



**AGENDA**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS FOUNDATION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

DATE: APRIL 18, 2020

TIME: 11 A.M. EDT

1. Call to order - Gratz
2. Roll Call - Albarado
3. Approval of board meeting minutes – Gratz
4. Report of the Foundation President – Gratz
5. Report of the SPJ President – Newberry
6. Treasurer's Report – Dubin
  - a. Audit Discussion
7. Report of the Executive Director – Shertzer
  - a. Report of the Journalist on Call – Hicks
  - b. Fundraising Report – Messing
8. 2018-19 Financial Audit – Shertzer/Koenig
9. 2020 Budget review and adoption – Shertzer/Koenig
10. Development Committee report – Ketter
11. Grants Committee Report – Kirtley
12. Publications Committee Report – Fletcher
13. Old Business
14. New Business
  - a. SPJ appeal
  - b. Atkins Estate Gift – Gratz
  - c. Membership Database Software – Shertzer

- d. Endowed Gift Policy – Shertzer/Messing
  - e. Gift Acceptance Policy – Shertzer/Messing
  - f. Grants cycle
15. Appointment of Nominations Committee – Limor
  16. Executive Session
  17. Adjourn

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS FOUNDATION  
FRIDAY, SEPT. 6, 2019  
SAN ANTONIO GRAND HYATT — SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

DRAFT

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. CDT. Members present: President Irwin Gratz; Vice President Hagit Limor; Secretary Sonny Albarado; Treasurer Howard Dubin; board members April Bethea, Fred Brown, David Carlson, David Cuillier, Jay Evensen, Paul Fletcher, Todd Gillman, Matthew Hall, Evelyn Hsu, Jane Kirtley, Sue Kopen Katcef, Robert Leger, Frank LoMonte, Patricia Gallagher Newberry, Andy Schotz. Members absent: board members Battinto Batts, Michael Bolden, Kelly Hawes, Alex Jones, Bill Ketter, Sally Lehrman, Russell Pulliam, Sonya Ross, J. Alex Tarquinio. Also present: SPJ communications director Jennifer Royer, journalist on call Rod Hicks, SPJ communications coordinator Zoë Berg and SPJ consultants Leah York and Heather Rolinski.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Leger asked about capital needs, which was tabled until the April 2020 board meeting. Motion: Dubin. Second: Evensen. Vote: unanimous.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board voted at 9:15 a.m. CDT to enter executive session to receive a report from Talbott Talent, the consultants hired to assist with the executive director search. A motion was made and seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board voted at 10:28 a.m. CDT to exit executive session. A motion was made and seconded. Vote: unanimous. Joining the meeting: communications coordinator Zoë Berg, director of development Larry Messing, Strategic Planning Task Force chair Victor Hernandez, SPJ director at large and Strategic Planning Task Force member Yvette Walker.

**REPORT OF SPJ PRESIDENT**

Gratz instructed the board to review the report in the board packet.

## **REPORT OF FOUNDATION PRESIDENT**

Gratz referred the board to his report in the board packet.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Dubin distributed an information sheet for the board to review while he gave his report. He said the market and Foundation's approximately 40 stocks have been doing well. The Foundation spent a little over \$500,000 in expenses, but still has \$13,153,000.

Usually a report from SPJ headquarters would be included in the board packet, but accounting was still working on it as it was behind, however Dubin said there should not be any red flags in the finished report. Gratz said the Society looks to close the books with \$100,000 deficit. Dubin plans to go to headquarters and work on the budget and become more involved.

After questions from LoMonte, Dubin explained that the Foundation does not benchmark its investments or buy and sell stocks. Gillman said the Foundation has a passive investment strategy with safe investments.

Hall noted that this coming year there will be additional costs related to the executive director and Talbott contract, but they will only be one-time costs.

## **REMEMBERING JOHN ENSSLIN AND MIKE FARRELL**

The board paused for a moment of silence. Gratz mentioned the scholarship in honor of Ensslin and said SPJ staff is taking up a donation collection.

## **REPORT OF JOURNALIST ON CALL**

Hicks was still working on his final report from the Casper Project. Hicks said participants did not change their habits or thoughts on the press but still found the project beneficial and have a better understand of the media. The project was written about in some industry publications but has not received much coverage outside of Casper, Wyoming.

Hicks plans to write up ways the project could be scaled to larger communities and carried out with the focus remaining on media literacy. He suggested the next journalist on call project should focus on news literacy and be less intensive. Hicks also plans to have a timeline for next year's goals by the end of the year.

## **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**

Messing referred the board to his report in the board packet. In response to questions from Carlson, Messing explained that most of SPJ's money will probably come from foundations as opposed to single donors, although he plans to do direct mailing to reach individual donors. He has been in talks with family run foundations but is working to cultivate a relationship with larger foundations. Messing noted that most foundations would like to see SPJ's plan for the future and an executive director in place before they donate. LoMonte asked about SPJ's participation in Media Impact Funders, which Messing said he hopes to participate in the future.

