

**AGENDA**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS BOARD MEETING**  
**VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING**  
**DATE: June 1, 2019**  
**TIME: Noon – 2:30 p.m. Eastern**

1. Call to Order – *Tarquinio*

2. Roll Call – *Hall*

- |                           |              |            |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|
| a. Tarquinio              | g. Fox       | n. Reilley |
| b. Gallagher-<br>Newberry | h. Hernandez | o. Savino  |
| c. Hall                   | i. Kissel    | p. Schotz  |
| d. Kopen-Katcef           | j. Koretzky  | q. South   |
| e. Bartlett               | k. Kroll     | r. Walker  |
| f. Davila-Richards        | l. Meyers    |            |
|                           | m. Radske    |            |

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. April 13, 2019
- b. May 6, 2019

4. EIJ2021 Venue Update – *Tarquinio*

5. Executive Director Search – *Tarquinio*

6. Public Comment Period

Enter Executive Session:

7. Executive Consultancy Proposals – *Tarquinio*

8. Content Management System Contract – *Tarquinio*

Exit Executive Session:

9. Adjournment

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019  
IN-PERSON MEETING IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m EDT. Members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Campus Advisor At-Large Jeff South; directors at-large Lauren Bartlett, Tess Fox, Victor Hernandez, Mike Reilley, Michael Savino and Yvette Walker; Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky; Region 10 Director Don Meyers; Region 11 Director Deb Krol and Region 12 Director Kelly Kissel. Joining later in the meeting by phone were at-large director Ivette Davila-Richards; Region 2 Director Andy Schotz, Nominations Committee Chair Eddy Gallagher and Bylaws Committee Chair Bob Becker. Member absent: Region 6 Director Joe Radske. All staff members present at the start of the meeting. Others present: SPJ Foundation president Irwin Gratz, SPJ Foundation vice president Hagit Limor, Finance Committee member Bill McCloskey and past SPJ presidents Sonny Albarado and Fred Brown. Gratz and Limor stayed for the executive session on legal and personnel matters.

SPJ PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tarquinio presented her latest report; see below.

SPJ FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Gratz presented his latest report; see below.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Alison Bethel McKenzie presented her latest report; see below.

110TH ANNIVERSARY TASK FORCE REPORT

Walker presented an update and said there remain questions about where and how the content would be shared, but that ideas include a list of journalism songs, a top 110 list of journalism movies, testimonials about what SPJ means to people, the 110 most important moments in American journalism and "110" pins being sold for \$110 each.

HONORING WOMEN IN JOURNALISM TASK FORCE REPORT

Krol presented a brief update and said there may be a panel honoring women at EIJ19.

## JOURNALIST ON CALL REPORT

Journalist on Call Rod Hicks presented an update on [the Casper Project](#) and his efforts.

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Gallagher gave an update. There are six candidates interested in two two-year terms and one candidate stated for secretary-treasurer so far. John Ensslin is not expecting to produce his candidate interview election podcasts in September as he changed jobs.

## LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLANNING CONVERSATION

Hernandez and Newberry led a conversation about long-term SPJ strategy. A task force chaired by Hernandez and including Tarquinio, Newberry, Walker, Reilley, SPJ communications director Jennifer Royer, student representative Julia Heimlich and one or more foundation board representatives will be developing and delivering a new strategy for SPJ over the course of 2019 and 2020. The task force expects to meet virtually every other week from May to September and provide monthly updates to the board, which is invited to offer input. Hernandez said SPJ's last strategic plan SPJ was approved Nov. 1, 2007. Some questions: Where do we see SPJ in 10 years? Should the current SPJ universe look the same in the future: with a nine-member board, 12 regions, some 200 pro and campus chapters, the annual conference, regional conferences, Mark of Excellence Awards, SDX Awards, our many partnerships, our 10 committees, our five communities and numerous initiatives, such as the Legal Defense Fund, Quill, the Leads email bulletins and more? What do other journalism organizations do well that we offer? What do other journalism organizations do well that we don't but might consider? Lists, priorities and recommendations to come by EIJ19.

