



June 6, 1995

To: Pat Scott, Executive Director,
From: Gail Christian, General Manager
Re: Dissolution of the WPFW Board

As you know, in response to concerns raised by myself and others about the WPFW Board, you attempted to halt the growth of the Board and to roll back its membership to October 1, 1994. You wrote, not one, but two letters to the Board telling them there were concerns about the way the Board was adding new members without the involvement of the Manager or anyone else at the station.

It has become clear that the Board does not intend to comply with your request. Instead it appears to be business as usual. Since the Board has refused to roll back its membership or to even seriously entertain the idea that it is acting inappropriately, I have decided, with the full support of each and every staff member, that it would be in the best interest of the station to "lock-out" the Board until this matter is resolved. As of this date neither the General Manager nor the staff of WPFW recognizes this Board's authority to represent the station. I will not allow the Board to use our premises nor will I share any information with them until I receive further instructions from you and the National Board.

To take this a step further I am also asking the National Board to immediately dissolve the WPFW Advisory Board and to allow a new Board to be seated in its place. This request is made on the following grounds:

When the former Manager and his entire staff were fired by the National Board last March it was appropriate to dissolve the Advisory Board that represented that Manager. Instead an Advisory Board was inherited that did not have one member that reflected the vision the new staff had put forth for the station. It became clear early on that the Board was not going to be particularly cooperative and preferred to act as an independent group with its own agenda.

A recommendation to add two members to the Board whose names were put forth by the Management Team was totally ignored. The two people were never contacted or interviewed even though their resumes were sent to the Board and several requests were made to consider them as new members.

The Board was asked over a year ago to concentrate its efforts on a major donor campaign that would lead to a capital campaign. There has never been any report, either written or oral, to indicate that the Board has undertaken this or any other activity. The reason given for this inaction was that the Board needed to bring on new members before any plan could be developed. It was nearly a year before any of the Board members, with one exception, would even agree to become members of the station. Even then it would not have happened without the prodding of the National Development Director.

Since March 1, 1995 the Board has added six new members. At no time was I consulted, shown resumes or asked my opinion regarding these new Board members. The point is not to challenge the quality of the new members, since I don't know them, but to raise the issue that they are total strangers. This certainly does not reflect the relationship the National Board intended for a local Board to have with the General Manager.

The new Advisory Board members may be strangers to me, but they are not strangers to the Vice-Chair of the Board who has described them all as "personal friends." This is not a situation that is acceptable to me, the staff or volunteers of this station.

The Board, through its Vice-Chair, has attempted to undermine my position as manager in conversations with National Staff, and has interfered in the Management of the station by taking program proposals and grant proposal ideas directly to the National Office without the knowledge of anyone at the station.

The current local Advisory Board has failed to gain the respect or support of the staff and volunteers. There is growing resentment that a Board is in place that has isolated itself from the station and from the plans for growth and development as outlined by the Management Team when it was put in place last March.

The refusal to stop adding Board members without input from station management and to defy your order to roll back the members to October undermines both my position and yours as Executive Director. An Advisory Board must be put in place that is willing to cooperate with the General Manager and be a part of station plans and activities. This Board has never displayed those traits. I feel there are sufficient grounds, as stated above, for the National Board to remove this Board and to allow another one to be formed under my direction and with input from the staff and volunteers.

I am asking that you forward this letter to the Executive Committee of the National Board with a request that they resolve this matter quickly, before the June Board meeting. I will send you a list, within 48 hours, of people we propose for a new Board.

I will send you other material over the next few days that I think will further support the need for change. It's unfortunate that this has to be handled this way. But no amount of talking seemed to make any difference. I think there are people on the Board who joined in good faith and hopefully they will understand the need for the station to regain control of the Board and its activities.

The staff and volunteers have worked very hard over the last year to turn this station around. I hope this does not deter us from continuing to work toward making WPFW an important and prosperous part of the community.

Gail Christa

We, the WPFW staff, have read this memo and support the General Manager in the "lock-out" and in the request to dissolve the local Advisory Board.

Signed By: (Original Signatures on File)

Robert Daughtry, Operations Director
Louis E. Hankins, Program Director
Kens Romeus, Membership Director
Lori Cheatam, Producer Julianne Malveaux Show
Yolanda Turner, Receptionist
Ann Walters, Premiums Manager
Sidrach Franklin, Volunteer Coordinator
Gloria Minott, Director of Public Affairs
Paula Thompson, Receptionist
Joanne Meredith, Development Director
Tony Regusters, Producer Julianne Malveaux Show