

Memo To: WJFF Board of Directors

From: Sally Stuart and Clay Smith, Co-Chairs of the Strategic Planning Work Group

Re: Strategic Planning Working Group Updates

Since the last board meeting, we have continued to work on our SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats/Challenges). We first developed our internal analysis and then in the last month or so we have conducted roughly 20 interviews with community leaders and members across the Catskills and NE Pennsylvania. We've interviewed leaders in government, civic and arts organizations, local media and health care leaders, business people, firefighters, librarians, WJFF underwriters and more.

We then crafted their input into an external SWOT Analysis and all the while we have considered what recommendations flow from the analysis. Please find attached to this memo our combined analysis and recommendations. Our discussion with the board was at the end of our long last meeting and we do not feel the board has been adequately engaged in the SWOT. Therefore we ask you to write to sara.stuart.nyc@gmail.com and claysmithny@gmail.com with your feedback and answers to the following questions:

- A. What are your thoughts about the SWOT analysis; what is missing; what would you change?**
- B. Which recommendations would you prioritize? Pick 3-4.**
- C. Do you have another recommendation that you would suggest?**

The next steps in our work will be to prioritize the recommendations and turn them into Key Strategic Goals and Objectives. This will be done within our committee and then in a community call on 6/29 at 6pm when we will share the Mission, Values, SWOT and Key Goals. Over the summer and into the fall we will finalize the goals and objectives and develop a plan for achieving them during the next 5 years. **We hope you can join the Community Call on 6/29 and help to promote this zoom meeting.**

We thank the committee members for helping with the interviews and for reporting on them. Also, we thank Tim for taking the time, during the pledge drive, to reach out individually to each of our interviewees with our request for interviews.

There have been two meetings since the last board meeting, a meeting with the SWOT leadership group, a subgroup of the SPWG, and a meeting of the full SPWG.

Draft Combined SPWG and External Interviews

WJFF SWOT Analysis

May 2021

Internal:

External:

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unique local programming and lots of it. You hear from eclectic, diverse voices. - a very important source for local news and info that is balanced ■ Talented and active volunteer base, we rely on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteers to produce programs ● Dedicated board and other committee members ● Our board is getting younger ■ Tradition of renewable energy and stewardship of the earth. (This was a really valuable platform and we can reinforce this.) ■ Expanded local news and thorough local COVID coverage and information ■ Dedicated, engaged and enthusiastic listenership – the station fosters a strong sense of community! ■ Localism ■ Public (not commercial) radio that is local, national (NPR) and global (BBC) ■ 30 years of service and experience ■ We are moving to a new physical space in Liberty, with new technology and more space 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Podcasting is growing on the national and local fronts (we could do more, then move them on air) ■ Broadcasting licenses are for sale (which could improve our signal within our listening area and/or expand it) ■ Broadband may finally be coming in a bigger way, due to increased federal support; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We can market to new people who are getting online ○ We could move more into streaming that reaches more people in a more expansive way (is this a new funding stream?) ● We serve a politically, socially, racially diverse community which presents a big opportunity to build bridges by bringing people together and listening to each other, which is in line with our mission. ● More local collaborations ● More local arts and culture and local live events
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor broadcast service in many of our service area communities, particularly PA. ■ Limited programing by and for youth ■ Lack of younger and diverse volunteers and listeners ■ Our revenues are not growing 	<p>Threats/Challenges to the Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Digital platforms are competing with radio and younger listeners prefer streaming over broadcast ■ Competition from other stations: WAMC, Peter Buffet's station ■ Competition from the overwhelming media and audio programming options <p>To the community:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not enough people listen to WJFF, not well enough known, need to increase our presence at events and in the communities ■ Need to invest in staff, listeners, volunteers, including more training ■ Lack of diversity on the board ■ History of conflict with some lingering impact, especially around the roles of volunteers, staff, and board ■ Confusion about the process for starting new local shows and sometimes on roles of staff and volunteers ■ Website is not easy to navigate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Influx of new residents (both a threat and an opportunity) ■ Divisions (e.g. political, class, cultural, etc.) create gulfs/silos between community members ■ Local services are stressed ■ Poverty, lack of affordable housing, lack of transportation, lack of access to the internet, etc . ■ Lack of vibrant local youth culture in the area ■ Brain drain, young people leave and do not come back.
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Recommendations:

Distribution (digital, broadcast)

- a. Given that the station has grown slowly over the last thirty years, and that we now have a stable foundation, **we are in the midst of making a giant step in growth**. As we move to the new Liberty location, this is a unique time for the station, carpe diem.
- b. Given that we have uneven broadcast coverage within our current listening area, and licenses are for sale, we should **pursue purchasing new licenses** to increase our coverage in the short term and explore future sales.
- c. Given that more and more people are listening to podcasts and listening to radio online, that we have uneven broadcast coverage in our listening area, and that broadband access in our area is likely to grow over the next five years, we should **continue to build our online presence, digital streaming and podcast production**. As we develop this expertise, we can then teach new skills to volunteers and find new ways for young people to get excited about the future of radio.

News (partnerships)

- d. Given that there is little local news in our listening area, that one of our strengths is local programming, that people are eager to talk about change in our society at this moment, and that we are working to connect with diverse populations in our communities, we **should explore collaborating with a more diverse range of local media outlets and increasing the number of reporters contributing to our programs**. Should local journalism and reporting become a new division of the station?
- e. Also, given the need for local news and reporting, we could also **engage/cover local organizations** (BOCES, Manor Inc, Catskill Mountainkeeper, local chambers of commerce, county government, people with disabilities, etc.) to host their own shows/get more involved in our programming.

- f. Given that we are named Radio Catskills and given limited media in NE PA, we can **do more to cover news, community information and events on the PA side of the river.**
- g. Given what we have been able to accomplish with our COVID coverage, we should consider taking on **one or two more topics and cover them the way WJFF has covered COVID** (e.g. climate change innovation, health, youth, etc.)

Community (diversity, youth, etc.)

- h. Given that we serve a politically, socially, racially diverse community, and that our mission includes “promoting understanding among people of diverse social, cultural, and political backgrounds,” we should **explore ways of bringing people together and helping them listen to each other.**
- i. Given the importance of connecting and engaging with our communities and constituents, we should **find more ways to keep checking in with diverse community members.**
- j. Given that WJFF has little or no programming aimed at children and youth, WJFF should **air educational programs for/with young listeners**, music that appeals to youth, young people on such topics as science, cultural expression, etc.

Organization (events, staff, volunteers, marketing)

- k. With a big influx of home buyers, as reported by realtors, WJFF could **be the default spot on the dial and the place to turn online to connect new community members** with what is going on in the area and this would be a source of donors and volunteers.
- l. Given the quality and relevance of our programming and our need to increase audience and revenues, we should **give residents more reasons to tune in** (e.g. programs that feature local children and broader range of music to attract more listeners) and position the station as an essential part of the community, not just another radio station.
- m. Given our strong community partnerships, WJFF should partner with others to **produce events at SUNY Sullivan’s big concert hall.** We need to be more visible in the community at events, even live broadcasting or recording coverage.
- n. Given the critical role of volunteers in the station and given our past history of internal conflict, we should **clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers** and keep this front and center to improve our culture and grow more collaborative and mutually supportive.
- o. What can **we do that would be really visible and draw attention to the station?** We are different things to different people, how do we get people to claim the station as their WJFF! We need more community outreach and advertising.

- p. Given that we need a larger budget to hire more staff, and that our budget can most sustainably increase through listener donations and underwriters, we should **find ways to expand our listening area and/or listening audience.**