Reilley lauded the approach as "forward-thinking" and encouraged a strong digital presence and suggested an incubator for women leaders. Tarquinio suggested focus groups. Kopen Katcef said ex-executive director Joe Skeel had proposed a long-term vision for SPJ in 2014 and the task force should review it. Kissel advised the task force to always keep membership in mind and talk about goals with as many people as possible, not just the board. Hernandez said there is an opportunity for radical ideas and asked what SPJ should focus on if we were building it from scratch today. Bartlett said SPJ tries to be everything to everyone and said we need to closely examine committees and communities and that we all should be able to explain SPJ's "value proposition" to potential members in 30 seconds. Krol wondered aloud if newsrooms or homes would be most SPJ members' bases of operations in 10 years. Koretzky said the future is teaching journalism to non-journalists. Walker said we need to be able to explain why SPJ is relevant and why journalism is important, and that's because it helps democracy and the country. Savino said to keep growth and media literacy front of mind and to consider getting journalists into schools and having a series of community conversations. Gratz said he can't think of a better description for SPJ than improving and protecting journalism and said SPJ needs a structure to constantly evaluate its

goals and mission. Koretzky asked if SPJ should allow more non-journalists to join. Hernandez asked if bigger journalism groups mean better membership. Kopen Katcef said this could be a time to revisit renaming the organization from the Society of Professional Journalists to the Society for Professional Journalism. SPJ web administrator Billy O’Keefe said SPJ has core strengths and SPJ’s “relevance has been given to us and gift-wrapped the past two years.” Limor said SPJ should offer a place for non-journalism students to learn journalism skills and training. SPJ office manager Linda Hall said SPJ created a supporters category and charged these members \$20 a year, but only 50 people signed up. Koretzky said that sends a message to such people: “Join SPJ and become a second-class citizen.” Hernandez asked if SPJ should offer “knives, forks and spoons” or “are we a Swiss Army knife” and asked if we should have just a few centers of excellence. SPJ director of development Larry Messing said SPJ does get donations from non-journalists. Matthew Hall said SPJ should survey people and its members to get data on what they want or don’t want, and he said the board should not reopen discussions on the organization’s name but rather focus on its mission. Kopen Katcef suggested SPJ do exit polling for people who left SPJ. Fox said to keep in mind the rural/urban divide in journalism. Reilley touted online meetings. Bartlett said SPJ needs to do more to reach the 41% of members who are “unaffiliated” and don’t belong to a chapter. Newberry said she is looking to have “one of the most boring years ever” when she becomes president in September and wants to highlight good things for journalism and journalists using the hashtag #journalismmatters.

## RECESS FOR LUNCH

Board members ate lunch from 11:30 p.m. EDT to 12:31 p.m. EDT, then reconvened.

## MINUTES

The board voted to approve the minutes of its Feb. 2 meeting. Motion: Meyers. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous. Abstentions: Kissel because he did not attend the meeting.

## CHAPTER REPORT

The board voted to activate Wyoming Pro – Region 9 and the following chapters from the list on its agenda – Albany Chapter, SPJ Region 1; Ann Arbor Chapter, Region 4; Kean University, Region 1 (Satellite Chapter under New Jersey Pro); Texas A&M University, Region 8; The Kings College, Region 1, and Wayne State University, Region 4 (reactivation). Motion: Bartlett. Second: Fox. Vote: unanimous.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee chairs presented their latest reports; see below.

## BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

Per memo below, the board voted to approve amendments related to dissolving the Quill Endowment, and ensuring SPJ board transparency in virtual meetings by requiring that meeting agendas and supporting documents be posted online 72 hours before meetings and that all meetings be live streamed by audio or video to allow the public to participate. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Newberry. Vote: unanimous. A proposal and vote that would have allowed SPJ to appoint SPJ members — and not just SPJ board members — to the foundation was postponed to September.

## BOARD POLICY REVIEW TASK FORCE REPORT

Hall presented a report; see below.

