

Media Factory Board Minutes DRAFT
April 20, 2026 at 6pm

In attendance:

In-Person: Keith Oppenheim, Seth Mobley, Gin Ferrera, Patrick Heltz, Duane Peterson, Adam Walker.

On-line: Olivia Hartwig, John Billingsley, Ted LeBlanc, Dean Pierce, Eric Agnero.

1. Call to Order

- a. Meeting called to order at 6:05pm.
- b. In lieu of a secretary, Olivia Hartwig agreed to take notes.
- c. We need a permanent secretary.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approve Minutes: March 16, 2026

Ted moves to accept at 6:08pm. Seconded by Dean Pierce.

Technical difficulty interlude at 6:09 or so. Resolved at 6:13.

4. Financial Report

- No significant expenses or income. Have not yet received first quarter funding from Comcast. Should see that number in a week or two at most.
- 4995 - Unrealized gains and losses reflects market volatility in March. Value has recovered to February numbers.
- 5531 - HRA funding - funds drawn because of a new account coming through a different platform. Our bookkeeper hasn't had clarity to apply it in another area. We are utilizing our HRA which is good!
- 7650 - Improvements - bulk is for the generator project. Working with property owners, Mountain Air Generators, and electricians about how to best tackle this project. Also discussing with property management how to appropriately share expenses, as they want to remove an old generator and we want to put one up. Grant money is also coming in but isn't reflected here because it is a reimbursement grant.
- Items that stand out as being higher or lower have been reported on in the past.

Balance Sheet:

- The investment account dropped down in March and today was back up to February numbers.

Only other related financial piece is about cable funding, which we will expand on further in our executive session discussion on contracts.

Questions:

Q: Is the first column we see in the Profit/Loss Comparison 2026, and the second 2025?

A: Other way around. 2025, then 2026, then "Change".

Dean Pierce moved to accept the financial report. Ted LeBlanc seconded. Motion passed at 6:22pm

5. Board Appointments & Election

Email went out April 9th with whose terms are up this year. Keith is terming out. Ted is stepping down as well. Hoping that both will attend the May meeting however for a proper farewell.

Annual meeting is May 18th 6-7:30pm.

Olivia and Dean are up for reappointment. Eric is up for reelection after finishing up a 2 year elected seat.

Post merger we learned that it is helpful to take care of the appointments in the April meeting. Once upon a time we didn't do that and it led to an appointment/voting activity bottleneck.

Process: folks who are up for reappointment communicate an interest to stay on (or not) and once we know who is interested we vote as a board whether to reappoint or not.

Dean emailed a question to Seth asking if it is helpful for someone on an appointed seat whose term is ending to run on an election seat instead? Would there be some advantage to the org? Or would this complicate matters? Should board service be backed by member support? And is there a benefit to Eric, who might then have access to an appointed seat instead of an elected one?

The answer was that this course of action would be up to Eric if he wanted to be appointed, and from there an action of the board.

Another question arose around Keith's term limits as Chair of the board and as a member. Both expire in May. Keith clarified that he has served on the board for an astounding 10 or 11 years. This is because he was on the board of one of the organizations that merged into Media Factory, at which time the clock "restarted" on his appointment to the newly formed Media Factory board. That clock runs out in May. He may return to the board in a year.

The observation was made that with Keith and Ted leaving, we will have an open seat regardless of Dean's offer to run instead of being appointed. It was also pointed out that due to the nature of the available seats, should Dean and Eric both run for an elected seat, they would be competing with one another. Whosoever might not win the elected seat could be appointed, as other board candidates have been in the past, in recognition of their desire to contribute and for their work with the board. Thus putting us back where we started.

The other elected seat belonged to an elected board member who resigned. This has left an elected seat on the board vacant for another year. Some discussion ensued about how the board might go about filling that seat with regards to running the seat in the upcoming election. With the deadline to express candidacy being Friday April 24th, some concern was shared around ensuring expectation clarity and term limits of the seat.

After reviewing the bylaws it was determined that the board could appoint someone to that seat until the seat's term ends, at which time it would be up for election again. It was further determined that the board does not wish to leave this seat unoccupied in the interest of a fuller board. Given our size and folks' schedules, we don't always have the group size we might wish for.

John Billingsley moved to appoint Dean Pierce to be appointed for a one year term to fulfill the remainder of the open elected seat. Ted seconded. Motion passed at 6:45pm.

Ted LeBlanc moved to appoint Olivia Hartwig for a two year term. Seconded by Eric Agnero. Motion passed at 6:49pm.

