

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
MAY 3, 2008
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Clint Brewer presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:07 a.m. on Saturday, May 3, 2008, at the Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Center in Indianapolis.

ROLL CALL

In addition to Brewer, the following were present: President-Elect Dave Aeikens; Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Smith; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston; Directors at-Large Sally Lehrman and Bill McCloskey; Campus Advisers at-Large Sue Kopen Katcef and Mead Loop; Regional Directors Ann Augheron, Darcie Lunsford, Jeremy Steele, Richard Roth, Gordon Govier, Ron Sylvester, Travis Poling, Deb Hurley, Scott Maben, Sonya Smith and Sonny Albarado.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Terry Harper; Associate Executive Directors Chris Vachon and Julie Grimes, Editor Joe Skeel; Programs Coordinator Heather Porter; Communications Manager Beth King; Web Administrator Billy O'Keefe; Membership Coordinator Linda Hall, Bookkeeper Shannon Longmore, Administrative Assistant Amanda Mohl, Advertising Sales Manager Mary Morgan, Graphic Designer Andrew Farkas; and Controller Jake Koenig.

Sigma Delta Chi Foundation board members in attendance were: Steve Geimann, Robert Leger, Fred Brown, Al Leeds, Irwin Gratz, Howard Dubin and Al Cross.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVED

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Hurley, respectively, the board approved the minutes from the following board of directors meetings:

- **October 3, 2007**
- **October 7, 2007**
- **November 1, 2007**
- **March 18, 2008**

CHAPTER MATTERS

Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Poling, respectively, the board approved the following items:

- **A request to elevate the Wyoming Pro Chapter from provisional to active status;**
- **An application for reactivation of the Florida A&M University Chapter;**
- **Creation of the New England School of Communications Satellite Chapter of the Maine Pro Chapter.**

SMALL GROUP WORK: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The board spent the balance of the morning and lunch working in small groups to brainstorm and discuss issues in an effort to identify 2008-09 goals for the Society's Strategic Plan.

The staff will review and organize the results of the small group work and present proposed 2008-09 goals for the strategic plan back to the board.

THE JOURNALIST

As part of his written report, Harper recommended that the board take "official" action to cease publication of The Journalist. After four years, the annual publication has failed to break even, let alone turn a profit. The 2007 issue generated no paid advertising although it did generate almost \$13,000 from newsstand sales, but it was not enough to warrant continuation of the magazine.

Upon proper motion and second by Roth and McCloskey, respectively, the board voted to cease publication of The Journalist.

NEW AMERICA AWARD

As part of his written report, Harper recommended that the board eliminate the New America Award. Despite best efforts, the award has never generated more than three entries.

Upon proper motion and second by K. Smith and Hurley, respectively, the board eliminated the New America Award as a stand-alone award and asked the staff to explore the feasibility of incorporating the award into the SDX Awards program.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION

The board went into executive session to discuss the evaluation of the Executive Director.

FY 2009 BUDGET

Harper reviewed the revenue portion of the budget and outlined a board-requested staff reorganization plan. Koenig explained how the budget was prepared and answered questions from the board. Harper will present a budget for approval in the near future. The fiscal year ends at the end of July. The executive session ended.

PR WIRE CONTRACT

Harper provided some background on the Journalism Education Series and the Society's relationship with Marketwire, exclusive sponsor of the Series. He explained that it started off slowly, but once the focus of and approach to the programs was fine-tuned, it became successful. As a result, he would like to approach other companies about sponsoring similar programs.

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Albarado, respectively, the board gave Harper the go ahead to "test the waters" to see if there is interest in similar sponsored programs.

CONVENTION SPONSORSHIP POLICY

Harper proposed revisions to the policy adopted in 2003 regarding non-media sponsors for the convention. Harper stated his opinion that the policy as it is currently written creates barriers to generating non-media sponsorship in a time when media companies are being less generous.

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Steele, the board voted to accept the revised version of the policy.

[The revised policy is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.](#)

DART SOCIETY PROPOSAL

The Dart Society presented a proposal to provide speakers, participants and sponsorship for the 2009 SPJ Convention & National Journalism Conference.

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Poling, respectively, the board accepted the Dart Society proposal.

[The Dart Society proposal is attached to these minutes as Exhibit B.](#)

ANNUAL REPORTS

Harper prepared a report and recommendations for the Executive Committee in January 2008 regarding the annual report process for professional chapters. The proposal requested that the following action be taken:

— Amend the Bylaws to repeal Article V, Section Four requiring professional chapters to submit an annual report.

