

## **KDHX Crisis Timeline (Updated 3/21/24)**

### **December 15, 2013**

88.1 KDHX moves from its original broadcast location at 3504 Magnolia, St. Louis to 3524 Washington Ave in St. Louis. The move to a new building was expensive; the station's capital campaign falls short; significant debt results.

<https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3068-how-is-kdhx-doing-financially>

### **August 3, 2015**

Executive Director Beverly Hacker resigns from KDHX after being placed on leave. She had lost the support of the board (many directors had already resigned due to the turmoil) and admits to questionable financial decisions.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/news/beverly-hacker-why-im-leaving-kdhx-2900295>

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/column/joe-holleman/kdhx-director-beverly-hacker-placed-on-leave-from-station/article\\_3ddea542-7fc4-58d5-9d6a-21531c6767e0.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/column/joe-holleman/kdhx-director-beverly-hacker-placed-on-leave-from-station/article_3ddea542-7fc4-58d5-9d6a-21531c6767e0.html)

### **September 1, 2015**

KDHX announces partnership with "66 Reasons to Love St. Louis," a public relations campaign of the Phillips 66 oil company. Part of this campaign includes a controversial mural on the top of the KDHX building and the use of local musicians' recordings, without clearly stating that use would support Phillips 66's campaign.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/news/new-kdhx-mural-comes-from-an-unexpected-partner-phillips-66-3008501>

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/big-oil-and-independent-radio-mix-in-st-louis/article\\_f6223d50-3542-536c-a925-36d2611a51ac.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/big-oil-and-independent-radio-mix-in-st-louis/article_f6223d50-3542-536c-a925-36d2611a51ac.html)

### **September 2015**

Board of Directors appoints Engagement Officer Kelly Wells (along with another staffer Ann Alquist) interim Executive Director.

### **September 2016**

KDHX Board of Directors makes Kelly Wells sole Executive Director.

<https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3070-when-did-kelly-wells-become-executive-director>

### **February 22, 2018**

At the annual associates meeting, KDHX board president Paul Dever presents radically amended bylaws to the assembled associates. Prior to this meeting and throughout the history of the organization, associate members approved all changes to the bylaws. Associates had no input on

these changes. Changes include: dissolution of an entire class of members in the corporation (annual members), increase of number of board seats controlled by the board (from 9 to 12), and deletion of associate members' right to approve bylaw changes. These bylaws dramatically shifted the power balance at the station towards the executive director and the board. Associates voice their concerns to no avail.

### **May 29, 2019**

Attorney delivers anonymous letter (written by unnamed former staff and volunteers) to KDHX board. Letter alleges harassment, discrimination, and other significant problems at KDHX; letter names Kelly Wells as responsible and calls for her resignation. Prior to letter, three black employees and two volunteers were fired by Wells or had resigned. (The three represent the total of all black staff at KDHX at the time; no black staff have been hired in the four years since.)

<https://www.stlpr.org/arts/2019-07-03/turmoil-at-kdhx-allegations-of-discrimination-harassment-and-financial-troubles>

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/news/tk-31980083?fbclid=IwAR06-kFIQoinvPED4MNmPuC4PwzOBMvTreKob6HLhA6xIjOsXqgbSkn8ZaE>

### **September 16, 2019**

KDHX Board holds public listening session. Community expresses concern; some call for new leadership at the station. KDHX announces investigation and more listening sessions.

### **October 1, 2019**

KDHX Board claims investigation clears Wells of wrongdoing. Board cancels further listening sessions. Board President states in an email: "We concluded that the sessions will not be the best way to gather constructive feedback, so we've canceled them. The board has heard all the complaints from ex-employees and we have looked into them. Kelly's dismissal is not on the table." Former staffers state they were never contacted by the investigators.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kdhx-abruptly-cancels-public-listen-forums-amid-internal-strife-32373297>

### **November 6, 2019**

The Riverfront Times reports that the Kranzberg Foundation has taken control of the entire first floor of the KDHX building, including the Magnolia Cafe and the Stage, by way of a long-term lease arrangement. This is part of KDHX's strategy to pay down its debt on the building but also sharply reduces KDHX's interaction with the community.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kranzberg-arts-foundation-to-take-over-first-floor-of-kdhx-32534455>

### **January 2021**

KDHX announces four-year strategic plan. Three years later, many of the key goals (including diversifying staff and board, increasing revenue) have not been met.

<https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/2164-kdhx-strategic-plan>

### **February 27, 2023**

KDHX holds the annual associates meeting via Zoom. At this meeting, associates are not allowed to speak to the whole group of assembled associates. Instead, associates are divided into small groups. Questions for staff had to be submitted by email. Group discussion is not allowed.