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

The ethics book has been edited by Walker and is about 100,000 words and 300 pages. Brown said it is ready to go online if there is a way to make a profit from it. The book will be printed through an on-demand publisher, who will make some money from each sale. Orders will be filled through Amazon.

Messing said the Journalism Education Association would be a good potential partner to help get the book into the hands of students. Brown note that the University of Denver would like to work with SPJ to put the book on their website behind a paywall. Kirtley said the board should find out more information about what this entails before making a decision. Grantz instructed the University of Denver be connected with Messing to find out more information and ensure the book can be taken back and put on SPJ's website instead. Carlson noted that other universities may also be interested in hosting the book.

Hsu suggested getting a funder who would give copies to students for free, she suggested about 5,000 copies for 5,000 students. Gratz suggested expanding that to put the books in college or public libraries. Newberry said if SPJ gives away free copies of the ethics book, a free student membership could be added.

## **PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGES**

**Society appointments to the Foundation board.** Move: Leger. Second: Dubin. Vote: unanimous.

**Transparency clause.** Move: Brown. Second: Dubin. No vote taken. The board discussed the proposed change.

Leger proposes an amendment not to live stream, because audio will be difficult. Kirtley agrees. Carlson noted that the transparency clause sounds more like a board policy than a bylaws issue. Newberry said live streaming works for Zoom calls but not well for in person meetings. Kirtly

noted that the Foundation is not a membership organization, and there is a distinction between the Society and Foundation. Schotz would like to live stream the meetings even they would not be viewed. Fletcher does not want to limit the ability for the public to see the meetings but said the question is whether it should be in the bylaws or just a policy.

Fletcher moves to table until the April 2020 meeting. Second: Carlson. Motion passes with Shotz and Gillman opposed.

The Foundation board asks headquarters to find out what other foundations do and what SPJ delegates decide and report back at the April 2020 meeting.

Gillman, who does not think he will be able to make it to the April meeting, wants it on the record that Kirtley raises critical distinction. He does not like that people think journalism organizations should operate like a government organization. He said the Foundation should be open, but SPJ members and the public do not need to hear everything. He is also vehemently opposed to livestreaming.

**Honor John Ensslin.** Move: Evensen. Second: Albarado. Vote: unanimous.

**Quill Endowment.** Dubin said this would not change much.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING TAST FORCE UPDATE**

Hernandez presented the update to the board. Walker joined Hernandez to answer questions and receive suggestions. Gratz suggested that the committee reach out to people who have not contributed with another survey because it becomes a self-selected sample. Hernandez mentioned that Mike Reilly suggested texting the survey to younger members, which they may consider if they do a second round.

SPJ has grown and become broader, so the reason some of the competition attracts more members is because it is more focused, according to Newberry. She said SPJ should focus on its central mission, and the board might have to make difficult decisions about what they want to continue. This can be reflected in the strategic plan which is a living document.

## **BUSINESS**

The Foundation board needs to provide the SPJ staff and new executive director with spending priorities by Jan. 1. Fletcher and Hsu will help those already working on this

## **ELECTIONS**

Carlson and Leger are not seeking another term and will step down from the board. Furthermore, Sue Porter and Tarquinio would like to be added to the board. Move: Evensen. Second: Gilliam. Vote: unanimous.

In addition, current officers Limor, Albarado and Dubin announced their desire to remain in their positions. Move: Carlson. Second: Leger. Vote: unanimous.

#### **ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board voted at 1:09 p.m. CDT to re-enter executive session to discussing the executive director search and items discussed during the previous executive session. Move: Albarado. Second: Brown. Vote: unanimous.

#### **EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board voted at 1:24 p.m. CDT to exit executive session. A motion was made and seconded. Vote: unanimous.

#### **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

Carlson moves to have the SPJ staff receive bonuses for the extra work they are doing in the absence of an executive director. The bonuses should be funded by the Foundation and come at the end of search process but before new executive director begins working. Details are to be worked out by SPJ Foundation president. Second: Leger. Vote: unanimous.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Move: Leger. Second: Carlson. Vote: unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m. CDT.

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS FOUNDATION**  
**January 22, 2020**

**DRAFT**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The Foundation board convened on Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:05 p.m. via electronic devices.

In attendance: Irwin Gratz, Board President, Hagit Limor, Vice President, board members Kelly Hawes, Dave Cuillier, Fred Brown, Jane Kirtley, Sue Porter, Andy Schotz, Paul Fletcher, April Bethea, Frank LoMonte and Patti Newberry. SPJ Executive Director John Shertzer and SPJ Foundation Development Director Larry Messing also participated.

President Gratz brought the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. A motion was made by Kelly Hawes, seconded by Paul Fletcher to approve the grants committee recommendation regarding a special call for proposals made by the Foundation in December.