- Once a month, Regional Directors will make telephone contact with each professional chapter. The staff will develop a simple form to be used to collect key data (membership, finances, programming, requests for assistance, etc.).
- Beginning in 2009, annual reports will be eliminated and replaced with a voluntary awards application.
- Beginning in 2009, the star ranking system will be eliminated.

The Executive Committee endorsed the proposal and forwarded it to the full board for review.

Aeikens and Sylvester made a motion and second, respectively, to adopt the proposed recommendations.

Considerable discussion ensued about the proposal and whether eliminating the annual report requirement is the right approach.

Upon proper motion and second by Roth and Sonya Smith, respectively, the board tabled the previous motion.

Sonya Smith was tasked with organizing a subset of the board to propose minimum standards for professional chapters.

SPRING CONFERENCES PROPOSAL

Harper prepared a report and recommendations for the Executive Committee in January 2008 regarding spring conferences. Harper's proposal requested that the following action be taken:

- Beginning in 2009, Spring Conferences are brought in-house under the direction of the staff and the professional development committee.
- Core curricula will be developed each year in accordance with SPJ's missions and priorities. Topical programming for each region also will be developed in consultation with the Regional Director and/or local SPJ leaders.
- SPJ will apply for a grant from the SDX Foundation to fund an additional staff person to coordinate the 12 additional programs, as well as provide much-needed support to existing programs.
- 2009 marks SPJ's 100th anniversary, elements of which can be incorporated into each of the 12 regional programs to raise the profile of the Society.
- Board action will remove the requirement that chapters attend the Spring Conference in their region which also eliminates an inconsistency because Spring Conferences are not required to be held in the first place.
- Regional Mark of Excellence Awards will be announced via news release, posted to the Web site, and awards will be mailed to the winners. A region may choose to host an event at which the awards are presented in person.

The Executive Committee endorsed the proposal and forwarded it to the full board for review.

Upon proper motion and second by Sylvester and Sonya Smith, the board approved an amended version of the proposal that makes it optional for regions to have their conferences planned and executed by the staff.

TERMS OF USE/PRIVACY POLICY FOR SPJ.ORG

The board reviewed proposed Terms of Use and Privacy Policy for the SPJ Web site drafted by Baker & Hostetler. A motion to approve the documents was withdrawn when concerns about the language were raised by some members of the board. Brewer instructed members of the board to forward their concerns to Harper who would present them to Baker & Hostetler for review and response.

CAMPUS MEDIA PROJECT

Campus Representative Taylor Rausch submitted a project idea that would create a systematic approach to implementing the campus media statement across the country.

Upon proper motion and second by Loop and Katcef, respectively, the board approved the project.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Diversity Committee Chairwoman Pueng Vongs reported that the committee has been coordinating five training programs across the country for journalists working at ethnic media outlets. She is making plans for the Unity conference and the SPJ convention. The Rainbow Sourcebook is being updated.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR MEETING REPORT

At the morning meeting for Regional Directors, the proposals for both the Annual Reports and the Spring Conferences were discussed. Harper attended the meeting to answer questions from the group.

LEGAL DEFENSE FUND COMMITTEE REPORT

LDF Committee Chairwoman Molly McDonough reported that several requests have been received, but not much money has been granted. She is gearing up for the collection of auction items for the annual convention auction.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

FOI Committee Chairman Dave Cuillier reported that the committee created some new Web pages for Sunshine Week and they were promoted by ASNE through their promotions of Sunshine Week.

FEDERAL SHIELD LAW

The federal shield law passed the House and is before the Senate's Judiciary Committee. Including a definition of a journalist seems to be the direction the committee is heading. SPJ would prefer like to move them toward the definition of journalism, not a journalist. The board reviewed a memo from Baker & Hostetler outlining the situation. It was the sense of the board that it could live with defining a journalist if the alternative meant no shield law. Negotiations are ongoing.

ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY

Angela Mensing, editor of The Inkwell at Armstrong Atlantic State University, contacted SPJ seeking support. The newspaper staff is looking for the administration to support a free press on their campus by restoring recent budget cuts made by the Student Government Association. SPJ will send a letter to the university's administration and issue a statement to local media.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board of directors, Brewer declared the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, 2008.