



Director Report April 2025

Administrative

- VAN Legislative Advocacy: Thanks to the advocacy team and the support of the legislature, VAN's State appropriation request for FY2026 is still fully funded (at \$1.35m). The Senate Appropriations Committee has left the amount intact in the line item. It appears that this will be left in the budget as is, which will be voted on before the end of the session. Also, as an aside (and bc. it's of particular interest to our operation), Senate Appropriations has asked VAN to consider becoming a fiscal agent for community radio stations, with the idea that he would lobby for adding back in the \$200K request for community radio. As mentioned previously, VAB (VT Association of Broadcasters) had made the request on behalf of community radio stations and for the use of the funds go towards emergency management services. The request was rolled into a larger emergency management bill, from which all appropriations were ultimately stripped. However, with the support of Senate Appropriations Cmte. chair Andre Perchlik, that money might be added to VAN's request, if VAN is willing to dole it out (which it is). So, there is still hope for the community radio funding after all. Johnny Gifford (formerly of SAPA and now Brattleboro Community TV, who sits on the VAN Board) has been instrumental in serving as a liaison and building the bridge between the loose network of community radio stations & VAN (Brattleboro Community TV also operates a volunteer radio station). Also, this might not have happened without the steadfast leadership of Llu Mulvaney-Stanak, the Station Manager of WGDR in Plainfield, who testified in front of Senate Appropriations.
- VAN Annual Meeting: VAN's Annual Meeting this year will be held at JAM (Junction Arts & Media, formerly CATV) in WRJ on Friday, May 5 from 9-3. The business meeting will be held in the morning, followed by a few different workshops. One of these workshops will be "Developing Your Board". In planning for this workshop, they are seeing a current Board Member to moderate, and others to come & participate. If anyone is interested in attending, let me know.
- Strategic Planning / Board Retreat: While it's clear that a longer, more involved strategic planning process is not going to take shape, there is still a need to address long-term planning and big picture strategy. What is now being proposed is a "boiled down" version, held as a Board retreat in May. A Doodle poll went out to Board members recently. First & foremost, we need consensus on a date. We can work out other details during the upcoming Board meeting. The retreat will replace the regular Board meeting for May.
- End of Year Planning: Since we'll be doing a retreat rather than a regular meeting in May, that leaves only 1 (or possibly 2, if the Board decides) regular meeting between now and the Annual Meeting in June. That leaves a lot of work to do on the committee level, such as planning the Open House portion of the Annual Meeting (Community Engagement), the FY2026 Budget (Finance), and the ballot & election procedures (Nominating & Elections).

- Staffing: Sarah Devereux's last regular day with us is this coming week. She will be starting a new full time role at the Tuck Business School at Dartmouth College. Sarah will remain open & available to work occasionally on weekends as needed, and to do some fill-in post-production & editing work from home.

Finance

- FY2026 Budget Work: I am behind schedule getting a budget draft done but will have a 1st draft for the Board to review & the Finance Committee to work on in time for the April Board meeting.
- Banking Change: We have closed the accounts at M&T Bank and now are doing our regular banking with Heritage Family Credit Union, where we also had a checking & savings account. As had been discussed previously, a decision needed to be made to simplify things. This will make the account reconciliation process smoother and simplified.
- Building Project Financing Plan: The total cost estimate for the remainder of the build out as currently planned is \$175,000 (this is a max / "not to exceed" amount). Given the status of our available funds and fundraising, the most likely scenario to get Board support for moving the building project forward is to modify the overall plan, reducing it to a smaller phase. We presently have approximately \$70K in our "building fund"; this is a cumulation of grant funds, a remaining sum from past fundraising for the project, and capital budget surpluses from previous years. I propose that we move forward with this amount now and ask for the Board's approval.

Buildings & Grounds

- Building Project Status: I met with Mark Blacnhard (VIS Construction Consultants) last week. He now has our original floor plans and will be getting them scanned for his design team. He is hoping to have someone assigned to this ASAP, but whereas this is most likely a relatively small project that we are making even smaller, it could be a bit of a challenge with finding the people available to do the work. He understands the time sensitivity with the grant funding (the project must be completed by Aug. 31st to comply with the guidelines of the VT Arts Council "Cultural Facilities" grant). That said, in the event that circumstances beyond our control (such as the lack of available contractors or other construction delays) interfere with our ability to meet the deadline, we can ask the Arts Council for an extension. We need to try to avoid that, but it is an option in an emergency situation.

WLUD-LP

- Running Notes: I have been compiling a list of notes on all things radio [here](#), mainly for sharing & collaborating with the committee, but also for my own reference.
- Committee Report: Michelle Stinson, who has been chairing the Radio Committee, has submitted a report. There is some redundancy with what's in my "running notes", but there are a few new noteworthy items and insights.

Community Engagement & Support

- Donor Appreciation Event: We have discussed hosting semi-regular donor appreciation events on site at a restaurant or other location. The purpose of such events is to get

together with our supporters and thank them. This would be for underwriters, donors / funders, members, municipal officials, & local legislators. One idea for the first such event is The Killarney, since they are an underwriter and would have the space.

- Annual Meeting / Open House: A poll went out to determine the best date for our Annual Meeting - all we know at this point is that it will be in mid-June. The radio committee would like to collaborate on the open house portion and has asked how they might participate.
- Underwriting: Last month, the Community Engagement Committee discussed the “reboot” of our underwriting program, building on a new one pager (flyer) that Lisa put together. It then went onto the radio committee for review - the intent is to add language about radio to the underwriting program and to leverage radio for the broader appeal. At its meeting earlier this month, the radio committee reviewed the document and began to talk about underwriting. This is going to be a process, since these are new concepts to many on the committee - it would be beneficial for the Community Engagement Committee & Radio Committee to work on this together. Michelle has suggested having 1 or 2 of the radio committee members participate on the Community Engagement Committee, which I think makes a lot of sense. It not only would be a more efficient way of achieving the goal (by avoiding the duplication of efforts), but it would also help radio committee members get up to speed on all things underwriting.
- Ludlow Town Hall: The network issues that we had been experiencing with the AV equipment in the balcony of the auditorium has been resolved. The Town ordered some new networking hardware from their IT service provider, Symquest. I met the tech over there to help with the install the week before last. At long last, the IT is all working as it should, which means the AV system no longer is experiencing the sporadic technical difficulties. The next critical pieces to this seemingly never-ending project is the electrical work, general organizing, and making the space a safer working environment. Those pieces are being spearheaded by FOLA (Friends of Ludlow Auditorium), which has jurisdiction over the space.