**SPJ FOUNDATION GRANTS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Kirtley explained the grants committee's reasons for its recommendation to fully fund the National Press Photographer's Association (NPPA) - Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP) request and to award \$10,000 to KUOW's project involving youth journalists.

Discussion of the recommendation ensued, primarily concerning the award to the NPPA and RCFP request and whether to fund it in full, or in part.

President Gratz reported that three board members who could not attend: Evelyn Hsu, Michael Bolden, and Matthew Hall, all wished to communicate to the board their support of the grants committee proposal.

SPJ President Patti Newberry suggested that the NPPA / RCFP principles conduct a session at EIJ 2020 to review results of the project. This was met with approval from several other board members.

Newberry also indicated SPJ was considering a proposal to enroll High School journalists as members and suggested some participants in the KUOW project could be part of a pilot project

Sue Porter suggested that a member of the SPJ or Foundation board should attend some or all of the training sessions connected with the NPPA / RCFP project

After discussion, those board members in attendance voted unanimously to make the awards as recommended by the grants committee.

Foundation President Gratz thanked the grants committee for its expedited review of the applications received during the special call for proposals.

Gratz also said the Foundation officers will bring to the April board meeting a proposal concerning whether, or how to handle out-of-cycle proposals in the future.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

## MEMORANDUM



**Date:** April 18, 2020

**To:** SPJ Foundation Board of Directors

**From:** Irwin Gratz, President

**Re:** President's Report

In 40 years of broadcast journalism, I have seen some interesting developments in our use of the available English vocabulary. There was the revival, after 9/11, of the word homeland, a staple of earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century wartime stories. I watched with interest as those who name such things (we journalists included) came to call the 2007-2008 economic meltdown the "Great Recession."

Now, of course, two words have come together in a way that will be seared into the minds of everyone now alive: "social distancing." Two relatively ordinary words that may acquire the kind of negative connotation now associated with the once proud boast: titanic.

And it has created a journalistic moment unlike any I can remember. It's a time when the need for our service is great, but at a time when important parts of our industry are hollowed out by changes in technology and advertising practice.

Whether, and how, our Foundation can help in this moment is certainly something we'll be discussing, not just at this meeting, but likely for the next few. Our ability to help is, of course, tied in some measure to the performance of the U.S. economy. Howard Dubin will tell us where we stand right now. Because we base our spending on a rolling measure of our corpus, the early-year declines will have only a modest effect currently, but will also remain a drag on our funding for the next few years.

Until the Covid-19 pandemic struck, the biggest issue we were likely to face was the disposition of a very generous bequest from Paul Atkins, a journalist and longtime journalism educator. Originally expected to be a \$200,000 gift to the Foundation over two years, it now appears the final amount will be about \$240,000.

We still will have a discussion at this meeting about the disposition of those funds.

We are also on the verge of releasing a new ethics text, at least online.

Executive Director John Shertzer, Development Director Larry Messing and I have also met with Craig Newmark. He gave the Society \$25,000 last year to sponsor a World Press Freedom forum we held in New York. He was quite receptive to hearing from us and, in our meeting with him, demonstrated he has a fair knowledge of the journalism organization landscape, along with considered ideas about where he thinks journalists fail regularly. We will have a further update during our meeting.

Needless to say, John will have his own report for you, but he appears to be enjoying his early months with SPJ. I am finding him both pleasant to work with and clearly interested in delving into the issues we face, both as journalists, and as a journalism organization.

Journalist on Call Rod Hicks continues to generate coverage and interest in our Casper Project. He has been planning for an event on race relations in news coverage, but that work has been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. He was also selected as a judge for the Pulitzer Prizes.

We will also have some discussions about process issues. The Society is moving to a calendar year budget and it makes sense for us to, as well. This will mean we will be considering only a six-month budget at this meeting. It also means we will have a discussion about our granting cycle. This will include a discussion of how, or whether, we wish to entertain out-of-cycle requests, like the ones we are funding this year for the National Press Photographer's Association related to coverage of the 2020 election.

I, of course, am disappointed we won't be able to be together for this meeting. Our personal contacts are one of the things I've long treasured about my participation in SPJ. But it will be good to see you (hopefully) on the 18<sup>th</sup> and continuing the work of aiding the profession we cherish.

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 18, 2020

**To:** SPJ Foundation Board of Directors

**From:** John Shertzer, Executive Director

**Re:** Executive Director Report



I am excited to participate in my first full and official SPJ Foundation Board meeting. It's been an outstanding first four months "on the job," although this last four weeks have been frantic and stressful (I'm sure for you too). We are in the midst of a turbulent time for many sectors, including the charitable one. I feel confident we will weather this storm, but we may have to contend with some short-term discomfort.

