

Media Factory Board Minutes

December 15, 2025, 5:30 pm

In Attendance: Keith Oppenheim, Deb Ellis, Dean Pierce, Duane Peterson, John Billingsley. Online: Colleen Goodhue, Ted Leblanc.

Media Factory Staff: Seth Mobley (Executive Director), Patrick Heltz (Content Manager).

1. Call to Order

- a. Keith called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.
- b. Dean volunteered to act as note-taker for the meeting.

2. Public Comment

- a. There were no comments from the public.
- b. Staff noted that a holiday celebration would be held at Burlington Beer Company (BBCO) immediately following the meeting. Some staff members were already at the venue to secure space for the gathering.

3. Approve Minutes: November 17, 2025

- a. Seth requested a correction to the draft minutes, more specifically in the staffing update section. He noted that the new Internal Content Producer's name is Ty, not Todd.
- b. Colleen commented on the Crowd Sourced Cinema world premiere, noting the "really wonderful" turnout and the high level of energy in the room during the event
- c. Deb moved to approve the minutes as revised; Ted seconded the motion.
- d. The motion carried.

4. 2026 Operating Budget

- a. Seth presented the 2026 Operating Budget, which had been updated with red text to highlight changes made since the November meeting.
- b. Income Highlights: The budget remains conservative regarding state grant funding, set at \$190,000. Seth noted that while the statewide ask to the legislature is increasing to approximately \$1.8 million, he is budgeting "flat" for now. If the state appropriates more funding, the organization will reduce the amount drawn from reserves, currently projected at approximately \$57,000 to offset the new discretionary account.
- c. Expense Highlights:
 - Benefits Administration: Seth added \$5,000 for NFP (benefits administration) after clarifying that these fees are separate from the health insurance premiums. The board discussed researching alternative service providers for this in 2026.

- Payroll: The budget includes a 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). Following board feedback, Seth applied this COLA to his own salary to maintain consistency across the staff, though he noted his take-home pay remains impacted by the cap on cash-in-lieu benefits.
- d. Discussion: The board discussed potential mid-year budget adjustments. Seth suggested that if cable revenue continues to decline drastically, the organization could approach municipalities and school boards to charge for meetings that exceed a set regular schedule.
- e. John Billingsley moved to approve the 2026 Operating Budget; Ted seconded the motion.
- f. The motion carried.

5. Strategic Plan

- a. Keith recapped the strategic planning process, noting that staff had helped compile the remaining benchmarks for the 2026–2029 plan.
- b. Colleen raised a question regarding Goal 2.C (developing networking among staff and board), suggesting it was significant enough to be its own sub-plan. Seth responded that the board would "chip away" at these benchmarks year-by-year, starting with more detailed discussions in the spring.
- c. Jason spoke regarding benchmark 3.B, emphasizing the need to strengthen connections between board members and production work, and suggested expanding the language to include regional high schools and technical centers in outreach efforts.
- d. Jason moved to approve the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan with the amended language for item 3.B to include regional high school students; Deb seconded the motion.
- e. The motion carried.

6. Adjourn

- a. John moved to adjourn the meeting; Duane seconded the motion.
- b. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m..