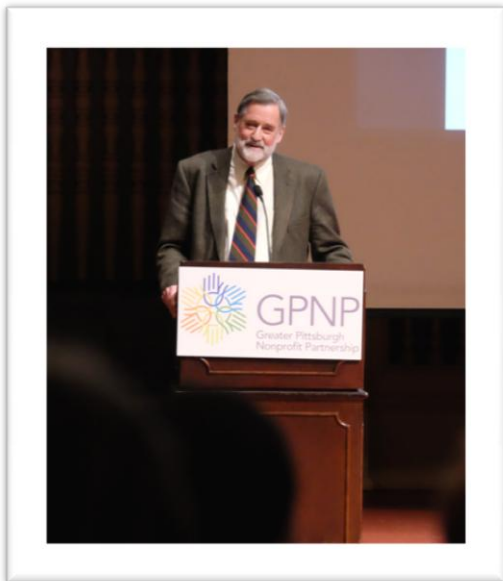




## GPNP Annual Meeting Summary

On Monday, November 24, over 300 local nonprofit leaders gathered for the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership's annual meeting at Carnegie Music Hall. The event showcased a variety of speakers, including foundation and nonprofit leaders. The theme of the day revolved around, "What is next for our region and Pennsylvania" in light of significant changes in the state's political landscape. A legislative panel was featured that gave attendees a balanced perspective of what to expect in the next legislative session.

Samantha Balbier, GPNP executive director opened the meeting with a focus on the advocacy work of the nonprofit sector. The key role of GPNP is to provide a unified voice for the nonprofit sector but first we all must do a much better job in communicating to the general public about the sector's regional impact employment power, and economic contributions to this region. The audience resoundingly agreed.



Maxwell King, the president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Foundation shared examples from the life of Pittsburgh local Fred Rogers to demonstrate the importance of storytelling as an effective advocacy strategy. A nonprofit's ability to articulate its mission and value through personal stories in a clear and meaningful way is essential, he said. King attributed the success the Pittsburgh region largely to the nonprofit sector.

Lois Mufuka Martin, CEO of Bethlehem Haven, challenged annual meeting attendees to look beyond the day-to-day and spend time thinking about their organizational and their field's long-term goals. She encourage attendees to get involved in GPNP through its committee work and provided an example of how doing so and by thinking long-term led to Bethlehem Haven's connection to the Campaign for What

Works and Harrisburg. Her involvement in GPNP has resulted in a site visit from PA Majority Leader, David Reed in the summer of 2014.



Deborah Acklin, president and CEO of WQED moderated the second half of the meeting – the panel discussion of state legislators addressing the future for Pennsylvania and southwestern PA. Participating in the conversation were Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D – Allegheny); Majority Deputy Whip George Dunbar (R – Westmoreland); Senator Randy Vulakovich (R – Allegheny/Butler); and Representative Jake Wheatley (D – Allegheny).



The panel discussed Senate Bill 4 which redefines a purely public charity in the state. They also addressed questions submitted by GPNP members covering a range of topics from education to environmental concerns. The legislators emphasized the need for nonprofits to share their stories with elected officials on a regular basis. Some of the key take aways are:

- 1) Senate Bill 4 will, in fact, be an impetus for wider public discourse on nonprofit charitable status and specifically the designation of a purely public charity. Both Senators made it clear that this will happen if it passes another session and moves to referendum. They urge the nonprofit community to prepare for this by next budget season. The panel members even suggested that this bill will likely spur a broader conversation about Act 55.
- 2) All panelists recommend that nonprofits continue to recognize the constraints of the budget, especially the balance between human service and education funding.
- 3) All panelists discussed the absence of a new revenue source. That even if a severance tax is implemented on Marcellus Shale, it is not a panacea and falls woefully short of what is needed. Republican panelists indicated that they will be looking very carefully at the municipal impact fees and what a severance tax may mean to some of the rural municipalities.

The annual meeting also included the business of GPNP. The membership approved two new candidates to the GPNP Advisory team:

- Laurie Barnett Levine, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Westmoreland County
- Presley Gillespie, President, Neighborhood Allies

The membership also approved committee appointments as follows:

- John Lydon will serve as chair of the Advisory Team for 2015 through 2016.



Lydon will take over for Brian Schreiber, who has served on the Advisory Team since 2012. Under Schreiber's leadership, membership in GPNP has more than doubled.

- Bobbi Watt-Geer, President of the United Way of Westmoreland County will become the GPNP Advisory Team Vice Chair in January 2015.
- Susan Raushcer, President of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh will now serve as the Public Policy Chair beginning in 2015.
- Attendees recognized the service of Deborah Acklin, president and CEO of WQED, who served as an Advisory Team member from 2012 - 2014. She remains committed to the sector and GPNP and will now chair the newly formed GPNP communications committee.



**GPNP announced three upcoming membership programs:**

1. An online fundraising program offered by Donor Pro. This program will provide free training in both Pittsburgh and Westmoreland County to all members on how to create and implement an online fundraising campaign. It will also offer the development of a free online webpage to all participants complete with merchant services.
2. Sustainable Pittsburgh will be offering a tailored made training program to GPNP members on how to make their facilities healthier for staff and the people that are served in them. The training program will also highlight energy efficiency training to assist all nonprofits in saving very precious operating dollars.
3. GPNP will be holding a happy hour in March 2015.