

Minutes WBAI LSB in public session 5-13-26

Members Present: Milton Alimadi, Carolyn Birden, John Brinkley, Elliot Crown, Joan De Lorenzo, Paul De Rienzo, Jim Dingeman, Simon Fitzgerald, Eleanor Elizabeth Forman, Sally Gellert (PNB Director), Gloria Guillo (Vice-Chair), Bob Hennelly (General Manager and Ex-officio LSB Member), Queen Mother Imakhu, Bounubti Kamenthou, Jeremy Kuzmarov, Alejandrina Murphy, Katherine O’Sullivan (Chair), Cerene Roberts (PNB Director), James Sagurton (PNB Director), Max Schmid, Alex Steinberg (PNB Director in exile), M. Kay Williams (Secretary)

Members Absent: Gail Bey, Jim Freund, Sharonne Salaam

Also Present: Auaja Lovest, National Elections Supervisor, R. Paul Martin (Treasurer), Neale Vos (CAB Chair),

Also Absent: Keziah Glow, Interim Program Director

Final Agenda

1. Convene meeting- Ask for recording of the meeting to be started. Identify Time Keeper. Note how chat is to be used, plus other preliminary remarks by Chair including to mention, as discussed the last several months, the Pacifica National Board has taken action forbidding LSB/PNB member Alex Steinberg’s participation in this meeting and others.

2. Adopt Agenda. (20 minutes)

3. Roll Call. (5 minutes)

4. Excuse Absences. (5 minutes)

5. Approve outstanding minutes: April 8, 2026 Meeting. (5 minutes) Sent 5-5-26.

6. Discuss upcoming elections, including eligibility requirements to vote (5 Minutes) – Sally Gellert

7. Take nominations for replacement of LSB member on the Committee of Inclusion (5 minutes)–

M. Kay Williams

8. Report from Community Advisory Board (2 Minutes) – Neale Vos

9. Reports of General Manager and interim Program Director. (20 minutes reports & 15 minutes discussion- Questions limited to one minute) Bob Hennelly and Keziah Glow

10. Report from Pacifica National Board Directors. (20 minutes reports & 15 minutes discussion- Questions limited to one minute) — Sally Gellert, Cerene Roberts, James Sagurton, Alex Steinberg

11. Treasurer’s Report. (5 Minutes report & 8 minutes discussion) — R. Paul Martin

12. Discussion: Appropriate thoughts for observing minutes of silence during LSB meetings and chance to express opinions about what people might choose to keep in mind. (5 minutes.) Remembering Mitchel Cohen, Bob Law, and others.

13. One minute of silence. (One minute)

14. Motion to divide the Public Comment - Motion that all future open meetings of the WBAI LSB will include two 15-minute Public Comment sessions at 7:45 pm and 8:45 pm instead of the current single Public Comment 30-minute period as the last agenda item at 9:16pm – (12 minutes) - Cerene Roberts

15. Report from the Committee of Inclusion. (5 minutes) – Carolyn Birden, John Brinkley, Joan De

Lorenzo, Cerene Roberts.

16. Report From Town Hall Committee. (5 minutes) — Jim Dingeman
17. Report from the LOFT Committee Including Resolution About LSB On Air Pitching. (7 minutes) - John Brinkley
18. Management Search and Review Committee, Discussion. (5 minutes) – Jim Dingeman
19. Discussion and Possible Resolution: Dealing appropriately with attacks on Public and/or Listener Supported media. (7 minutes) – Jim Dingeman
20. Discussion: Launching additional streaming of (HD) WBAI channels (5 minutes) — Jim Dingeman
21. Using Current WBAI Studio Camera Capacity to Start YouTubing WBAI Content (5 minutes) — Jim Dingeman
22. New Business.
23. Public Comment. (30 minutes, 2 minutes maximum per speaker before next in queue to speak. Must begin no later than 9:16 PM ET.)
24. Adjourn no later than 9:46 PM ET (Note this, and start time for public comments is one minute later to reflect the meeting's one minute of silence).