### **February 28, 2023**

One day after the associates meeting, veteran DJ and one of the founders of KDHX, Tom Ray, is fired via Zoom. Management claims he was fired due to “a long history of bullying, aggression and harassment” of staff. Ray denies the accusations, and claims he was fired in retaliation for criticizing management.

[https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3031-open-letter-to-the-community?fbclid=IwAR2nI5k\\_AXA3AzMR2y9Z7EIW3TIKF728O2\\_gSRlt4g2wdrl48pQNALzSaow](https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3031-open-letter-to-the-community?fbclid=IwAR2nI5k_AXA3AzMR2y9Z7EIW3TIKF728O2_gSRlt4g2wdrl48pQNALzSaow)

[https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/papa-ray-whose-firing-led-kdhx-into-upheaval-blames-management/article\\_5a78c0a8-5d8f-11ee-95df-672e43d63740.html](https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/papa-ray-whose-firing-led-kdhx-into-upheaval-blames-management/article_5a78c0a8-5d8f-11ee-95df-672e43d63740.html)

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/arts/tom-papa-ray-speaks-out-after-kdhx-firing-39566281>

### **May 4, 2023**

Management sends a producer agreement and other policy documents (over 15 pages) to volunteers and orders them to sign in less than 30 days. Management holds “office hours” by Zoom to discuss contract. DJs had no other input on the contract; many raise concerns regarding the terms. Some minor points are addressed by staff in a revision; substantive concerns are not.

### **May 19, 2023**

Twenty-nine current and 16 former volunteers (45 total) sign and publish statement of no confidence in Executive Director Kelly Wells. Current DJs attempt to read the statement during the public comment period of a Zoom-based KDHX board meeting. They are cut off before finishing.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kdhx-djs-issue-no-confidence-letter-in-executive-director-amid-continued-strife-40090739>

### **June 30, 2023**

KDHX dissolves the Folk School. The Folk School had provided numerous educational and cultural opportunities. During the pandemic of 2020-2022, KDHX curtailed its Folk School offerings and moved to an online educational effort. A year later, those efforts were also ended.

<https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3065-what-happened-to-the-folk-school>

### **August 30, 2023**

KDHX fires veteran DJs Drea Stein and Andy Coco; both had been critical of mismanagement at the station. Executive Director Kelly Wells claims both encouraged listeners to “defund our station.” Stein and Coco reject the accusation; management provides no evidence to support its claim.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kdhx-fires-longtime-djs-andy-coco-and-drea-stein-40765782>

### **September 5, 2023**

The Gyres Society, an offshoot of the Save KDHX Facebook group, is established “as a Missouri nonprofit educational corporation to support community broadcasting in and for St. Louis, Missouri.”

<https://blog.gyres.org/>

### **September 22, 2023**

KDHX terminates 10 veteran DJs: Hound Dog Brown, Caron House, Roy Kasten, Michael Kuelker, Chris Lawyer, Rich Reese, Christopher Schwarz, Paul Stark, bobEE Sweet, and John Wendland. Together the DJs have over 200 years of experience broadcasting at KDHX. All had been critical of management and had been leaders in organizing the volunteers to form a union and to speak out about abuse of power and unfair treatment at the station. The firings, which took place by email on September 22, 2023, came to be known as the “Friday Massacre.”

<https://fox2now.com/news/missouri/mass-exodus-of-kdhx-volunteer-djs-at-least-10-fired-others-quit/>  
[https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/music/st-louis-radio-station-kdhx-fires-10-more-volunteer-djs/article\\_d3bb9ff8-597a-11ee-b5f0-8759176f961f.html](https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/music/st-louis-radio-station-kdhx-fires-10-more-volunteer-djs/article_d3bb9ff8-597a-11ee-b5f0-8759176f961f.html)

### **September 22, 2023**

President of the Board of Directors, Gary Pierson, who is consul at the Capes Sokol law firm in Clayton, Missouri, issues statement to the media that the 10 DJs were fired because they were "not consistent" with the goals of fighting "things like racist and gender discrimination, and patriarchy." Pierson provides no evidence to support the claim. All DJs reject the accusation. DJs counter that Pierson is smearing them and weaponizing DEI language to justify authoritarian actions.

<https://www.stlpr.org/arts/2023-09-22/kdhx-fires-10-more-volunteer-djs-as-leaders-try-to-assert-control-over-station-in-turmoil>

### **September 26, 2023**

Pierson withdraws the accusation and states to the Post-Dispatch that “he has no reason to think the DJs are racist or sexist.” Pierson will later claim that the DJs were fired because they supported fellow DJ Tom Ray and opposed his termination and/or that the DJs had encouraged “defunding” the station. The fired DJs admit support for Tom Ray but reject any and all claims of defunding.

