

**Tolland Board of Education
Communication and Outreach Committee
Special Meeting**

Minutes – June 3, 2015

Members Present: Karen Moran (Chair), Kathy Gorsky, Colleen Yudichak

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent

Guest: Paula Tremblay, Assistant VP of Media Communications, Mass Mutual

The meeting was called to order at 5:07pm.

Guest Speaker: Paula Tremblay, Tolland resident and Assistant V.P. of Media Communications at Mass Mutual, spoke to the group about the best practices in communicating with the media. She shared her *Ten Tips to Manager Your Message*. Attached is her PowerPoint presentation. She offered suggestions such as creating a “stand by statements” list that the Board can refer to as certain situations arise; designating a point person for media communications or different issues; always representing the Board and speak only “as a board member”; set Policy that any board related issues be communicated through the Communications chairperson or designated person; don’t repeat negativity – less is more; the goal is to get your message out, not be reporter’s friend, and staying focused on the message – don’t veer off; never answer for others, and always keep image of the Board in mind.

Website Task Force update: The task force has participated in tutorials with Sharp School to go over how to manage the calendar and staff directory functions of the website. They have also begun delegating design duties to each member of the group to work on the different sections of the mock site.

Community Conversation Update: Karen Moran and Diane Clokey met with members of the community who had committed to participating in the Conversation as Scribes and Moderators to have a discussion about proceeding. The overall topic of the Conversation was discussed as well as the timing and date of the event. The group also discussed reaching out to different community organizations to gather participants, and ensure there is a good cross-section of the community involved in the conversation.

Spring Newsletter: The Newsletter has a new “look” and “feel” to it and shall be mailed to be in residents’ mailboxes approximately June 17.

Next Meeting: The committee will meet again in August to plan for the upcoming school year and any district communication needed.

Future Agenda Items:

Fall Newsletter articles

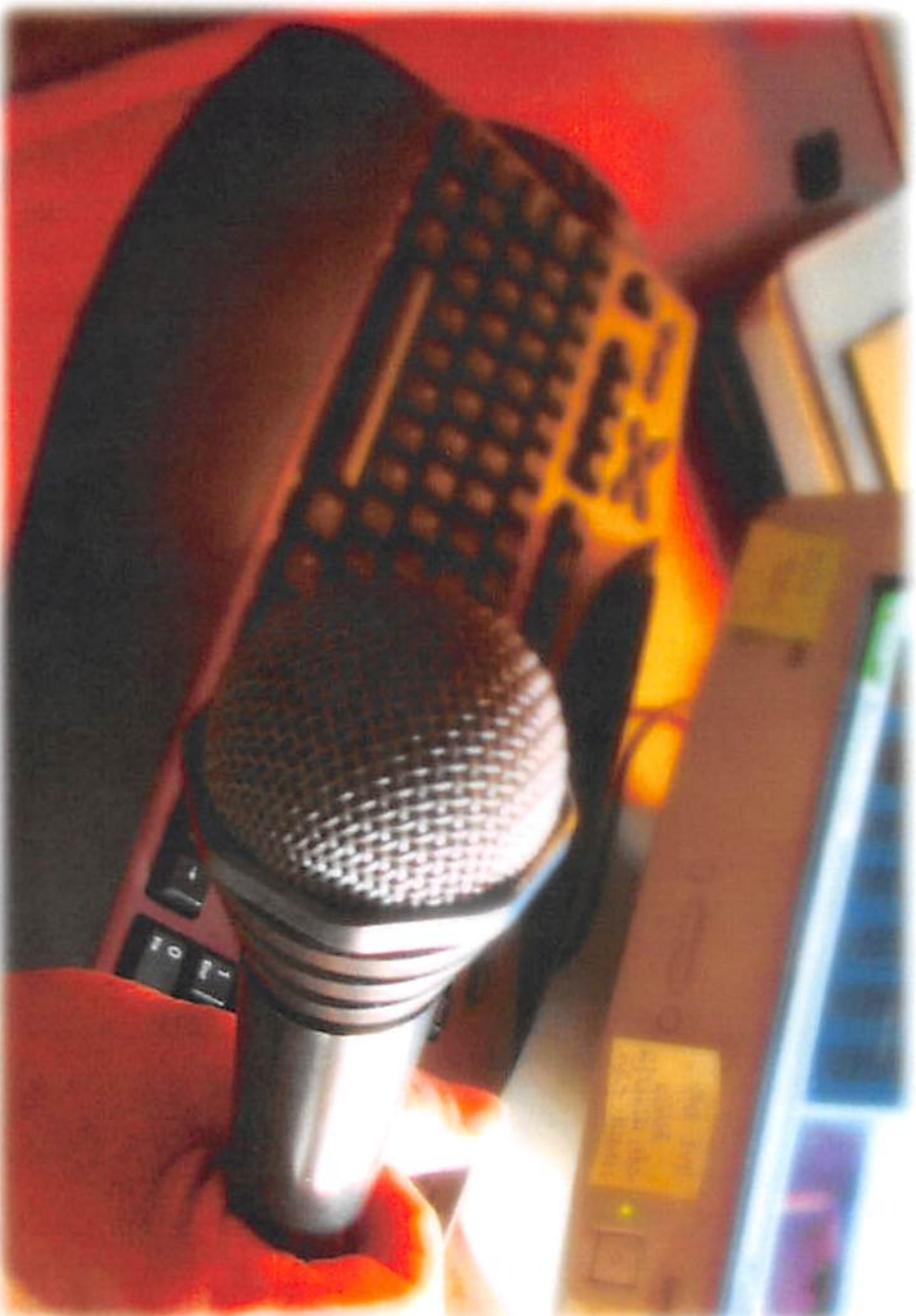
Community Conversation Update

Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Moran

TEN TIPS

Manage your message



TONIGHT'S AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Expectation Setting
3. Top 10 Tips
4. Media Tidbits
5. Staying in Touch



1. BE SIMPLE

Make it simple. Keep it simple.

Sound bite = Is it brief? Crisp? Relevant? Memorable? Does it inspire?

(Hint: Active verbs and colorful adjectives; be visual.)

Edit. Test. Edit.

(And do not use acronyms.)



2. SEQUENCE

Set it up for the listener.

“Why is this important now? Let me share 3 reasons...”

There is memorable power in 3.



3. BE FACTUAL

Base supporting points in fact, not opinion.

It's easy to argue against opinion; it's much harder to argue against facts.

Simple stats are ideal and brief anecdotes are memorable! Mix the two when you can.



4. BRIDGE

Consistently and simply transition to YOUR message.

If dialogue or questions takes you away from your focus, bridge: "That's one perspective, and here's another one that people often overlook..." "



5. REPEAT

Do not miss the opportunity to repeat key points – especially to wrap up.

Sound bites help make it memorable; **repetition** helps embed it into memory.



6. NEVER SPECULATE

It's OK to say that you don't know the answer to a question and that you need to follow up.

'Dead air' is ok. Do not feel a need to fill it.



7. START AND FINISH WITH THE END IN MIND

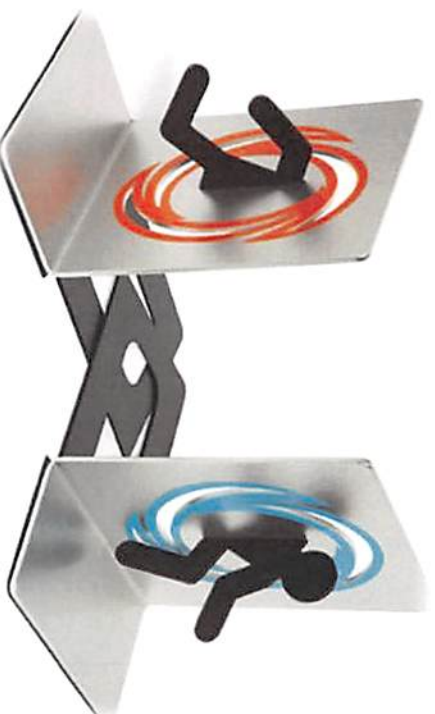
If there was only one sound bite that others attribute to you, what would it say?

Always hit your main point first – and last.

Don't wait to be asked a specific question so that you can provide a specific answer.

Your beginning and ending may be the most memorable.

“To wrap this up, I think there is one thing you need to remember...”



8. MANAGE CONFLICT AND CONTROVERSY

Do not let it manage you.

Contrarian views are 'newsworthy.'

Always frame and respond in the POSITIVE; do not REPEAT negative terms. Do not be defensive. *"That's one perspective. Here's another..."*

Stay focused on your main message; avoid off-handed remarks.

Do not volunteer information unless it supports a positive point you want to make.



9. BE A ROLE MODEL

You are always on.

Be clear with “my” vs. “our” perspective.

(Advice: If you are representing your organization’s position, cite the organization in your response.)

Never answer for others and do not repeat others’ names, products, ideas or platforms. *“I cannot comment on that, but I can tell you ‘x.’”*

Be highly selective with your asks.

In the event of a crisis/issue, remember:

1. People/safety first.
2. Personal property second.
3. Processes third – now and long-term.



10. DO NOT BEAT YOURSELF UP

Use every opportunity to practice, evaluate and learn.

Promise to practice one new skill or improve in one area next time.

Advice: Always maintain a broader long-term focus. Build a positive legacy – for yourself, your organization, and your community.



MEDIA TIDBITS

1. Reporters are on deadline and are typically looking for sound bites or quotes, not an education.
2. They make judgments about what to include in a story based on many factors (eg: compelling quotes, perceived usefulness, redundancy, space).
3. Assess every opportunity to avoid inclusion in a negative storyline or an attribution out of context. (Last-minute opportunities are not always worth it.)
4. If you are misquoted, email the reporter with correct information but never overreact or back a reporter into a corner (think long term).



ABOUT PAULA TREMBLAY

Paula Tremblay is an assistant vice president in corporate media relations and communications with MassMutual. She is a seasoned communications executive who can quickly assess and activate plans and resources while navigating through complex and confidential situations to preserve, protect and promote a brand. Specialties include brand management, crisis communications, issues/reputation management, media channel integration, executive and employee communications, media relations and training, CSR/cause marketing, and event planning. Prior to joining MassMutual, she represented a variety of other brands in the financial services, healthcare, technology and retail industries. Paula received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications with a minor in Psychology from the University of New Hampshire.





Palumbo, Jennifer <jpalumbo@tolland.k12.ct.us>

Re: conference call regarding WeatherSTEM installation

1 message

Walter Willett <wwillett@tolland.k12.ct.us>

Thu, Jun 25, 2015 at 6:49 PM

To: Jennifer Palumbo <jpalumbo@tolland.k12.ct.us>

Cc: Dominique Fox <dfox@tolland.k12.ct.us>, Carolyn Tyl <Ctyl@tolland.k12.ct.us>, Adam Sher <asher@tolland.k12.ct.us>, "Fontaine, Susan" <sfontaine@tolland.k12.ct.us>, Peter Sztaba <psztaba@tolland.k12.ct.us>

Jen can you get those cc'd in this email, including me, together? Thanks.

From:

Walt Willett

> On Jun 23, 2015, at 12:13 PM, Fontaine, Susan <sfontaine@tolland.k12.ct.us> wrote:

>

> Good Morning,

> Ed Mansouri would like to conference call with us at 10 AM on July 1st. It's very important that Adam and Peter are available for this call. Is it possible to make this work? I have to let them know asap. Installation for WeatherSTEM is scheduled for July 15th.

>

> Adam and I will be available at that time. Thanks again for all of your support in this fantastic endeavor!

>

> --

> Susan Fontaine

> Science Department

> Tolland High School

> Tolland, CT 06084