in the past have we had a call-in? Tom H. said yes, although he did not remember exact dates or circumstances. He noted it was difficult to do and if no one called in the station could look foolish. Rich asked Matthias to talk about it. Matthias said that in Northern Ireland the whole population listened to the call-in and talked about it afterward. People talked to each other and/or on the radio. He said currently there is a group of people on Facebook who talk to each other about old Great Falls. He said his point is, that could be a small talk starter for a call-in. He said people tune in to listen to the chit chat or sometimes just for background, not necessarily to call in themselves.

Rich asked whether we can have a City/County Health Department call-in, and what would we need for studio set-up? Tom H. reminded him people are not allowed to come into the studio now.

Dan commented that even if there is not a sophisticated system there are ways, like tonight with the school board meeting. Tom H. suggested this is a good point for purchasing remote equipment. Dan said it could still be done with Facebook live, for instance. He said there is a way, and to go back to the "want to".

Rich said Thomas has done Facebook live with us, at the party, and these are all ideas we need to brainstorm, and that right now during social isolation people will want to call in.

Janice suggested we have local businesses notify KGPR what they are doing as a great way to get our name out and disseminate information. Rich suggested we contact the Chamber of Commerce to network with the businesses. Dan said in the last 30 days people had something to prepare for and engage in with Easter, but now there is nothing going on, nothing special coming up, but the need for information is just as important today as 30 days ago. Dan suggested we could do an entire Saturday of broadcasting local businesses. Janice agreed that was a good idea. Rich said it could build an interest and we could leverage Chamber of Commerce.

Janice said there are lots of little community connections going on now we could have on the radio, for instance, there is a group who worked on the 2010 Census who have been meeting regularly for 10 years and it shows the localness of our community. Another example she talked about was the "Howl" at 8 each night. Dan said radio stations could get behind the Howl but commercial stations are uninterested.

Rich said it was time to wrap up, said "let's do the deep dive, see what we can do on Facebook, and does it cost to advertise on Facebook? Thomas said "It is all about what the objective is." Dan noted that if we did a 4 hour broadcast with 20 businesses and each posted it to their Facebook page it would generate a lot of listeners.

Rich thanked everybody for attending and said we will keep working on these points. He asked Tom H. to reach out to old volunteers to come back in, Tom H. said he is working on it. Rich adjourned the meeting at about 8:50.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. via teleconference.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diane Stinger, secretary, Great Falls Public Radio Association on April 14, 2020