6. Strategic Planning

a. "Let's Talk Community Media" Presentation:

Purpose: to follow up on board questions on what to say and what to share with folks in regards to outreach. This was a facet of the Strategic Plan. This presentation will be:

- High level
- Interesting to others
- Includes common talking points
- Hitting the strategic plan's goal deadline of "spring"

What is community media in VT?

- Public, educational, and government access television
 - 24 access centers in vt
 - Vermont media exchange (VMX)
 - Vermont Access Network
- Low-power FM / Community Radio Stations
 - 10 LPFM and community radio stations in VT

Connecting with Content

- The main item that we do here is distribution (though that's easy to forget).
- You make it, you recommend it, we air it!
- It's your channel; we'll play what you create and what you want to see!
- You can really use your voice and get content out there. It's member driven.
- Quite a large service area: Burlington, South Burlington, Essex, Essex Junction, Williston, Shelburne, Hinesburg, Charlotte, Ferrisburg, Vergennes.

- We have 3 channels which change based on where you live and what cable provider you have (Comcast vs Burlington Telecom). But we also have OTT (Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, etc) and Online (REWIND, YouTube, mediafactory.org)

Pathway of Learning and Engagement

- Workshops
 - we offer 8-10 suggested donation workshops on professional technical topics
 - You don't have to be a member
- Group Tours + Programs:
 - Free!
 - Great entry point for gathering members
- Events
 - Low effort engagement tool
 - Crowd-source premiere
 - Arthrop
 - Made Here event (VTIFF)
 - Try to have at least one a month. Share our community's content and make connections. Powerful for the things our members make to have an audience.
- Internships
 - Supporting growth in the interest
 - Two slots, three internship opportunities, paid.
 - 2023 - 22 interns, 7 have been hired on since.
- Usually people will do one of these things which leads to them doing another, and another...

Community Partnerships

- Production, Educational, Event Support
- Criteria:
 - Mission aligned?
 - Available budget?
 - Opportunities for in-kind support?
 - Established partnership or a new one?
 - Our schedule/staff capacity?

Community Media in a Post-Cable World

- Cable TV is a thing of the past thanks to streaming. The fewer cable subscriptions, the less money we get.
- Cable TV is now also pushing their shows into internet streaming which is not regulated in our funding mechanisms.
- While there is national and state advocacy, that takes time

- Last remaining hyper local media environments. Unfettered access to community information, easy to access on cable, internet, radio. Gotta move with the times.
- Services are integrated into public meetings to provide access to online participation in civic engagement.
- Regulatory Work
 - National advocacy via the Alliance for Community Media
 - Statewide advocacy via Public Utility Commission Dockets and Lobbying
 - Contracts with Cable Providers
- Sustainability Strategies
 - Diversification of Funding
 - Underwriting and Sponsorships
 - Charitable Giving
 - Grant Support
 - Financial Investments
 - Organizational Mergers

Getting Involved

- Become a member
- Take a workshop
- Arrange a tour for your org
- Attend a special event
- Underwrite our programming
- Become a monthly donor
- Serve on our Board!
- Tell others about our services
- Watch our channels
- Download the Media Factory app
- Save 99.3 on your radio dial
- Make a statement to support community media
- Front Porch Forum

RE: Dean's curiosity about AI use

This item came up during the Crowd Source project. The staff created guidelines that outline if participants are using generative AI for entire scenes, they will need to use a Media Factory provided watermark. The focus of the event is on transparency, creative process, representing community, and using film and editing skills.

7. Executive Session to Discuss Regulatory Affairs & Contracts

Olivia Hartwig moved to go into Executive Session to discuss contracts. John Billingsley seconded. Motion passed at 7:26pm.

Ted LeBlanc moved to leave the executive session. Dean Pierce seconded. Motion passed at 7:46pm.

8. Committee Reports

Leadership:

We did not have a quorum in the officers meeting. No notes taken.

Programming:

Emails went back and forth on a program proposal. Unclear if a decision has been made.

No other committee reports.

9. Other Business

- Tuesday 4/28 at 6pm: Farewell for Jordan and Ben will be held at BBCO to see them off on their adventures in Portland.
- Saturday at 4/25 at 11am: How We Made It: two film makers discussing their craft (including board member Duane!)
- May 28th at 6 or 7pm: Spring Producer Showcase. Really cool opportunity to see what folks who made things in the past 6 months or so.

10. Adjournment

Ted LeBlanc moved to adjourn the meeting. Dean seconded. Motion passes at 8:11 pm.