During and then after we emerge from this crisis, we need to envision a strategy for how the foundation continues to grow and thrive. Bottom line, we need more resources. The grants committee would love to do more. SPJ will also likely need increased support as that organization attempts to reframe itself. We are in a comfortable position generally, but this crisis has shown how precarious it could get.

My recommendations for the duration of 2020 and likely into 2021 would be as follows:

- Develop greater vehicles for individual donor identification, cultivation and stewardship. While we need to do this anyway, grant makers are going to be tentative coming out of COVID-19. The investment in new database software is a major first step.
- Such vehicles could include major gift programs, giving societies and a focused planned giving initiative.
- We need to maintain the 4.5% distribution even in the midst of a potential recession. The economy will come back and we have shown steady growth in our investments. Lowering that only hampers what the Foundation can do.
- The Journalist on Call position was a signal that the Foundation wants to be more proactive in advancing journalism, which is a great message. Now we should move that further by more directly answering the question: "what difference does the SPJ Foundation want to make?"
- We should continue to work on telling the Foundation's story through better marketing and communications efforts. We have an excellent vehicle in Quill that can provide us with good opportunities for that.

In my experience with fundraising organizations the most effective ones develop an annual plan based on a larger strategic plan, and then stay militantly disciplined to the plan. That will be how I plan to lead the staff. The board can support us best by developing the vision and overarching goals.

We also need the board to support us in a few ways: (1) open doors for us to donors and funding entities, (2) support the purchase and implementation of new database software, and (3) make an annual contribution that you consider significant.

The remainder of 2020 will be a year to define the SPJ Foundation in preparation for 2021 to be a year of tremendous growth. I'm excited to walk this journey with you!

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Shertzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

John Shertzer

At the February 2020 meeting, the SPJ Board requested a listing of current and former partner-relationships. The information requested is below:

<b>Status</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Service(s) Provided</b>	<b>2020 Contract/MOU?</b>	<b>Financial Arrangement?</b>
Current	ACES	Training Venue at EIJ	No	No
Current	Facebook	Training	Yes	Yes
Current	Google	Training	Yes	Yes
Current	JAWS	Accounting	Yes	Yes
Current	Mike Reilley / Journalist's Toolbox	Resource Aggregation	Yes (in process)	Yes
Current	News Leaders Association (ASNE)	Accounting	Yes	Yes
Current	RTDNA	Convention Partner	Yes	Yes
Former	ACES	Accounting	No	Yes
Former	ACES	Conference Services	No	Yes
Former	ACES	Communication	No	Yes
Former	JAWS	Conference Services	No	Yes
Former	NAHJ	Convention Partner	No	Yes
Former	NAHJ	Membership	No	Yes
Former	RTDNA	Accounting	No	Yes
Former	RTDNA Foundation	Accounting	No	Yes
Former	SFJ	Accounting	No	Yes

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 14, 2020

**To:** SPJ Foundation Board of Directors; SPJ Foundation Finance Committee

**From:** John Shertzer, Executive Director

**Re:** Proposed SPJ Foundation Budget for Fiscal Year 2020



Included with this cover memorandum is the proposed calendar year 2020 budget for the SPJ Foundation. The Foundation (along with SPJ) is converting its budgeting to align with the calendar year. This budget reflects a full 12 months of 2020 even though we are requesting approval a few months in.

There are several documents. The best one to see an overview is the “Composite View” document.

As you review this information, please remember that this is merely a management tool, albeit an important one. The numbers presented represent staff’s “best guess” based on fixed expenses, estimates, historical data and trends. We do our best to stick to it, but we always adjust one way or another depending on what the year brings. This year is the most uncertain one facing organizations like ours in a long time (and maybe ever).

The good news is that our investment strategies are strong, solid and consistent. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, our investments were growing a nice rate. While this won’t continue for this year, our strategies should help us weather the storm.

Despite this, I am not pleased with this budget. We can do better in terms of fundraising and staff is committed to this effort. I look forward to developing ideas and tactics during this shutdown period that can be deployed once our country’s business returns to normal.

A couple specific notes:

- We have shifted the finances for the Google and Facebook programs from the Foundation budget to the SPJ Budget. This accounts for some of the 6-figure variances you see in a few places on the budget.
- \$90K of the Atkins gift is shown as revenue in this budget. If this is removed, the budget would show a deficit. Hence, board discussions about the use of that gift could impact this budget.

Staff will be prepared to answer your questions at the board meeting.

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 18, 2020

To: SPJ Foundation Board of Directors

From: Larry Messing, Director of Development

Re: 2020 Development Report



**Final Campaign Comparison**

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For the sake of a more apples to apples comparison, the below numbers are reflective of the previous fiscal year versus calendar year.

	<u>8/19-3/20</u>	<u>8/18-3/19</u>
<b>SPJ Foundation</b>	\$41,310.08*	\$51,918.78
<b>SPJ General Fund</b>	\$10,106.50	\$ 6,882
<b>Legal Defense Fund</b>	\$ 8,691.50	\$ 6,654.
<b>First Amendment Forever Fund</b>	\$ 1,275	\$ 3,335

*\*Excludes the \$200,000 gift from the Paul Atkins Estate.*

**Grants/Major Gifts Received**

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**Scripps Howard Foundation**

- Scripps Howard Foundation has pledged \$67,000 to support the new Ted Scripps Student Journalist Leadership Boot Camp. Initially planned for launch this summer, it has been delayed due to the pandemic.

**Paul Atkins Estate Gift**

- The Foundation was the recipient of a \$200,000 estate gift from the Paul Atkins estate. Mr. Atkins was a journalism professor in West Virginia. So far, we have received \$190,000 of the gift, with the remaining coming at the end of this year. The funding is unrestricted.

**Key Prospects/Outstanding Proposals**

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**Craig Newmark**

- John, Irwin and I met with Craig Newmark at his home in New York in early March to discuss possible partnerships. We have submitted a potential proposal and are working on details that will work best for both SPJ Foundation and Mr. Newmark. His general interest is in ethics, especially as it relates to false equivalencies.

**Hollywood Foreign Press Association**

- Requested \$10,000 to support the Journalist on Call's proposed *Race in America: What Reporters Need to Know* program, which will provide training sessions nationwide to show journalists how racism shapes our lives, how we uphold it and how we might interrupt it. It is a collaboration with the Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources.

**Gannett Foundation**

- Seeking funding for EIJ

**Tegna Foundation**

- Seeking funding for EIJ

**Upcoming Grant Proposals**

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- Ford Foundation (for 2021 funding)
- Democracy Fund

**Focus for 2020**

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- Provide more structure to major donor program
- Build planned giving program
- Create better marketing materials to highlight ways to support SPJ and SPJ Foundation
  - Case Statement
  - Giving brochure to be included in member renewals
  - Easier to use website giving section
  - Journalist on Call section added to website to highlight Rod's work

**MEMORANDUM**



**Date:** April 13, 2020  
**To:** SPJ Board of Directors  
**From:** Jane Kirtley, SPJ Foundation Grants and Awards Committee  
**Re:** 2020 Grant Recommendations

Colleagues:

Attached you will find a spreadsheet outlining the SPJ Foundation Grants and Awards Committee’s recommendations for the Spring 2020 cycle.

As you will see, the total grant amounts requested far exceeded our allocation of \$39,000. In drafting the recommendation for dispersal of the available funds, we considered the Foundation’s core principles, as spelled out on the website:

- ***The SPJ Foundation helps by:***
  - *Advocating for open government*
  - *Promoting integrity*
  - *Encouraging excellence*
  - *Fostering diversity*
  - *Inspiring new generations of talented journalists*
  - *Protecting freedom of speech and press*

We also considered the following principles for SPJ Foundation grantmaking:

- To support SPJ
- To support partners (and past partners) with proven track records
- To give preference to projects with national or regional scope
- To ensure that the programs reflect the SPJ Foundation’s core missions

Accordingly, our recommendations are as follows:

National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association:	\$ 5,000
WETA/PBS NewsHour Student Election Reporting Labs:	\$ 2,500*
New England First Amendment Coalition:	\$ 1,500
James W. Foley Legacy Foundation:	\$ 5,000
SPJ Region 3 (SPJ “Paper Money” project)	\$ 2,500*
Society of Professional Journalists	\$ 22,438+
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 38,938.00</b>
<b>Balance remaining:</b>	<b>\$ 62.00</b>

\*Full amount of grant request

+ Recommendation is contingent on EIJ taking place

Brief notes about each grant request appear on the spreadsheet. Committee members will be happy to answer questions or provide further details at the board meeting on April 18.

During our committee meeting, we concluded that it is probably time to revisit once again our grants protocol and priorities. Among the issues we identified:

- Should the SPJ Foundation fund training projects run by other organizations? If so, should funding be contingent on SPJ's meaningful participation in the programming content and execution?
- Should the SPJ Foundation provide funds to send attendees to other organizations' events/conferences/workshops – even if they are presented as attempts to increase diversity for those organizations? Is the answer different if the funding supports attendance by SPJ members (as was done in the past with NFOIC)?
- Should the SPJ Foundation prioritize grant requests from former grantees/partners, or give preference to new initiatives?
- Recognizing that the board has established that SPJ (National) grant requests be given priority, should the SPJ Foundation nevertheless consider allocating a fixed percentage of available funds each year to be awarded to outside organizations?
- Should there be more than one grant cycle each year?

The committee would welcome further input on this topic from the board and, if asked to do so, is willing to undertake drafting a revised policy, to be presented at the Fall Board Meeting.

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 10, 2020  
**To:** SPJ Board of Directors  
**From:** Rod Hicks, Journalist on Call  
**Re:** JoC activities since Sept. 2019 board meeting



This report covers activities of the JoC since the September 2019 board meeting.

### **Race Project**

Plans are in the works for a major training project for journalists on strategies for gaining trust in communities of color and why it's important. SPJ will team up with the Institute for Journalism & Natural Resources to stage four two-day sessions in different regions of the country within a year. The sessions will explore topics including implicit bias, the complexity and diversity of communities of color, why language matters, shifting U.S. demographics and what it means and what white privilege looks like. The sessions, some of them interactive, are designed to show journalists how racism shapes our lives, how we uphold it, and how we might interrupt it. Each session will be limited to 50 participants at minimal or no cost to them. The estimated \$500,000 cost of the project will be covered by grants from foundations. Dave Spratt, CEO of IJNR, is leading the fundraising effort and got positive initial responses from contacts at three foundations. However, there has been no word from any during the virus outbreak. We believe things will get back on track when we get far enough on the other side of the pandemic. There are steps we can take to reduce costs, but the project would look quite different, depending on how much we raise to fund it.

### **Media Trust Forums**

This is another project sidelined by the pandemic. Our plan was to hold three two-day forums focused on disinformation and news literacy this summer in three cities, in Wisconsin, Michigan and Arizona. The point was to help residents figure out how to identify trustworthy news sites and not get fooled by disinformation campaigns leading up to the presidential election. The sessions in each city would be on back-to-back nights and last two hours. The first night would feature presentations on news literacy and disinformation. The second would feature a panel of local and national journalists answering questions from the audience. We are looking into the possibility of moving this online.

### **COVID-19 stories**

I compiled a list of two-dozen uplifting or useful coronavirus story ideas news organizations can pursue to give their audiences options beyond the daily grim news. Suggestions included tips for making your home workspace video conference-ready, features on long-established or iconic local businesses on the verge of closing, how single people are coping since meeting new people and dating have gotten harder and profiles of local heroes.

### **COVID-19 Panelist**

I use my participation in a March webinar on coronavirus coverage to stress the importance of using precise language and avoiding alarmist wording. The webinar was sponsored by the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists.

### **Pulitzer Prizes**

Served as a juror for the 2020 Prizes, assigned to Explanatory Reporting entries.

### **Newsroom Chat**

Addressed the newsroom of The Philadelphia Inquirer in January about news consumers' distrust of the news media and findings of the Casper Project. I also took questions from the staff, including from Editor and Vice President Gabriel Escobar.

### **Classroom film**

Participated in a short film discussing news literacy and how to avoid falling victim to disinformation campaigns. The five-minute film for Capella and Strayer universities will be used to aid instruction.

### **Interviews**

Washington Post media columnist Margaret Sullivan wrote about the Casper Project in a September column.

Philadelphia Inquirer columnist Jenice Armstrong interviewed me for a November piece on news media trust pegged to findings of the Casper Project.

Bob Mann interviewed me for his "Hot Media with Bob Mann" podcast in February. I discussed why so many Americans distrust the media and what I learned from the Casper Project.

I gave listeners in Wyoming an overview of the Casper Project and its findings in a radio interview on Glenn Woods' "Wake Up Wyoming" show on K-2 Radio in Casper in March. Conservative, outspoken project participant Chuck Hawley joined me for about half of the interview.

I was interviewed in October about the Casper Project by Doug Hamilton, host of "Main Street" on Prairie Public radio in North Dakota.

### **Writings**

The January edition of Crain's NewsPro featured an editorial I wrote for the magazine that noted the mainstream media overlook or downplay many legitimate stories that resonate with conservatives and most news coverage is filtered through the values, experiences and culture of predominantly white journalists.

Journalists are encountering numerous challenges as they report on the coronavirus outbreak. One is the president of the United States. President Donald Trump spent the early days of the virus' arrival on the homeland denying it would have much impact here. (Quill, March 23)

Journalists covering the coronavirus have produced compelling, informative stories, but along the way, there have been mischaracterizations, inaccuracies and absent nuances. Journalism organizations, college journalism departments and even a science publication are offering guidance for accurately covering the coronavirus and COVID-19, including language to use and avoid. (Quill, March 18)

Americans are cynical about the press, with just 41 percent saying they trust it. Sloppy reporting and some high-profile egregious mistakes and ethical lapses are among the contributors. But Americans also need to be able to trust that those who run their government will give clear, reliable information, particularly in times of crisis. (Quill, March 3)

Snoop Dogg's sexist, threatening response to Gayle King for bringing up an old rape allegation against Kobe Bryant looked familiar. This behavior isn't new, but when the President of the United States similarly assails the press frequently, it's unsurprising we seem to be seeing it more. (Quill, Feb. 17)

Much of the evidence introduced during the House impeachment of President Donald Trump was accessible to Americans through the news media and online sites. While some of the most engaged Americans took advantage of this raw information, it's safe to say most Americans didn't. The American press showed how it's vital to democracy, synthesizing the news into comprehensible, contextual stories. (Quill, Dec. 19)

Attacks on journalists simply for doing their job appear to be rising as data continue to show the public's view of journalists declining. While people have always criticized journalists and their work, the increase in recent years is fueled by easy-to-use technology and a president who encourages it. (Quill print edition, not yet published)

### **Addressing Environmental Journalists**

I was a speaker at the Society of Environmental Journalists' annual conference in Fort Collins, Colorado. I was invited to speak about rebuilding trust in the news media and to go over findings of the Casper Project.

### **Casper Wrap-up**

I returned in Casper, Wyoming in October to review findings of the Casper media trust project with residents who participated in the six-month study. Some participants said the project allowed their complaints about the press to be heard by journalists across the country. One said she gained insight into the challenges news organizations face, including dwindling resources and rookie reporters assigned to cover complex stories and a wide variety of topics. Participants were given certificates of participation. The session was moderated by SPJ Wyoming President Melissa Cassutt.

### **Facebook Trainers**

Helped sort through applications to become trainers for the SPJ/Facebook training program.

### **Canceled activities**

I was invited to address opinion writers at the National Society of Newspaper Columnists conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma in June. This had been on the schedule for more than a year, but the group was forced to cancel the conference due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Mac McKerral had invited me to participate in a forum in March at the University of Western Kentucky focused on the need for engaged citizens and the role the news media plays in that. I would have addressed the audience about media distrust and findings of the Casper Report and then participated in a panel discussion. The forum was canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 18, 2020

**To:** SPJ Foundation Board

**From:** SPJ President Patricia Gallagher Newberry and SPJ President-elect Matthew T. Hall

**Re:** Financial Support



Fellow Board Members:

We write to seek emergency Foundation support for SPJ. If the journalism industry — and SPJ's budget — was hemorrhaging before the coronavirus crisis began, they are now coding on the operating table. *The New York Times* estimated this month that 28,000 employees of news media companies nationwide have been laid off, furloughed or had their pay cut since the crisis began. That was before *The Los Angeles Times*, the biggest newspaper on the West Coast, announced this week that it would furlough employees on its business side for four months. This bloodletting will only worsen as the economy struggles to reopen, and Americans coast to coast weigh whether it's safe to rejoin crowds before a vaccine is produced. Time is a luxury media outlets don't have. Without the staples that undergird much of journalism's coverage and advertising — things like sports, real estate dealings, car sales, concerts, the theater — news outlets will continue letting go journalists in large numbers and at terrifying speed. It's a break-glass moment. News media companies that survive this will be shells of their former selves.

As you may know, the Society's operational budget is already battered. SPJ accumulated a \$153,000 deficit over the last six months of 2019 and projects an additional \$129,000 deficit in 2020. The FY20 deficits will grow if SPJ and its Foundation cancel the SDX awards dinner in June and EIJ20 in September, with penalties from host hotels and lost ticket and registration revenue. Combined, those losses would erase the \$400,000 balance in SPJ's reserve fund. And, of course, as journalists find themselves out of work, they will have less ability to pay membership dues, attend conferences or support the Society.

Against this backdrop, the SPJ Finance Committee voted on April 11 to request \$1 million from the SPJ Foundation for uses to include absorbing current deficits; expanding digital resources for members; and launching a microloan/grant program for suddenly unemployed or underemployed journalists.

We subsequently learned that the Foundation's mission would support grants to SPJ only for charitable or educational purposes — but not for general operations and likely not for a loan or grant effort.

As a result, we write now asking the Foundation to consider allocating additional funds to support Executive Director John Shertzer's three-month COVID-19 Crisis Management Plan. That plan is still in development, but it calls for staff to quickly expand and improve online resources for members; hold skill-building and mental health webinars; consider new ways to deliver Google and Facebook training; and build out other yet-to-be identified programs. Foundation funds would help train current staff or

hire new staff or contractors; obtain software or hardware for new online resources; market these offerings; and position SPJ to remain relevant to members now and to reinvent itself as a go-to digital player when the crisis ends. We have improved and protected journalism since 1909. That mandate has never been more important than it is now in this period of unprecedented hardship for the industry and for us. We ask the Foundation for help.

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 18, 2020  
**To:** SPJ Foundation Board of Directors  
**From:** SPJ Staff  
**Re:** Impexium purchase agreement



The purpose of this memo seeks to outline staff desire to sign a purchase agreement with Impexium to be our member database solution going forward. I believe the shift to Impexium will be a game-changer for our organization. This is a sharp, modern and cutting-edge solution.

Our request is for the Foundation to use some of the Atkins bequest to fund the one-time implementation fee of \$35,000. Supporting the move to a new database of this kind will help staff raise more funds for the Foundation. The ability to keep effective records and be data-driven will be a phenomenal booster to our efforts. No foundation can be successful without a strong AMS.

