

SPJ/SDX Combined Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2000 - Columbus, Ohio

Meeting Date: October 26, 2000

Meeting Place: The Adams Mark Hotel, Columbus, Ohio

Roll Call:

Roll Call was not taken, but a quorum was present.

Call to Order

Sigma Delta Chi Foundation President Paul Steinle called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Paul Davis to approve minutes as amended from the April 2000 joint board of directors meeting. Second by Paul McMasters. Motion carried.

Legal Issues Update

No one from Baker & Hostetler was able to attend the meeting because of flight cancellations. Executive Director Jim Gray updated the boards on issues surrounding the lawsuit about the Society's ethics handbook. The case has been settled. A statement and a Q&A about the lawsuit was printed in the October/November Quill. The statement will be posted for 120 days on SPJ's Web site.

SPJ's libel insurance has covered the settlement. SPJ was responsible for the \$5,000 deductible. The total cost to the insurance company was around \$100,000. The insurance company has renewed SPJ's policy. Amendments to the policy now cover all SPJ publications, not just those specifically listed.

Steinle asked Gray to research the cost of a rider to the insurance policy that also would cover SPJ chapters.

Paul McMasters said that "Doing Ethics in Journalism" is a great book and the organizations should look at a way to continue publishing it. Steinle suggested a resolution supporting the authors of the book.

Motion by Irwin Gratz to adopt the proposed resolution. Second by Paul McMasters.

Board members discussed legal issues of the resolution. Some suggested that board members write individual letters of support to the book's authors.

Motion by Al Cross to delete all references to volunteers from the proposed resolution. Second by Georgiana Vines. Motion carried.

Motion by Paul Davis to table the resolution. Second Jim Parker. Motion carried with three opposed. One abstained (Kyle Niederpruem abstained from all motions regarding the resolution).

Report From the Executive Director

The move of headquarters is complete. Jim updated the group on the ribbon-cutting ceremony and invited all board members to visit the new headquarters.

Foundation Grant Requests

Paul Steinle explained that with the grant requests, there would be a time for discussion, and then a vote by the SPJ board of directors. The SPJ board would be voting on whether to recommend the project to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation board for funding. The foundation board will vote at its meeting later this afternoon on whether to fund the projects.

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press submitted a \$25,000 grant request to prepare the fourth edition of "Tapping Officials' Secrets," a 50-state compendium of open government laws. Details are available in the joint board packet.

Motion by David Carlson that the SPJ board recommends that the SDX Foundation board fund this project. Motion was seconded. The motion carried.

Larry Muhammad Request to Fund "Kentucky Colonel"

Larry Muhammad, a member of the Louisville Pro Chapter, submitted a \$5,000 grant request to aid in the production of "Kentucky Colonel," a play about First Amendment challenges to the Negro Press during World War II. The play focuses on the life of the late Frank L. Stanley, wartime publisher of the Louisville Defender.

Motion by David Carlson not to recommend this project for funding by the SDX Foundation board. Second by Jim Parker.

The group discussed the play and asked about the content. A copy of the play was not available at the meeting. Board members said it was difficult to judge without information about the content.

The above motion and second were withdrawn.

Motion by Al Cross to defer action by the SPJ board pending additional information. Second by Ray Marcano. Motion carried. Ray Marcano will contact Larry Muhammad and let him know the status of his request.

Rainbow Sourcebook Request

SPJ Diversity Committee Chairwoman Sally Lehrman updated the groups on the status of the project. The sourcebook is essentially complete, and Lehrman thanked the Foundation for its funding. An accounting for fund usage was provided in the joint board packet. Lehrman explained that the project has fallen behind schedule due to technical problems getting it posted to SPJ's Web site. To address this issue, Lehrman sought additional funds from the Foundation to do what was necessary to get the database on the Web site. This may involve hiring a programmer. Funds would also be needed to maintain the site and keep it current once the information is posted and to provide promotion to draw traffic to the site.

Motion by David Carlson that the SPJ board recommends that the SDX Foundation board fund this proposal with up to \$10,000 with the understanding that the database must reside on the SPJ Web site within the next six months. Second by Jim Parker.

Board members expressed concern about funding a project that might not reside on SPJ's Web site. SPJ needs to have the technology and know-how to manage projects like the sourcebook on their site.

Hoag Levins suggested SPJ Web managers develop a brief statement of technical specs for SPJ's Web site. The statement would explain that all SPJ technical projects must fit a particular structure that the organization defines. Otherwise, volunteers will have too many projects that don't fit the organization's structure. And sending visitors away from the site makes accounting of site traffic impossible, which is important and necessary for the site in the future.

On a vote, the above motion carried.

International Journalism Committee

The SPJ International Journalism committee requested \$1,500 for completion and distribution of the "Guide to International Journalism Programs," a resource for students and mid-career journalists seeking to prepare for assignment overseas.

Motion by Robert Leger that the SPJ board recommends that the SDX board fund this program. Second by Dave Aeikens. Motion carried.

Update on Previously Funded Grants

Student Press Law Center Grant

SPJ Past President Carolyn Carlson updated the group on the Student Press Law Center's "Covering Campus Crime Handbook." This is the third edition, and the book was funded in part by the SDX Foundation. Carlson thanked the Foundation for its donation and provided copies of the book for board members. The book will also be available in a session she is leading during the convention and will be available for chapter leaders later this fall. Carlson said the new edition addresses new regulations and should remain accurate for quite a while.

High School Journalism Project

Paul Steinle pointed out that information about high school journalism advocacy was available in the board packet. Mac McKerral provided the material for board review. It explains several efforts in Florida to reach out to high school journalists and journalism programs. Steinle encouraged members to read it over and offer suggestions or advice.

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members

Paul Steinle recognized the outgoing SPJ board members and thanked them for their service to the board.

Other Business

Howard Dubin discussed DePauw University's idea of sponsoring a high school essay contest. He wondered if SPJ wanted to participate in this project to increase the organization's visibility. Jim Gray pointed out that SPJ sponsors a high school essay contest about the First Amendment. The group briefly discussed the idea.

Paul Steinle discussed the current grant applications. He said this was a short list of requests. The more people who know that we are willing to support them, the more projects we will receive. He encouraged board members to let people know about the foundation and its work.

Steinle updated the group on a Journalism Education Association project that did not receive funding in the past, but the group had been encouraged to revise its proposal and come back to the foundation in the

future. He said they had decided not to submit a revised proposal.

Adjournment

The group adjourned, and the Foundation board began its meeting.

Actions to be Taken

SPJ BOARD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Board members were asked to review the high school journalism information provided by Mac McKerral.
- Board members were asked by Howard Dubin to consider a joint high school essay contest sponsored by DePauw University.