7:06 pm ET – The Chair, the secretary and a quorum being present, the Chair convened the meeting. She made her introductory Chair's remarks, including that the PNB has banned our PNB Director Alex Steinberg's participation in all Pacifica activities. Jack de Palma was made Timekeeper.

7:07 pm ET – The Chair called for a motion to adopt the agenda, which was screen shared by the secretary. So moved (Sally Gellert), Seconded (Jim Dingeman). The Chair asked three times if there were any objections, and there were none, so it passed without objection.

7:08 pm ET – The Chair asked the secretary to call the roll. This was done, results as above, including late arrivals.

7:13 pm ET – The Chair asked for a motion to excuse all absences. So moved (Jim Dingeman), Seconded (James Sagurton). The Chair asked if there were any objections. Eleanor Elizabeth Foreman objected. The Chair asked if there were any other objections. Since there were none, she declared the absences excused, and we would note the one objection in the minutes.

7:14 pm ET – The Chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the 4-8-26 meeting, which had been sent by the Secretary on 5-5-26. So moved (Jim Dingeman). Seconded (Sally Gellert and James Sagurton). The Chair asked three times if there were any objections, and there were none, so she declared the minutes were accepted.

7:15 pm ET – The Chair called for Item 6, Discussion of the upcoming elections, including eligibility requirements. She acknowledged the presence of Aauja Lovest, the National Elections supervisor, and Sally Gellert, our staff PNB Director, to present the topic.

Highlights:

- The deadline for “Volunteer Team Members” and “Paid Staff” to register their names in the data base is 5-31-26. The designated staff person who certifies names and hours is the Interim Program Director. Hours can be listed up until 6-30-26. If the names aren’t registered, the “Volunteer Team Member” may join and vote as a Listener until 6-30-26.
- The deadline for Listener Members to make sure their contributions are up to date is 6-30-26.
- Confirmation emails come from team@pacificca.org.
- The software they are using is Elections Buddy. Problems with the website are being addressed.

The Board discussed the elections and requirements.

Point of Order (James Sagurton) One recognized speaker at a time, please.

7:21 pm ET Motion (Jim Dingeman) To extend the discussion 10 minutes. Seconded (James Sagurton). Passed without objection.

The Board continued to discuss the elections.

7:31 pm ET Motion (Jim Dingeman) To extend the discussion to exhaust the stack. Seconded (James Sagurton) Passed without objection.

The Board continued to discuss the elections.

7:39 pm ET The Chair called for Item 7: Nominations for replacement of one of the four elected LSB members of the WBAI Committee of Inclusion. Presented by M. Kay Williams.

First, Carolyn Birden confirmed her resignation from this committee. She had tried to notify the committee at the last COI meeting but quorum was not met so the committee did not meet. Then M. Kay Williams screen shared the enabling resolution for the COI, which is identical in both sets of Bylaws for this requirement, namely, 4 voting members elected by the entire LSB.

James Sagurton nominated M. Kay Williams to replace Carolyn Birden on the Committee of Inclusion.

Point of Order (Cerene Roberts) This discussion should be deferred to the next meeting because notice of this item was not included in the call for the meeting. [The announcement of the meeting was published on kpftx.org, and on air on WBAI, but never includes the entire agenda. The agenda was sent the day before the meeting to members of the LSB.]

The Board discussed the item and the Point of Order.

The Chair asked our local Robert’s Rules expert, R. Paul Martin, to weigh in on the issue of notice too late and he agreed notice was too late.

Motion (James Sagurton) To postpone this item until next meeting. Not seconded.

The Board continue to discuss the item.

7:45 pm ET Motion (Sally Gellert) To extend the discussion to exhaust the stack. Seconded (Jim Dingeman and James Sagurton) Passed without objection.

The Board continued to discuss the issue until the Chair ruled the item will be continued until next meeting. There was no challenge to this ruling of the Chair.