SPJ will fund the bulk of the annual fees going forward, with the Foundation supporting some percentage through our standard budget allocation process.

### The current situation with our database (AMS):

- We've been partnered with iMIS for over a decade. It was likely the Cadillac of systems back in the day, but for some reason the organization did not keep current on upgrades and now it's a very faulty system with a lot of bugs and issues. The result of which is that we are forced to do most things manually (enter member records, payments, etc.).
- The current version we are on is so outdated that upgrading would require a sizeable investment.
- Compounding our issues is that staff is not pleased with the customer service of IMiS. We work through a middle-man company, who is slow to respond to our many challenges.

### Why Impexium?

- Impexium has strongly positive reviews from a few of our peer organizations. The Local Media Association and Kellen (an association management company that handles clients like CMA and AAJA) use Impexium and have been pleased with its ability to service their organization productively.
- While all AMS systems tend to sell the same types of services, staff is confident that Impexium does it better. Their interface is very user-friendly, the applications sync well with our current processes and there are some very compelling features regarding analyzing data.
- This is how Impexium describes its fundraising capabilities:
  - Allow individuals to easily donate online, including the ability to prompt to donate when joining or renewing membership.
  - Establish security levels to protect sensitive donor-specific data.
  - Recognize different donation types.
  - Continually track contributions and contributions by donor.
  - Offer installment payments / billing to donors.

- Record and track various gift types — anonymous, cash, honorarium and memorials, matching — received from donors. Create various gift reports for historical tracking.
- Track unlimited gift history and enter unlimited gift coding for Campaigns, Appeals and Fund Designation.
- Impexium is very mobile-friendly and can easily be used on smartphones and other mobile devices, something the current system has no capabilities of providing.
- Impexium is a full-service option, capable of servicing every avenue of SPJ needs.

We strongly recommend bolstering the future of the Foundation by agreeing to fund the one-time Impexium implementation fee. Thank you for considering this request.

## GIFTS ACCEPTANCE POLICY

### Proposed additions/changes in red

The Board of Directors of the **Society of Professional Journalists Foundation** (“**The Foundation**”) and its staff solicit current and deferred gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations to secure the future growth and mission of the **Foundation** and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). This policy governs the acceptance of gifts by the **Foundation** and provides guidance to prospective donors and their advisors when making gifts to the **Foundation**. **The Foundation** reserves the right to deny any gift.

#### TYPES OF GIFTS ACCEPTED

1. Cash.
2. Readily Marketable Securities. Such securities will be accepted and shall be held or sold in accordance with an investment policy established by the **Foundation**.
3. Non-Readily Marketable Securities. Gifts of such securities will be accepted under the following condition: Gifts of closely held securities will be carried on the **Foundation’s** books at a nominal value of \$1.00, unless the **Foundation** is provided with an appraisal by an independent appraiser acceptable to the **Foundation**, establishing its Fair Market Value.
4. Real Property: Gifts of real property will be accepted under the following conditions:
  - (a) All offered gifts of real property over \$5,000 are required to have an appraisal by an independent appraiser acceptable to the **Foundation**, establishing its Fair Market Value. The date of the appraisal shall be within 60 days of the date of the gift.
  - (b) Except in the case of residential property that has been used solely for residential purposes for at least 20 years, all proposed gifts of real property shall be accompanied by an environmental audit.
  - (c) It is the responsibility of the donor to pay for the appraisal and the environmental audit.
  - (d) The **Foundation** shall determine the acceptability of mortgaged property.
5. Personal Property.
6. Planned Gifts: The **Foundation** will accept the following types of planned gifts. Donors will be encouraged to have their planned gift agreements reviewed by their legal and financial advisors.
  - (a) Charitable Trust. A Charitable Trust shall be subject to the following rules:
    - i. SDX prefers that a donor who creates a charitable trust name an outside trustee.
    - ii. However, if the donor requests the **Foundation** to act as trustee, the **Foundation** shall do so under the following conditions: (i) the initial funding of the trust must have a Fair Market Value of at least \$500,000; (ii) except in the case of a Lead trust, the **Foundation** must be a vested beneficiary of the trust for at least 75% of the remainder; (iii) the trust shall be responsible for its own expenses; (iv) payments from the trust will be made not less than quarterly, and (v) an annual statement will be provided to beneficiaries in compliance with the rules of the Internal Revenue Service.

- (b) Other Types of Acceptable Planned Gifts. Other types of acceptable planned gifts include bequests; remainder interests in property; retirement plan beneficiary designations; and life insurance beneficiary designations.
7. **Endowed Gifts: Endowments may be established with a \$50,000 minimum gift, but must be funded at the appropriate level so that the annual payout is sufficient to support the intended wish of the donor.**