Minutes TMC CC

Present: Sharon, James, Maya, Caitlin, Rachel,

Absent: Lisa, Steve, Ivan, Antoinette

Agenda:

1. First Reading of 2017 Budget/ Discussion of Finances (attached)  
2. TMC's role in the news sector: a 360 evaluation

**Budget Revenue**

We reviewed the proposed budget. On the revenue side, we reviewed grants—the New Economy grant seems likely because it is being proposed by our partner, the New Economy Coalition; the Annie Casey grant is 50-50. We are looking for grants from other funders, but they seem unlikely and so aren’t in the budget.

Note: since our meeting we have received a grant from Wallace. It is for $50k instead of the $60k we asked for; it may be our last grant from Wallace according to our program officer.

We reviewed member dues. Several reasons for the dues increase:

1) new database means it’s easier for us to ask for dues

2) new databaase means we can take credit cards as payment for dues

3) we plan to bring in 30 new members as part of our racial equity work—cohorts of 8-10 outlets at a time (e.g. latino outlets, African American outlets, etc)

The bottom line: Once again we are running under what we really need, as reflected in the negative balance. It is crystal clear that the Media Consortium will not be able to get more than $125-150k/ year in foundation money. We need an alternative funding source.

**Plan for Revenue**

The current plan is to turn our annual conference into a revenue generator by adding to the 2 day TMC member meeting (which everyone wants to keep) a more public event that would bring together government officials, policy experts, advocates and our progressive media to plan for the major policy positions of each new administration/congress and to frame progressive responses to those positions. The idea is a kind of Netroots post-election.

This year will be a pilot of that idea, with a one day policy focus before our regular meeting. We are seeking $20K in sponsorship for that. If this day is revenue positive—if it attracts sponsors and non-media high-paying participants—then it may well be the way forward.

**Expenses**

Our expenses are higher this year than in previous years because we have hired Manolia; we are doing more travel (in order to connect with funders) and we plan to finally implement our new website.

These are all necessary expenses if we want to move the Media Consortium forward.

**360 Evaluation**

Jo Ellen gave a brief report on other associations. The most interesting is INN, which is quickly becoming the trade association for nonprofit media, and continues to attract almost all the foundation funding going to media associations. AAN is going into a period of dormancy as it searches for a new ED; ACM, the public access channel group, is flouishing—Jo Ellen is now on its foundation board.

What does TMC offer within this ecosystem? WE highlighted three areas we do well (and that no one else is doing well):

1. **Measuring Impact.** Others might get more attention for their impact measurement, but none of their work is as sophisticated as the work TMC has done and can do, with more funding.

2. **Real Collaboration.** We have built a network of peers who treat each other as equals. That is unusual—most of the “collaborations” we read about feature one large organization graciously sharing content or data with smaller organizations.

3**. Racial Equity** work. Just about everyone is now talking about diversity. But we’ve been working towards racial equity since Chris Rabb’s talk in Baltimore in 2013, our focus on surveillance of black people in 2014, and Malkia Cyril’s talk to us in 2015. We are the only media group to have invested in racial equity training for the network, and we continue to focus on long-term change in this area.

All of these areas express our core as news outlets driven by progressive values who believe in the methods of grassroots organizing, working from the bottom up rather than the top down.

The question we face as a leadership team is this: Is this vision and practice enough to differentiate us from other groups? Is it valuable enough to our members to inspire them to support the organization deeply? Can we find a way to make this direction sustainable? And finally, am I the right leader at this time, or would the Consortium benefit from a leader who is more sales/pr-oriented?