7:47 pm ET The Chair called for the CAB Report by Neale Vos.

Highlights:

The following are the WBAI Community Advisory Board's recommendations to WBAI Management:

1. Have a Manager's Report To and From the Listener.
2. Set up a committee to review pilot programs.
3. Explore alternative ways to fundraise.
4. Bring the Gary Null Show back on air.
5. Have a spiritual show that will do spiritual readings on air.
6. Update the WBAI Archive.
7. Bring back the Pacifica App.
8. Have more tech programs of and by young people.
9. Have producers address the student loan issue.
10. The CAB also has concerns about WBAI's FCC license, which we would like addressed at this meeting. When does the 2-year provisional license expire? Has WBAI applied for its 6- year license renewal? When will WBAI get its 6-year license from the FCC.

The Board heard the report.

7:52 pm ET: Motion (James Sagurton) That we add an item on the next agenda to consider and discuss the suggestions from the CAB presented by Neale Vos in his report. Seconded (Jim Dingeman)

Amendment (Cerene Roberts) That the CAB also prepare a report to the LSB, identifying their members, how they were selected, how they perform the community needs assessment that allows them to present us a list of things that the CAB says the listeners want. Seconded (John Brinkley)

Motion (James Sagurton) To separate the amendment and the motion.

The Board discussed the two motions. The Chair consulted our informal Robert's Rules expert, R. Paul Martin, who confirmed that, according to RONR 12, Section 27, paragraphs 10 and 11, a motion to separate was mandatory and did not require a second. The Chair then ruled that that is what the meeting was going to do.

Appeal the Ruling of the Chair (Cerene Roberts) Seconded (Eleanor Elizabeth Forman).

The Board continued to discuss the item.

Motion (M. Kay Williams) To call all three questions: to have a roll call vote on the appeal of the ruling of the Chair, and if failed, to move to a roll call vote on the other two motions. Seconded (Sally Gellert) Passed without objection.

Roll Call Vote on the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair to divide the motions. (Yes votes uphold the ruling, No votes oppose it.)

Yes: Carolyn Birden, Elliot Crown, Paul de Rienzo, Jim Dingeman, Sally Gellert, Gloria Guillo, Jeremy Kuzmaerov, James Sagurton, Max Schmid, M. Kay Williams

No: John Brinkley, Joan de Lorenzo, Eleanor Elizabeth Forman, Queen Mother Imakhu, Alejandrina Murphy, Cerene Roberts

Abstain: Milton Allimadi, Bounubti Kamenthou

Not Voting: Simon Fitzgerald, Katherine O'Sullivan, Alex Steinberg

Not Present: Gail Bey, Jim Freund, Sharonne Salaam

The Ruling of the Chair was upheld by 10 yes, 6 no, 2 abstain, 6 non-voting.

Roll Call Vote on the motion for the LSB to put on the LSB's next agenda to consider the suggestions from the CAB. (As restated by James Sagurton)

Yes: Carolyn Birden, John Brinkley, Elliot Crown, Joan de Lorenzo, Paul de Rienzo, Jim Dingeman, Sally Gellert, Gloria Guillo, Queen Mother Imakhu, Jeremy Kuzmarov, Alejandrina Murphy, James Sagurton, Max Schmid, M. Kay Williams

No: Eleanor Elizabeth Forman, Cerene Roberts

Abstain: Milton Allimadi

Not Voting: Simon Fitzgerald, Bounubti Kamenthou, Katherine O'Sullivan, Alex Steinberg.

Not Present: Gail Bey, Jim Freund, Sharonne Salaam.

This motion passed with 14 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain, 7 not voting.

