

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING
ECB Board Room
3319 West Beltline Highway
Madison, Wisconsin
May 3, 2019
9:30 A.M.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT
Marta Bechtol, Executive Director

Advocacy Day

The Wisconsin Public Radio Association and the Friends of Wisconsin Public Television held their annual "Advocacy Day" at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison on April 24.

Although most of the Joint Finance Committee were out for a regional hearing in Green Bay, we still managed to have a full house of advocates who visited all 132 legislative offices to thank members of the state Legislature for their support of Wisconsin Public Broadcasting.

Advocates also emphasized the essential nature of state support in ensuring the delivery of public broadcasting to the most rural parts of Wisconsin, and voiced their support for the increase for K-12 funding in the ECB budget request.

State Budget Update

Following the release of Governor Evers' budget at the end of February, I have made repeat visits to members of the Joint Finance committee and other legislators to discuss the agency request. I have also provided additional details on our request to the State Budget Office as well as the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. As of this writing, conversations have been pleasant and positive, but I'm not quite ready to bet on the odds of our additional ask for K-12 funds passing.

ECB's capital budget request has been assigned to All-Agency Funds within the capital budget, which would be in the best interest of the agency. That said, the FCC has given us completion deadlines for the signal expansions in Green Bay and La Crosse that have become worrisome after the State Building Commission's deferral of action in March. I have filed our concerns with the commission and the agency has begun preparing paperwork for these projects so that we will be ready to move forward just as soon as funding is confirmed, as we are hopeful it will be.

Federal Budget Updates

I visited Washington D.C. on February 25-27 to attend the annual Public Media Summit, which is essentially the federal version of our state Advocacy Day. Gene Purcell and I joined Jeanette Roberts, president of the Friends of Wisconsin Public Television, to visit Wisconsin's senators and representatives on behalf of America's Public Television Stations (APTS) and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Federal funding makes up about 10% of ECB's annual operating budget.

CPB is requesting a \$50 million increase (\$495 million) to its two-year advance funding in FY 2022. This would be the first increase in CPB funding in 10 years. CPB has been flat funded in the Labor-HHS budget at \$445 million for the last 10 years. It is also requesting a continuing appropriation

for the broadcast interconnect of \$20M. A small \$3M increase for Ready to Learn is being requested through the Education budget.

CPB's current funding level equates to \$1.35 annually per American taxpayer. The requested increase would bring that up to \$1.50.

UW-Madison Transition Update

With the July 1 integration on the horizon, Gene Purcell reports that things are ramping up for the staff and that all is proceeding in an orderly fashion. Impact to ECB is virtually non-existent at this time, but Gene and I continue to meet almost weekly to discuss ways to enhance Partnership relations and improve workflow.