[https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/4-more-kdhx-djs-resign-as-uproar-over-firings-increases/article\\_71e4a6ce-5bd4-11ee-8b17-3b0c626b7311.html](https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/4-more-kdhx-djs-resign-as-uproar-over-firings-increases/article_71e4a6ce-5bd4-11ee-8b17-3b0c626b7311.html)

### **September 26, 2023**

Associates of KDHX (the only class of members at the station) hold an emergency meeting at the Central Stage space below the KDHX studios on Washington Avenue. All associates are volunteers at the station. Over 50 attend. Board President Gary Pierson attempts to intervene in

the meeting and to declare it unlawful. Pierson is ruled out of order. At the meeting, the associates vote to remove two members of the board for failure to execute their duties. Associates also elect three new directors to the board.

<https://www.stlpr.org/arts/2023-09-27/kdhx-volunteers-attempt-to-replace-board-members-in-latest-conflict-with-station-leaders>

### **October 6, 2023**

Board President Gary Pierson dismisses the DJs' efforts to organize and says they will never be rehired. The statement is published on the KDHX Facebook page and receives nearly 500 critical comments.

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/kdhx-says-it-will-never-rehire-its-fired-djs/article\\_b06d3916-66c3-11ee-b72b-77c19a17d0d3.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/kdhx-says-it-will-never-rehire-its-fired-djs/article_b06d3916-66c3-11ee-b72b-77c19a17d0d3.html)

<https://www.facebook.com/881kdhx/>

### **October 12, 2023**

Volunteers file for NLRB recognition but withdraw the application till a later date. Volunteers incorporate as an auxiliary to support KDHX called the League Of Volunteer Enthusiasts (LOVE) of KDHX.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kdhx-critics-form-new-association-plan-litigation-41045896>

### **October 21, 2023**

Save KDHX Facebook group reaches 3000 members, holds well-attended festival in support of the dissenting volunteers.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/225209479913634/>

<https://www.stlmag.com/culture/music/kdhx-fans-and-former-djs-unite-for-save-our-station-festival/>

### **October 26, 2023**

Twelve terminated volunteers receive certified letter from the law firm of Sandberg Phoenix stating that their associate status has been revoked. The letter indicates an appeal process. All appeals are denied by the board.

<https://loveofkdhx.substack.com/p/the-beginning-of-a-long-road>

### **October 30, 2023**

Andrew Scavotto, partner at Stinson LLP in St. Louis, sends formal letter on behalf of the concerned associates, demanding that KDHX recognize the actions taken at the special meeting, including the seating of three new representatives.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-2tK1lmwl2XfFsoKN2aLETzLX\\_aMzGR1/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-2tK1lmwl2XfFsoKN2aLETzLX_aMzGR1/view?usp=sharing)

**November 15, 2023**

Andrew Scavotto, partner at Stinson LLP in St. Louis, files petition in the City of St. Louis 22nd Circuit Court to force KDHX to seat the three representatives.

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/fv/c/Petition%20for%20Declaratory%20Judgment.PDF?courtCode=22&di=13117848>

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/cnet/cases/newHeader.do?inputVO.caseNumber=2322-CC09544&inputVO.courtId=CT22#docket>

**December 21, 2023**

The Community Advisory Board of KDHX Community Media meets for the first time in over three years. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is mandated by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for any publicly funded broadcasting station. The CAB is intended to provide community input about KDHX's radio programming, community connection, and impact based on the station's goals and priorities as identified by the KDHX Strategic Plan. Unfortunately, the new CAB was handpicked by KDHX staff and is weighted in favor of programmers loyal to the Executive Director and other overt allies.

<https://kdhx.org/articles/inside-kdhx/3298-community-advisory-board>

**January 29, 2024**

Lawyers for KDHX (led by David P. Weiss of the Sandberg Phoenix firm) file motion to dismiss the petition. Plaintiffs file response to this motion a month later. Case continues to work its way through the courts.

**January 31, 2024**

Over 80 protestors gather outside KDHX to speak to and welcome volunteers at their first meeting of the year. Protestors peacefully call for change at KDHX.

[https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/more-than-80-protesters-rally-outside-st-louis-radio-station-kdhx/article\\_de856644-c0a4-11ee-8dd2-0b60e10273b5.html](https://www.stltoday.com/life-entertainment/local/more-than-80-protesters-rally-outside-st-louis-radio-station-kdhx/article_de856644-c0a4-11ee-8dd2-0b60e10273b5.html)

**February 23, 2024**

LOVE of KDHX Gofundme surpasses \$26K donations from over 300 individuals. Funds will go to support the organization's legal efforts.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/league-of-volunteer-enthusiasts-love-kdhx>

**March 21, 2024**

Judge Jason M. Sengheiser calls and hears KDHX's motion to dismiss the petition to seat the three candidates elected by the associates in September 2023. The motion to dismiss is denied. The lawsuit will move forward.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/music/kdhx-loses-in-court-as-judge-rejects-motion-to-dismiss-42152724>