Roll Call Vote on requiring a report from the CAB as to how they comprise themselves and how they perform community needs assessments, or gather the information that we've just pledged to provide time to discuss. (as restated by Cerene Roberts)

Yes: Milton Allimadi, John Brinkley, Joan de Lorenzo, Paul de Rienzo, Eleanor Elizabeth Forman, Queen Mother Imakhu, Alejandrina Murphy, Cerene Roberts, M. Kay Williams

No: Carolyn Birden, Elliot Crowne, Jim Dingeman, Gloria Guillo, Jeremy Kuzmarov, James Sagurton, Max Schmid

Abstain: Sally Gellert

Not Voting: Simon Fitzgerald, Bounubti Kamenthou, Katherine O’Sullivan, Alex Steinberg.

Not Present: Gail Bey, Jim Freund, Sharonne Salaam.

The motion passed with 9 yes, 7 no, 1 abstain, 7 not voting.

8:24 pm ET The Chair called for the GM Report by Bob Hennelly

Highlights of Report:

- The pledge drive goal was \$120K, which we surpassed with \$132K.
- The fundraiser for “Steal This Story” with Amy Goodman at the IFC made \$12K. The expenses were limited, just the \$530 pizza bill.
- Currently have \$52K in the bank.
- The Pacifica Foundation took out approx. \$12K from the pledge drive and will do so again every month for the rest of this year, for a total of \$96K unbudgeted, to pay \$3500 for the cost of the elections, plus \$8000 for the Audits, going back to 2022. They are levying this vs all the stations, but did not warn us in advance, or we could have increased the goal of the fund drive. This will put tower payments in jeopardy, and raises the question why the Pacifica Foundation (PF) didn’t exhibit better planning, and what are the Central Services for, if not to pay the expenses of the Pacifica central office, which include elections and audits, which have been planned for a while.
- The GM has been told that the PF has been doing fundraising bringing in about \$10K per month. Where are these funds going? He wants to encourage the Foundation to do more fundraising through grants now that we have programming which is national in scope. (WBAI funded the series, “Democracy and Destiny,” through a Rockefeller Foundation grant – a 12-part series on oligarchs, dark money, and the funding for Jan 6).
- There have been problems with streaming and archiving, especially with WBAI and WPFW, even with Democracy Now, which is very popular. Fortunately, these problems have been stabilized by Jake Lance and Chris LaPilusa. There is a real need for a national technological upgrade, especially issues with Audio Port. [The tech needed to transfer programs to the 210 affiliates who are independently owned and pay PF for these transfers.]
- Studio B is up and running to train Board Ops without interfering with live transmission, thanks to Jake Lance and Grayson Challenger.
- He sent out advisories on Staff Announce re the elections. There have been glitches with the software being used to register staff and “volunteer team members.” This has been brought to the attention of Keziah Glow and the NES.
- We have increased Union positions from 4 to 6. There is a prescribed procedure for advertising these positions to existing or potential Union members.
- There was a 5-hour report on the May 1st Protest, coordinated between all 5 stations, including WPFW local reporting and 15-minute international segments on Cuba, Gaza, and South Africa. KPFT’s broadcast was also carried on HD1. We are grateful to Lawrence Schmidt from KPFA, and Ursula Rudenberg, Jeannie Hopper and Stephanie Schubert from the Affiliates (210 in 40 states, 30 swing districts, and 7 countries).
- Queen Mother Imakhu’s program is now on the air (“Shenu Living” Wednesday’s at 5 am ET).

- He understands there is sensitivity around Gary Null, but he is currently suing Pacifica for over a million dollars, so putting him back on the air is not on the table.

Highlights of Q & A:

- The breakdown of donations during this fund drive was 50% Union and 50% Individuals. Since then, we received a \$10K donation from the American Postal Workers Union, Jonathan Smith, who came up in the New Jersey local, graduated to the regional and national union representing 200K postal workers. UFT renewed for \$10K. Plus gave \$30K for our national programming. Sara Nelson's Flight Attendants increased to \$5K. 1199-SEIU renewed for \$12K. We have also seen an increase in major donors (> \$500). These donations from Unions have funded this national coordination of public affairs programming, e.g. the \$60K we got from the AFG.
- The Pacifica Foundation continues to claim WBAI isn't paying Central Services, but, for a long time, they collected \$7300 per month from WBAI for "Payroll processing." What was this for unless for Central Services?
- We also have been talking about getting credit from the national office for the national programming he's been working on, plus for these surprise deductions from the bank account that have been made.
- The Audit Committee of the PNB was informed that the PF had the money for the first installment of Audit fees but would need money from the stations "later." It is unclear why they are asking for it now, especially without warning.
- The PNB is talking about raising the membership requirement after the elections. \$50 has been discussed.
- We wouldn't need to increase membership fees if everyone could increase Buddies. He believes that people who care about the station (producers, board members, committee members, and their families and friends) should be Buddies. WBAI's Buddies bring in \$2500 per month, which is a life-saver, but he is envious of KPFA which has \$4000 per month. He cited an inspiring example of a current inmate who sent \$30, \$1 for every year he's been incarcerated.
- There is still a lot of resentment that the PF had to pay the bill to the ACD, the previous call center, which accumulated \$1/minute for answering the phone, including repeated calls checking on whether premiums were being mailed out.
- The IRS website still lists us as lapsed, but we do have a letter from them, posted on pacifica.org, which states we're OK.
- There's still a lot of conflicts at the national level. Some stations don't have Union members, and don't want them, let alone take donations from them. Some stations don't even want Interns.
- He was reminded that the former "gag rule" was rescinded some time ago.
- He was asked what he thought about a lower membership requirement for inmates of \$15. [Waivers are being discussed at the national level.]
- He was asked about regional programming and fundraising. He responded that programming already has reflected regional interest: the controversy about the ICE concentration camp in Roxbury, New Jersey, labor groups in Hudson Valley in New York State, and in Newark and Trenton, New Jersey. Larry Hamm has been helpful. We carried the Mumia march in Pennsylvania. Rebecca Myles is working with the Interns with recording equipment for on-the-ground reporting.

- He was encouraged to consider restarting the on-air, scheduled Reports to the Listener, and inviting LSB members as guests. He stated he would consider it, if we would talk about how we became interested in WBAI and why we care, and leave behind the internecine conflict.

9:03 pm ET Motion (Jim Dingeman) To extend the discussion to exhaust the stack. Seconded (M. Kay Williams) Passed without objection.

The Board continued to discuss the report.

9:14 pm ET The Chair called for discussion of the minute of silence. Jim Dingeman began to read the eulogy of Mitchel Cohen, former Board member, which was continued in public comment.

9:16 pm ET The Chair called for Public Comment to begin.

The Board heard Public Comment. It began with a minute of silence for Mitch Cohen, plus a tribute and the secretary screen-shared his picture.

9:47 pm ET: The Chair adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by M. Kay Williams, Secretary

Attachments:

Information from the meeting and the Chat:

Auaja Lovest, MPA

2026 National Election Supervisor

nes@pacific.org

What follows is R. Paul Martin's written Treasurer's Report:

WBAI Treasurer's Report, May 13, 2026

The WBAI local Finance Committee met on April 15, 2026. The National Finance Committee (NFC) met on April 28, and May 12, 2026. These meetings were held by teleconference.

The WBAI General Manager did not attend the April 15, 2026, local Finance Committee meeting. I'm sure it was a busy time for him and that's why he never replied to my E-mail asking if he would attend, but he hasn't attended a meeting since August, and the local Finance Committee has questions for him. The committee discussed the need for financial information in order for the committee to do its job. Also discussed was the decision of the NFC to meet only once a month.

At the April 28, 2026, NFC meeting both the Executive Director and the National Business Manager were on the call. The NFC was told that the National Business Manager had to leave early to attend her son's

birthday. The minutes for the March 24, 2026, meeting were complicated because I had submitted corrections to the draft minutes and then someone else had submitted a document that crossed out my corrections on dubious grounds. There was a discussion of this. In the end the minutes of the March 24, meeting were postponed to the next NFC meeting.

There was a discussion of whether and when the audio of that January 20, 2026, NFC meeting, at which the WBAI draft FY26 budget was approved for sending to the PNB, would be released. The minutes of that meeting were declared not to be confidential although the entire meeting had ended up being held in executive session. The NFC Chair said he was hesitant to do that. A Director who was a guest at the meeting said that she had spoken to the PNB Chair about this and that the PNB Chair had said that she would work on making that audio available because the budget discussion was not confidential. The Chair said that it would be up to the PNB Chair to get that audio released. James Sagurton asked that the issue of getting that audio released to the public be put on the next meeting's agenda. The Chair said that that would be fine. Unfortunately, that item was not on the next NFC meeting's agenda. I think that it will be a topic at some point in a future meeting.

The Executive Director said that she wanted the National Business Manager to be on the NFC calls so that she would know what reports the NFC needed. The Executive Director asked what the NFC was looking for when it meets. The Executive Director said that she and the National Business Manager would then be able to tell us why the National Office gets reports from people and why they don't. The Chair said we needed information on each station's financial progress so that we can pay our bills.

The National Business Manager said that it sounded like what the NFC needed was a report from the donor database, which she said could be quarterly or monthly. The National Business Manager said that WPFW, KPFT and KPFA were making regular Central Services payments but that WBAI and KPFK were not. She said that in FY24 the National Office had taken additional payroll funding from some stations and that was done until May of last year but that the National Office had not gotten a dime from WBAI with regard to Central Services. She said that KPFK had paid maybe twice since then but that for the most part those stations are not pulling their weight.

I brought up the fact that the WBAI General Manager is doing a lot of work for Pacifica and he's paid out of WBAI's budget and I suggested that his work for Pacifica be counted toward WBAI's Central Services fees.

The Executive Director said that the National Office was preparing audits for FY22 and FY23 and that they would be done by late June to mid-July and then she would start on FY24 and FY25 which she said would be done by the end of November. She praised the great coverage of the "No Kings" demonstrations and said she noted that the special programming was produced by the WBAI General Manager and hosted by Jenna Flanagan in New York. She said that the Pacifica Network News project was starting up and that WBAI General Manager Robert Hennelly and Pacifica Affiliates Network Director Ursula Rudenberg were the startup coordinators.

At the previous NFC meeting the committee had voted to meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday of each month. One NFC member said it was inconvenient for her and so the committee voted to change the monthly meeting date to the second Tuesday of each month. The May 12, 2026, NFC meeting started out with a contentious discussion when the Chair tried to force through the minutes of the March 24, meeting as interpreted by the NFC Secretary. Those minutes almost entirely reflected the crossing out of my corrections. I objected and wanted to say why that shouldn't happen. I had to remind people that the NFC approved the minutes not just the committee Chair. The Chair was especially aggressive in insisting that I was the one being dilatory and he threatened to have me removed from the meeting. James Sagurton called a point of order and said that the Chair was bullying. He also pointed out that minutes were legal documents and needed to be accurate. In the course of these exchanges the Chair said that he did not have Roberts' Rules of Order 12th Edition and he knew what he wanted. In the end he said that he wanted the minutes to show attendance, dates, motions, who made the motion and whether or not the motion passed. That motion passed by three for and one against. We'll see what those minutes look like in a month or so.

The committee had put a discussion and review of Pacifica's new Policy Manuals on the agenda, but that got postponed to the next meeting after one member admitted to not having read any of the documents.

The Executive Director told the committee that Pacifica was on track for completing the audits. She said that the auditing firm had met with the Audit Committee the night before and the firm had given a presentation on what they were doing. She said that the auditing firm had given them an overview and had described the progress of the audit. She said that the auditing firm was getting the information they needed right away. She said that the National Office and the auditing firm have a shared workspace that's helping to keep everyone coordinated and on track.

The Executive Director told the committee that all of the Union contracts in Pacifica are up for renegotiation this year. She said that she was working with the General Managers and a law firm in northern California that specializes in Union negotiations and they have made a spreadsheet that has comparisons of each of the Union agreements on subjects and the Pacifica employee handbook. She said that the goal was to have as much parity as possible so as to make work life balanced between the Union and non-Union employees.

The Executive Director then talked about the Pacifica-wide elections that are happening this year. She talked about Staff getting E-mails from team@pacifica.org. I noted that my co-producer had not gotten an E-mail yet, and the Executive Director told us about a lot of E-mails that we were supposedly sent. I know that I have not gotten anywhere near the number of E-mails that she says were sent out, and other producers at WBAI have also told me that they have not heard from Pacifica about this election either. She said that the National Office was going to tell the General Managers to make sure that they get those E-mails out to the producers. James Sagurton said that after a discussion about this at the PNB that he's seeing the potential for a massive disenfranchisement of Staff people. The Executive Director said that the Program Directors approve the time that producers put in on the Pacifica Web site. In answer to a question the Executive Director said that she had pulled the spreadsheets of people who have registered

and who have been approved and they have full compliance of registered people and approval of that registration, “At KPFA, KPFT, KPFK, half at WPFW and probably a third at WBAI.” I sure do hope that there’s no intent on anyone’s part to lessen the number of producers who can vote from WBAI.

The NFC Chair noted during this meeting that courts had ruled a couple of years ago that a station, he meant WBAI, had not been able to show that the people whom the station claimed were eligible to vote had actually done the work to be eligible. The Chair soon tried to cut off discussion of this topic, but his motion to shut down discussion failed by a tie vote and the committee talked some more. James Sagurton used the opportunity to note that no court had ever decided what the NFC Chair claimed they had. The NFC Chair then tried to prevent James Sagurton from speaking anymore, but he persisted in the face of this bullying behavior by the Chair and he said that the only person who had the authority to say who could vote in that election was the Election Supervisor at that time and she had approved the WBAI Staff voting lists for that election. I’m wondering if the New Day Pacifica et al. faction is going to try to disenfranchise the WBAI Staff again.

The NFC then had a discussion of possibly raising the membership fee from its current \$25 per year. I said that we needed to. I noted that, when the bylaws were implemented in 2003, WBAI and some other stations had a membership fee of \$50 a year. Looking at an on-line inflation calculator, I see that \$50 in 2003, is \$90.49 in 2026. The discussion went on for a while. The Executive Director said that she was sure that she could get information from the stations about how much donors gave.

There was then a discussion about not getting financial information. And people from WBAI weren’t the only ones who were feeling that pain. The NFC Chair has by his autocratic behavior been tending to make ordinary committee functions much harder than they need to be. I’m hoping that doesn’t continue. Things like minutes are important for an organization that has to answer to federal and state governments. There are well established ways of complying with the law and following the rules is a big part of that.

I am really hoping that the WBAI Staff doesn’t get disenfranchised in this upcoming election. I know that I have not gotten the many E-mails that the Executive Director said were sent out about this election. I know that at least some other Staff haven’t either. I hope that the audits get done soon and I hope that we can all get the financial information that is necessary for WBAI and all of Pacifica to continue on. Many things are keeping me pessimistic at this time.

The next NFC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday June 30, 2026, at 8:30 PM (ET). The next local Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 7:00 PM (ET). These meetings will be held by teleconference.

R. Paul Martin WBAI LSB Treasurer

ED’s Shareable Report 5-7-26 – See pdf sent concurrently with these minutes

Part I: The illegitimate elections

This is just a brief note to inform the Pacifica community that steps have been taken to hold elections for the Pacifica National Board and Local Station Board's this year under the illegitimate bylaws that have been implemented. The Pacifica Democracy Coalition is pursuing a legal action in California that aims to restore democratic governance to Pacifica. If our legal challenge succeeds, we will be asking the court to declare these elections null and void as well as every other action arising out of the illegitimate New Day bylaws. That includes the hiring of General Managers through a process that bypasses the Local Station Boards.

