

Summary of Straw Polls Passed at WBAI Bylaws Subcommittee Meetings

August 24, 2002

Chairs: Janice K. Bryant and Ray Laforest

Introduction

This document is intended as a contribution to the discussion on drafting new bylaws for Pacifica from the WBAI Bylaws Subcommittee. Many of issues voted on in these straw polls, especially those concerning the powers of listener-members and the holding of a future bylaws convention, have not been included in any of the Bylaws proposals drafted to date, that is the "Robinson," "Spooner," and "Fertig" Proposals, also know as Proposals A, B and C, respectively. (The A, B, and C proposals are at www.pacifica.org. Extensive minutes, an earlier summary of the straw polls and other notes from the WBAI Bylaws Subcommittee meetings are available at www.wbai.net (click on Bylaws Revision).

The Subcommittee holds open meetings that are announced on a WBAI Bylaws Subcommittee email list and periodically on air. A total of 18 Subcommittee meetings have been held to date (8/24/02), normally on Tuesday evenings in lower Manhattan, but also one Saturday meeting, and one each in New Jersey and Brooklyn. The members of the Subcommittee have discussed and debated, sometimes heatedly, a variety of issues concerning the creation of new bylaws for Pacifica including elections procedures and what powers should be held by the Pacifica National Board and the Station Boards in each Pacifica Signal Area.

Although the Subcommittee has no formal powers concerning final decisions about the new bylaws and election procedures, its discussions are advisory to the national Pacifica Bylaws Committee composed of the committee chairs of each subcommittee. A number of straw polls were taken at WBAI Bylaws Subcommittee meetings during April through August 2002, to assess the positions of committee members and to provide advice on the rewriting of the bylaws by assessing the collective views of

the subcommittee members. Thus, the straw polls are recommendations of the Subcommittee. A number of subcommittee meetings have been held about other issues such as elections procedures, but no straw polls were taken.

Listed below are the dates of the meetings at which straw polls were conducted, the approximate number of people in attendance, the facilitator of the discussions and the results of each straw poll. The facilitators formulated the questions to be discussed. The structures of the questions and voting are sometimes different, but the main point of the question discussed and the vote of the members should be clear.

Straw Polls were held on the following issues:

Date: Topic:

- April 23 Who will vote in station board elections? Votes were cast on a number of options discussed.
- May 9 Powers of the local board (7 Questions).
- May 14 Elections of the PNB (2 Questions) Powers of the Listener-Members (4 Questions).
- May 21 Allocation of air time to Station Boards and PNB (3 Questions). General Meetings (1 Question).
- May 28 Approval of the PNB budget by station boards (1 Question).
- July 23 National Control of Local Programming (2 Questions)
- Aug. 20 Powers of the Local Board as described in the Robinson and Spooner bylaws proposals (1 Question).

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of April 23, 2002

Approximate attendance: 30

Question: Who will vote in station board elections? (Note: a number of options were discussed, some quite similar. The number of votes for each option precedes the Option

number. The vote totals exceed the number of people present because the voting structure allowed people to vote more than once.)

- 10 **Option 1.** Only listener subscribers at the current rate and listener volunteers.
- 11 **Option 1a.** The same as Option 1, but it includes listener-prisoners.
- 9 **Option 2.** Listeners who make any financial contribution (even at a nominal rate), or who do any volunteer work for WBAI including something from their home or in their community). Listeners in some categories (on welfare or workfare, prisoners, etc.) would be exempt from either financial contributions or volunteering but would have to register in some way.
- 5 **Option 3.** All listeners. They only need to indicate their interest by registering to vote and providing some information about themselves
- 3 **Option 4.** In addition to listeners, listener subscribers, volunteers, and those in exempt categories, if they are members in or work with other progressive organizations.
- 0 **Option 5.** The constituency model/community model ("Mimi Rosenberg option").

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of May 9, 2002

Approximate attendance: 40

Straw polls on role of the local board, led by Donna Gould:

(Notes: Seven questions we asked that were connected to the draft bylaws written some time ago know as the "Wonderwheel Bylaws." Options were presented for each question. The number of votes received by each option precedes the option

Question 1. Should the local board be responsible for hiring and firing station manager?

- 2 Local board should be solely responsible.
- 30 Local board should be responsible in conjunction with others
- 0 Local board should have no part.
- 7 Abstentions

Question 2. Should the local board have responsibility of oversight of GM?

- 1 Local board should be solely responsible
- 27 Local board should be responsible in combination with others
- 0 Local board have no part.
- 8 Abstentions

Question 3. Should local board be responsible for hiring, firing, and oversight of Program Director?

- 0 Local board should have sole responsibility
- 20 Local board should be responsible with others
- 11 Local board should have no part
- 5 Abstentions

Question 4. Should local board have power to amend, adopt, repeal foundation by-laws?

- 0 Local board should be solely responsible
- 6 Local board should be responsible with others
- 25 Listeners should ratify all bylaws changes
- 0 Local board should have no part
- 3 Abstentions

Question 5. Should the local board have the power to develop the station budget?

- 1 Local board be solely responsible
- 19 Local board to be responsible with others
- 17 Local board should have no part.
- 2 Abstentions

Question 6. Should the local board have the power to approve the station budget?

- 4 Local board should be solely responsible.
- 27 Local board should be responsible with others.
- 0 Local board should have no part.

2 Abstentions

Question 7. Should the local board have the power to monitor/oversee station budget?

- 0 Local board should have solely responsible
- 40 Local board should be responsible with others
- 0 Local board should have no part
- 0 Abstentions

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of May 14, 2002

Approximate attendance: 30

Straw polls on PNB, led by Donna Gould

(Note: The structure for voting was different and on most questions except where indicated was simply yes, no, or abstain.)

Question 1. There should be no appointed seats on the PNB

- Agree 18
- Disagree: 8
- Abstain 4

Question 2. How should PNB members be chosen?

- 12 By listener-members and local boards in combination
- 5 By local board only
- 6 By listener-members only
- 7 Abstentions

Straw polls on powers of listener-members, led by Larry Romsted

Question 1. Should there be a national listener bylaws convention in four years (or so)?

- Yes 17
- No 11
- Abstain: 4

Question 2. Should Listener-members have the power to propose

a) Formal Motions?

- Yes 25
- No 1
- Abstain 4

b) National by-laws?

- Yes 22
- No 3
- Abstain 5

c) Articles of Incorporation?

- Yes 10
- No 10
- Abstain 8

d) Referenda?

- Yes 17
- No 4
- Abstain 5

Question 3. Should PNB decisions be transparent? (except for personnel and litigation issues).

- Yes 25-30 (estimate, clear vote count not taken)
- No 1
- Abstain 1

Question 4. Should listener-members have to power to ratify changes in

a) Articles of incorporation?

- Yes 18
- No 0
- Abstain 11

b) By-laws?

- Yes 17
- No 0
- Abstain 9

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of May 21, 2002

Approximate attendance: 30

Discussion and straw polls led by Steve Brown:

Question 1. Each local station board shall 'own' the last 5 minutes of each program.

- Yes 15
- No 8
- Abstain 2

Question 2. The National Board shall have the option of using 15 minutes of each day at each station.

- Yes 14

No 9
Abstain 2

Question 3. Salaries and job-duties of everyone in the Pacifica Foundation shall be publicly posted.

Yes 19
No 9
Abstain 6

General meetings, led by Roger Manning:

This proposal, which has been widely distributed and revised, formalizes periodic town hall meetings in which any listener can participate. The intention is to insure, in writing, regular Pacifica listener/staff participation in the preservation and health of the foundation as well as to promote connectivity between Pacifica management, staff, station boards and listeners.

Yes 29
No 2
Abstain 4

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of May 28, 2002

Approximate attendance: 30

Question proposed and discussion led by Steve Brown:

Question. PNB will have to have its budget approved by the five stations.

Yes 5
No 10
Abstain 16

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of July 23, 2002

Approximate attendance: 30

Straw polls on national control of local programming led by Janice K. Bryant

Question 1. The PNB is responsible for insuring that programming at each station is in accord with the mission.

Yes 32
No: 0

Abstain 2.

Question 2. PNB can mandate, after consultation with local area,s that stations devote a specified amount of time to programming about governance.

Yes 16
No 5
Abstain 4

Question 3. PNB can mandate that stations devote a specified amount of time to programming about governance (no need for consultation with local areas).

Yes 13
No 6
Abstain 1.

Question 4. PNB can mandate, after consultation with local areas, that stations devote a specified amount of time to programming that remedies lapses in Pacifica's mission.

Yes 18
No 3
Abstain 4

WBAI Bylaws Subcmte Mtg of August 20, 2002

Approximate attendance: 40

Comparison of the powers of local boards as described in the Robinson (A) and Spooner (B) bylaws proposals led by Donna Gould

Question. Should the powers of the local and national boards be as laid out as the bylaws proposals know as:

Robinson 0
Spooner 13
Other 23 ("Other" means some structure different than the two proposals, many wanting more checks and balances on the Spooner model.)