

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
JANUARY 10, 2009
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Dave Aeikens presiding, the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on Saturday, January 10, 2009, at the offices of the Wisconsin Law Journal in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ROLL CALL

In addition to President Aeikens, the following were present for all or portions of the meeting: President-Elect Kevin Smith; Secretary-Treasurer Hagit Limor; Vice President, Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston; Immediate Past President Clint Brewer; Director-at-Large Bill McCloskey; Region 3 Director Darcie Lunsford; SDX Foundation President Steve Geimann; SDX Foundation Secretary and Past SPJ President Irwin Gratz; SDX Foundation Board Member and Past SPJ President Fred Brown; Executive Director Terry Harper; Associate Executive Directors Chris Vachon and Joe Skeel.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Aeikens provided an update on the work of the SPJ committees. He stated that along with his travels, he has had 25 interviews mainly focused on the shield law and the state of the industry. Aeikens also reported that he is sending a letter to President-elect Obama asking to him uphold his campaign promises regarding the shield law. In his upcoming months, he will be focused on the centennial and shield law work.

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Geimann explained that the Foundation's endowment has taken a beating due to market activity. The amount available for the Foundation to provide grants will be affected; there will be less money for grants this year. On a positive note, fundraising efforts have been successful under the guidance of Development Director Amy Posavac. The number of gifts has tripled from previous years and there has been an increase in the amount donated to the Foundation.

WELLS KEY AWARD

The executive committee reviewed a proposal recommending that the Wells Key winner is notified prior to the convention of her/her selection. Past Wells Key winners have shared with us the challenges of sharing this moment with loved ones when the winner is kept confidential. There is still a desire to keep the selection confidential to continue the excitement and tradition of the announcement so the general membership will not notified prior to the convention of the Wells Key winner.

Upon proper motion and second by Smith and Lunsford, respectively, the Executive Committee voted to alert the Wells Key recipient, after the officers make the selection, of his/her selection and the recipient will be asked to keep the information confidential.

STAFF REPORT

Harper provided a written report of the Society's operations prior to the meeting. He reported that finances are in good shape although we are beginning to feel the effects of the industry changes. The process has begun for the development of next fiscal year's budget and the changes in the economy and the industry will need to be taken into consideration as the budget is developed.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVED

Upon proper motion and second by Ralston and Limor, respectively, the committee approved the minutes from the June 21, 2008 Executive Committee meeting.

Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Brewer, respectively, the committee approved

the minutes from the November 12, 2008 Executive Committee meeting.

ETHICS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

At the request of President Aeikens, the ethics committee was tasked with how SPJ can react to industry wide ethical gaps. The committee had an anecdotal example which initiated the conversation. The executive committee reviewed the report from Ethics Chair Andy Schotz and decided not to take action on the information from the committee.

SPRING CONFERENCES

President Aeikens asked if the national officers would like to attend any of the Spring Conferences. Below is a list of the conferences and the officers attending:

Region 1: Dave Aeikens

Region 2: Hagit Limor

Region 3: Hagit Limor

Region 4: Neil Ralston

Region 5: Neil Ralston

Region 6: Dave Aeikens

Region 7: Neil Ralston

Region 8: Hagit Limor

Region 9: Kevin Smith

Region 10: Kevin Smith

Region 11: Dave Aeikens

Region 12: Clint Brewer

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AT DEPAUW

Harper informed the committee that Jane Pauley is scheduled to speak the Friday night of our event at DePauw University and so the schedule will probably be a panel in the afternoon, then a dinner followed by the Jane Pauley address. All the rooms at the Walden Inn have been secured for SPJ and invitations for the event will be going out in February.

CENTENNIAL HISTORY BOOK

The committee reviewed an update provided by Charles Fair on the Centennial History book they requested the following from Charles: editing information, a timeline and available pages to preview.

The committee plans to discuss the book again once this information is obtained.

2009 CONVENTION

Vachon informed the group that the programming committee of Molly McDonough and Kevin Smith met and reviewed about 140 program proposals the day prior. Confirmed sponsors, so far, for the conference are: Russell Pulliam, Scripps Howard Foundation and the DART Society.

2010 CONVENTION

Approximately ten cities were considered for the location of the 2010 convention and the list was narrowed to three cities: Las Vegas, Cincinnati and Salt Lake City. We requested proposals from hotels in those cities. Salt Lake City has only one hotel that can accommodate our group and the prices at most of the Vegas hotels were higher than anticipated. Based upon the proposals from three hotels in Cincinnati, Cincinnati seems to be a good option for us.

HELIUM.COM PARTNERSHIP

The CEO of Helium, one of the world's largest writing communities as well as an online publisher, submitted a proposal for review. A partnership between the two organizations would include: promotion of SPJ to the Helium community; rewards and opportunities for SPJ members at Helium; and tools for SPJ to engage its members.

Upon proper motion and second by Brewer and Limor, respectively, the Executive Committee

directed the staff to pursue a relationship with helium.com.

NEWSWIRE SERVICE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The staff was tasked with investigating the possibility of partnerships with newswire service companies. Three companies were approached and one of them submitted a proposal for review. The committee decided not to pursue a partnership at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Vachon and Skeel reviewed the goals for the current year and provided an update on their status.

The most significant amount of work done in relationship to the strategic plan has been the forward movement of the membership database upgrade. Work began following the 2008 convention and is scheduled for completion by spring 2009.

In addition, the Town Hall Meeting program is underway with plans being put into place for 12 Town Hall Meetings to take place throughout the country during Ethics in Journalism Week (the last week of April).

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee reviewed recommendations from the public outreach committee which was tasked, by President Aeikens, with putting together ideas on opportunities to celebrate the centennial.

Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Lunsford, respectively, the Executive Committee accepted the committee's recommendations with the addition of chapter celebrations across the country on April 17.

UPDATE ON FEDERAL SHIELD LAW

Brewer, chair of the Government Relations committee, provided an update. According to all indications, this year very well may be the year for the shield law to pass. Our position with the Obama administration for now seems solid. Our legal counsel met with representatives of the transition team and the discussion did include the shield law, which they received favorably.

There will be a lobbying trip again this year that will coincide with the SDX Banquet scheduled for July 10, as long as government officials will be in town on July 9 and 10.

ETHICS BOOK

Fred Brown was present to discuss the progress of the fourth edition of "Doing Ethics in Journalism." Next steps involve the marketing of the book to publishers and the decision about whether or not to publish as a textbook.

NEW BUSINESS

2009-2010 BUDGET

Harper discussed that the preparation of the upcoming budget will be approached as there are "no sacred cow" in the Society as we tighten our belts for the next fiscal year. In addition, opportunities for revenue generation will be researched.

GRANTS COMMITTEE

Smith reported that the Grants Committee is moving along. Several conference calls have been held with committee members. Nine foundations have been identified to approach. A call was held between committee members and the Ford Foundation; and we received \$5,000 from the Scripps Howard Foundation for the 2009 convention.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Lunsford reported that she had hoped for a report on the star ranking system from the Regional Directors who volunteered to work on this project, but she doesn't have a report yet to distribute.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Brewer, respectively, the committee adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.