Part II Tribute to Mitchel Cohen

I want to pay my respects to Mitchel Cohen, a former Chair of the WBAI Local Station Board, who died a fortnight ago after a long illness. Mitchel was one of a kind and he deserves recognition for his work for WBAI and for his commitment to a radical politics of emancipation. I worked closely with Mitchel when he was the Chair of the WBAI LSB and I was a member of the Pacifica National Board.

Mitchel always tried to rethink things to break through logjams. This was evidenced in the way he approached the problems WBAI was facing. He came up with a number of proposals for dealing with WBAI's perpetual financial crisis. Some of those proposals had elements of genius but were also interspersed with completely unrealistic expectations and demands. Mitchel got very frustrated when the General Manager of WBAI, Bethold Reimers, did not adopt many of Mitchel's suggestions. He also got frustrated with me when I did not enthusiastically embrace some of his proposals. But Mitchel never let that stop him. He always tried to figure out ways to get around logjams.

One story I am particularly fond of happened several years ago when Mitchel was in charge of a group of volunteers at WBAI. Mitchel took the initiative to organize volunteers and for a time he even recruited some volunteers from a group of handicapped public-school students who were willing to make phone calls to potential contributors. Those volunteer sessions were scheduled at definite days and definite times as it was not easy to coordinate everything with the school administrators. Well, on one of the scheduled days, the volunteers came in as previously arranged. However, the list of contributors to be called was not available and without that there was nothing for the volunteers to do. The list was kept in the office of Andrea Katz who was part of WBAI management. Andrea was not in the office that day and there was no one available who had the key to her office. I don't know exactly what happened next except to say that Mitchel was not going to let a locked office ruin the day for his volunteers. He managed to get a copy of the list and the volunteers were able to work through the list as usual. Needless to say, WBAI management was furious and Mitchel was banned from WBAI's premises for a long time after that incident.

But lest one gets the impression that Mitchel was only able to screw up everything, I want to strongly affirm the many positive things he did see through for WBAI. I recall that Mitchel made a cold phone call to Yoko Ono and managed to get a \$10,000 contribution to WBAI as a result.

On another occasion Mitchel single-handedly organized a benefit concert for WBAI featuring the songs of the great anti-war singer, Phil Ochs. Mitchel and his network of friends got some very notable musicians together for that event, including Dominic Chianese, who was famous for his role as Tony Soprano's uncle, "Junior", in the Sopranos. The presence of this celebrity at a benefit folk concert may surprise some until one learns that, before he became an actor, Chianese worked at a Folk Center in Greenwich Village where performers like Phil Ochs and other folk musicians from the 60's were regulars.

Mitchel of course was a staunch opponent of the forces that were always trying to shut down WBAI within Pacifica. I recall that in the fall of 2019, when plans were underway to turn WBAI into a repeater station, we had a closed session of the Pacifica National Board during which a person was trying to convince the PNB that he be given a mandate to take drastic action in order, as he put it "to save WBAI" from a takeover by "anarchists". During his presentation he brought up the name of Mitchel Cohen. It just so happened that this person and Mitchel Cohen were both graduates of Stony Brook in Long Island and both attended that university in the same years and knew each other. This person made the preposterous claim at the PNB meeting that there was reason to believe that Mitchel Cohen going to undertake the kind of direct action he was involved in when he was a student at Stonybrook – that Cohen was preparing to lead a group of anarchists in an illegal action to take over the WBAI studio and broadcasting facilities. This was of course pure fantasy but some members of the PNB at that time actually believed it.

Mitchel was of course a staunch opponent of the current authoritarian regime that is now running Pacifica and would ask me what was going on in Pacifica in the last few years. I told him about the hijacking by New Day of the Pacifica bylaws and of our legal challenge to it.

I will finish with the slogan Mitchel always used when he learned of the passing of a notable figure in the struggle for human liberation:

Mitchel Cohen Presente!