

**ALABAMA EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

January 28, 2025

10:00 a.m.

*Alabama Public Television, Birmingham Conference Room  
2112 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., Suite 400, Birmingham, Alabama 35205*

**PRIOR NOTICE**

Sufficient Prior Notice was given as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Act, the FCC, the CPB, and the policies of the AETC, as reported by APT Executive Director, Wayne Reid.

**ROLL CALL (VERBAL)**

A verbal roll call was conducted by Mr. J. Holland, Secretary.

**AETC Commissioners Present:**

Mr. Ferris Stephens, Chairman  
Chairwoman

Mrs. Bebe Williams, Vice

Mr. J. Holland, Secretary

Mrs. Tijuanna Adetunji

Mr. Les Barnett

Mr. Pete Conroy

Mr. William A. Green, Jr.

The Alabama Educational Television Commission consists of seven members. No members were absent and a quorum was present and official business could be conducted.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Chairman Ferris Stephens.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting had been provided in writing prior to the meeting for review by the Commissioners. There was no discussion.

**Motion** by: Commissioner Les Barnett to approve the November 12, 2024 minutes

**Second** by: Commissioner J. Holland

**Discussion:** No discussion

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

## **SETTING OF OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Les Barnett proposed adding a discussion on “Legacy Moments” for the semiquincentennial to the agenda.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Ferris Stephens noted that there is no old business to be discussed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **EXECUTIVE REVIEW**

Chairman Stephens asked Executive Director Wayne Reid to give his report.

#### **Update of APT Activities – Wayne Reid**

Executive Director Wayne Reid provided an update on various activities, including:

- **Statewide Household Reach:** APT continued strong viewership reach with slight growth. APT is still the broadcaster with the largest reach in the State. Most commercial broadcast stations are seeing declines in their broadcast reach. APT is bucking that trend.
- **Football Championships:** Viewership for the December football championships in the Birmingham market were very encouraging. APT was among the top three stations for the three nights of football telecasts in Birmingham. The statewide ratings are still being tallied.
- **In the Margins Series:** Produced by APT Digital in conjunction with PBS Digital Studios, it has been nominated for an NAACP Image Award. The winner will be announced in February 2025.
- **Upcoming Documentaries:** Updates were given on documentaries produced in partnership with JSU. *A Legacy of Progress: The Jim Folsom, Jr. Story* will be broadcast on APT in March with screenings in February. The documentary on Fort McClellan will be released in the third quarter (*McClellan, A Life Saved*). Due to the recent purchase of Ft. McClellan by actor Katt Williams, there will be information added to the ending of the documentary about the purchase and future plans of the facility.

- **Partnership Opportunities:** Ongoing discussions are taking place with Lakeshore Foundation for potential documentaries about their beginnings and current activities with Olympic sports.

## **Commission and Board Members' Support for CPB and State Funding Requests**

Wayne Reid discussed the potential jeopardy of CPB funding and the importance of local support. He emphasized the following points:

- **CPB Funding Requests**
  - The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has requested a \$595 million advance appropriation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2028, which includes \$397.16 million for public television station and programming grants, \$132.39 million for public radio station and programming grants, and \$35.70 million for system support.
  - CPB funding is crucial for local stations like APT, as it supports content development, community services, and other local station needs. Community Service Grants (CSGs) make up 70% of CPB's entire appropriation and are essential for programming, production, and services.
  - Commissioners were asked to write to federal legislators to support CPB funding, highlighting the impact of these funds on local programming and community outreach.
- **State Funding Requests**
  - State funding for the new State House studio was discussed, with a request for an additional \$8.1 million to be included in the governor's budget. This funding is necessary to build out the new studio and ensure high-quality production capabilities.
  - Wayne Reid and Jack Williams have been in discussions with state legislators, including Director of Finance Bill Poole, to secure this funding. Commissioners were encouraged to contact their state legislators and advocate for the inclusion of this funding in the Governor's budget.
  - The importance of state funding for ongoing projects and new initiatives was emphasized, including the need for support in areas such as educational programming, digital transformation, and infrastructure improvements.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Semiquincentennial Preparation**

The discussion was led by Commissioner Les Barnett. Commissioner Barnett proposed producing numerous short segments for the United States' Semiquincentennial, similar to the 200 "Legacy Moments" produced for Alabama's Bicentennial celebration. These segments would seek to further educate and revitalize the patriotic spirit of Alabamians leading up to the commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution. He suggested highlighting significant events and figures from American history over the past 250 years, and to include an emphasis on Alabama's contributions and impact on our nation.

It was mentioned that American Village is currently producing some vignettes that highlight the year leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Further discussion focused on APT's role in producing its own perspective on the founding of our country as well. The Commissioners were in consensus that while American Village will cover specific historical moments, APT should on its own also create programming in addition to the American Village that spans the entire 250 years of American history.

Potential topics and themes to be considered:

Historical Events: Key moments from the American Revolution, Civil War, World War II, and other significant periods.

Alabama's Contributions: Stories to include Alabama's history relating to the Revolutionary War, but that can also include historic events such as the Tuskegee Airmen, shipbuilding in Mobile during World War II, and other notable achievements by Alabamians that have a historic connection to the United States' beginnings.

National Impact: Highlighting how events in and figures from Alabama have shaped the nation.

The Commission proposed that APT produce 75 short segments relating to the Semiquincentennial and asked that funding be sought by requesting supplemental funding from the Alabama Legislature, as well as seeking additional support from underwriters and other sources.

The Commission will also collaborate with Pete Conroy, who is on the State communications committee to promote the USA's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, to secure additional funding.

**Motion** by: Commissioner Les Barnett to produce 75 "Legacy Moments" segments relating to the Semiquincentennial

**Seconded** by: Commissioner J. Holland

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

Wayne Reid said that he and Jack Williams will discuss the supplemental funding opportunities with state legislators and potential underwriters.

### **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The Commissioners discussed the scheduling date for the next meeting, with suggested dates of April 15 or April 22. After discussion, there was a motion to set the next AETC meeting for Tuesday, April 22, 2025, in the Birmingham office.

**Motion** by: Commissioner Bebe Williams to approve April 22, 2025, as the date of the next meeting

**Seconded** by: Commissioner Les Barnett

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

Chairman Stephens noted that there was no further business on the agenda and entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** by: Commissioner J. Holland  
**Second** by: Commissioner Bebe Williams  
**Motion Passed Unanimously**  
The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lorraine Fancher  
Recording Secretary

**APPROVED – DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Mr. Ferris Stephens  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. J. Holland  
Secretary