## EIJ PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Newberry presented a report; see below.

## FUTURE EIJ SITE SELECTION

Bethel McKenzie and director of conferences and events Basharat Saleem led a discussion. As a result, the board voted to opt out of a conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2021 and pursue a conference in New Orleans in late September 2021. Motion: Kissel. Second: Hall. Vote: unanimous. Saleem will pursue options in Philadelphia and elsewhere for 2022. A proposal to consider Tampa in 2023 was tabled.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Hall gave a report from the Finance Committee, which had met on April 12 to discuss Bethel McKenzie's 2020 budget proposal. Bethel McKenzie and staff presented the budget proposal. The board voted to approve the budget — without Bethel McKenzie's proposed dues increase and instead with corresponding lesser line items for events, meals and banquets; outside services and participant/speaker travel. Board budget approval was contingent on O'Keefe reviewing and OKing a new electronic database. Motion: Hall. Second: Newberry. Vote: Everyone yes but Koretzky, who voted no.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board voted at 3:51 p.m. EDT to enter executive session to discuss legal and personnel matters, including the executive director's review. Motion: Walker. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous. The board voted at 6:13 p.m. EDT to exit executive session. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Krol. Vote: unanimous.

## ADJOURNMENT

The board voted to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. EDT. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Krol. Vote: unanimous.

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
MONDAY, MAY 6, 2019  
VIDEOCONFERENCE/TELECONFERENCE MEETING

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:14 p.m EDT. Members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Campus Advisor At-Large Jeff South; directors at-large Lauren Bartlett, Tess Fox, Victor Hernandez, Mike Reilley, Michael Savino and Yvette Walker; Region 2 Director Andy Schotz; Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky; Region 6 Director Joe Radske; Region 10 Director Don Meyers and Region 12 Director Kelly Kissel. Members absent: Director-at-large Ivette Davila-Richards and Region 11 Director Deb Krol. Others present: SPJ Foundation president Irwin Gratz, SPJ Foundation vice president Hagit Limor, SPJ lawyer Mark Bailen, SPJ lawyer Marc Antonetti, Assistant Region 3 Director Susan Dunten, SPJ D.C. Pro chapter president Jonathan Make, SPJ member Hazel Becker and others who attended but did not speak during the meeting. Gratz, Limor, Bailen and Antonetti stayed for an executive session to discuss human resources matters related to the resignation of executive director Alison Bethel McKenzie.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dunten asked when McKenzie resigned and when it was communicated throughout SPJ. Tarquinio said McKenzie resigned Monday, April 29 and after close of business, Tarquinio, Newberry, Gratz and Limor contacted every SPJ staff member to let them know, then posted [a brief announcement](#) on the SPJ website late that night after talking with SPJ's lawyers. About 48 hours later, after talking to SPJ's partners, Tarquinio published [a blog post](#) with more information.

Make expressed appreciation for this public meeting but great concern about how the resignation had been announced. He said that [a statement](#) signed by at least nine SPJ chapters and at least 13 SPJ leaders was not a comment on the outcome of the resignation, but a critique on how SPJ's membership was told about the resignation. He asked why it took 48 hours to share more information on the SPJ website. Tarquinio said it took her 48 hours to talk to SPJ's partners, do outreach and be able to write a blog post. She said SPJ could have done quicker outreach to chapters and members.

Bartlett said the board should have been notified before the initial statement was posted.

Becker said the board should have a town hall meeting later about the process but focus now on its business related to the resignation itself.

Tarquinio apologized for “problems with the execution” but said it was never anyone’s intention to hide anything or cover up anything. She said the board would hire an interim executive director, but none had been selected and the timeline was to be determined.

Dunten said SPJ needs a plan of action to ensure improved communication.

Walker thanked Bethel McKenzie for her work.

Becker thanked staff for carrying on so effectively at a busy time.

Hall apologized to SPJ members and said an eblast would have been a better way of notifying everyone of the resignation and vowed better communication in the future.

Newberry said Tarquinio handled a difficult situation well and also said a more immediate eblast would have been a better way to let membership know.

Tarquinio praised staff for its work following the resignation and said she would put related news and updates in eblasts to keep members informed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board voted at 4:08 p.m. EDT to enter executive session to discuss human resources matters related to McKenzie’s resignation in a separate teleconference call. Motion: Newberry. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: unanimous. Members absent from executive session: Davila-Richards, Hernandez, Krol and Radske. The board voted at 5:36 p.m. ET to exit executive session. Motion: South. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The board voted to adjourn at 5:37 p.m. EDT. Motion: Hall. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous.