

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2008  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**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 9:10 a.m. on Wednesday, September 3, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

**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; Student Representatives Taylor Rausch and Melissa Patterson; Regional Directors Ann Augherston, Darcie Lunsford, Jeremy Steele, Liz Hansen, Gordon Govier, Ron Sylvester, Travis Poling, Scott Maben, Sonya Smith and Sonny Albarado.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Terry Harper and Associate Executive Directors Chris Vachon and Joe Skeel.

Others in attendance were: Steve Geimann, Fred Brown, Irwin Gratz and Andy Schotz.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Upon proper motion and second by Loop and Sylvester, respectively, the board approved the minutes from the following board of directors meetings:**

- May 3, 2008
- May 28, 2008
- July 29, 2008

**CHAPTER MATTERS**

**Upon proper motion and second by Sylvester and Steele, respectively, the board approved the following items:**

- An application for provisional status of the Wilkes University Chapter;
- An application for provisional status of the Alabama Pro Chapter;
- The Terms of Use/Privacy Policy for the SPJ Web site.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Brewer reported that he and President-elect Aeikens had positive newsroom visits during their time in Atlanta; specifically with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Georgia Public Broadcasting to name a few.

Brewer was pleased to inform the board that SPJ has continued to do good work with its shield law efforts and he recognized Laurie Babinski, Baker Hostetler, for all her help to the Society. To keep the momentum going, a Government Relations committee has been formed and Brewer will serve as the chair after his term as president ends.

Finally, Brewer thanked the board for their time and talent throughout the last year. He enjoyed his term and thanked all for their support.

**2010 CONVENTION**

In examining availability for New York in 2010, Harper found that there is no time of year when we will be able to get a group rate of less than \$200/night. The timing of the convention in August and early September poses conflicts for students and educators. The late September and October dates translate into

higher room rates due to peak season in most places. As a result, the staff requests board guidance on convention timing and location for 2010.

**Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and McCloskey, respectively, the board voted to eliminate New York City as its desired city for the 2010 convention and requests a proposal for possible 2010 locations by April 2009.**

**The motion was amended by Aeikens and McCloskey to eliminate the April 2009 due date.** Instead information will be brought to the board as soon as it is prepared.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Joe Skeel reviewed the accomplishments of the 2007-08 goals of the strategic plan. Some of those accomplishments include the development, and subsequent funding for, of a Town Hall program that will be rolled out in spring 2009. In addition, much work occurred this year by the FOI committee with the Web site and with Sunshine Week. Finally, an assessment was completed by the staff of the Society's database management system, iMIS, and as a result, a proposal is being presented to the board with recommendations for upgrades to the database.

Skeel then provided an overview of the 2008-09 goals in order for the Society to continue to stay on track with the overall strategic plan. The 2008-09 goals were developed from small group work conducted at the May 2008 board meeting.

**Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Aeikens, respectively, the board voted to accept the 2008-09 strategic plan goals.**

**A friendly amendment was proposed by Lehrman to include sections 2E and 4A from Inclusiveness section of the Master Document into the 2008-09 goals.**

Section 2E reads:

Ensure that diverse individuals see themselves reflected at [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org)

Section 4A reads:

Incorporate diversity in all SPJ training and professional development

**Aeikens withdrew his second from the initial motion.**

**Lehrman then seconded the amended motion.**

**Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Lehrman, respectively, the board voted to accept the 2008-09 strategic plan goals.**

## **IMIS ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT DATABASE UPGRADE PROPOSAL**

Skeel provided information to the board about the need for SPJ to upgrade its current database management system. The upgrade will provide real-time action to members; redirect staff resources; and allow for future updates that would improve members' connection to [spj.org](http://spj.org).

The estimated cost for the upgrade — including all hardware — is estimated at \$39,000-\$50,000. Allowing 10 percent for cost overruns, it is being requested that up to \$55,000 be authorized to complete the project. This is considered an asset purchase so would not impact the Society's profit and loss statement. The funds to pay for the upgrade would come from SPJ's reserves, currently at \$375,000.

**Upon proper motion and second by Ralston and Steele, respectively, the board approved the database upgrade proposal.**

## **AWARDS & HONORS COMMITTEE**

The Awards & Honors Committee submitted recommendations, for the board's review, for changes to the SDX Awards and the Mark of Excellence Awards programs.

**Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Rausch, respectively, the board approved the following changes to the Mark of Excellence Awards program:**

- **Adding wording to define a classroom exercise**
- **Restrict the amount of entries in the magazine category to one issue and one entry per magazine**

**Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Hansen, respectively, the board approved the following changes to the Sigma Delta Chi Awards program:**

- **Supporting material: Limit the amount of supporting material with each entry to no more than 10 pages.**
- **Public service categories: Limit the entry to a single article or a series of no more than five articles**
- **Photography Features & Sports Photography: Limit the entry to a single photo or a series of no more than three photos.**
- **Broadcast entry running time restrictions: Apply a maximum running time on entries.**
- **Defining breaks in broadcast entries: Add wording to clearly define how segment/edits should be identified.**
- **Online entries: Add wording “Entry should not include printouts of material that is readily available online.”**
- **Television categories: Reconfigure the categories to be more in line with the categories for RTNDA’s awards program.**

**Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Sylvester, respectively, the board approved the incorporation of the New America Award into the Sigma Delta Chi Awards program. The award’s criteria will remain the same with the exclusion of the collaboration requirement.**

## **STUDENT PROJECT UPDATE**

Student representatives, Taylor Rausch and Melissa Patterson, reported that their projects are nearing the homestretch. Letters have been drafted for the projects — one that will seek to start SPJ chapters at all accredited journalism schools and the other that will seek to have all accredited schools adopt SPJ’s Campus Media Statement.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

After completing the review process of the annual reports and the chapter awards nomination process, Lehrman felt that the cut off between large and small chapters, which currently stands at 70 members, should be adjusted.

**Upon proper motion and second by Lehrman and McCloskey, respectively, they would like to propose that the definition of a large and small chapter be changed from the cut off of 75 to 60 members.**

**The motion was tabled by Maben and Sue Kopen Katcef, respectively, for the Sunday board meeting in order for the Regional Directors to discuss this at their regional meetings scheduled for Friday, Sept. 5.**

## **MEETING ADJOURNED**

**A motion was made by Sue Kopen Katcef and Neil Ralston to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.**