

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL**

Meeting Called to Order

With President John Ensslin presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:14 a.m. on Sunday, September 20, 2012, at the Marriott Harbor Beach, in conjunction with the Society's annual convention at the Excellence in Journalism conference.

In addition to Ensslin, the following were present: Immediate Past President Hagit Limor; President-Elect Sonny Albarado; Secretary-Treasurer David Cuillier; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston; Director at-Large Bill McCloskey; Director at-Large Lauren Bartlett, Campus Adviser at-Large Kym Fox; Student Representatives Gideon Grudo and Taylor Mirfendereski; Regional Directors Luther Turmelle, Brian Eckert, Michael Koretzky, Liz Hansen, Amanda Theisen, Kelsey Volkman, Eddy Gallagher, Don Meyers, Dana Neuts and Teri Carnicelli.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Chapter Coordinator Tara Puckey.

President's Report

President Ensslin began his report by introducing the idea of a partnership with National Press Photographers Association. Because of the high number of arrests of journalists in recent months, especially photojournalists, Ensslin proposed a joint project on World Press Freedom Day. In addition, NPPA and SPJ will write a letter to NYC Police Commissioner Ray Kelly recommending that he use NPPA's attorney to lead a training session for command staff. Ensslin heard no opposition and plans to move forward with the projects.

Ensslin also spoke briefly about his visit to DePauw University, the birthplace of the Society, where he inducted 10 new members into the newly revived chapter. Ironically, Sigma Delta Chi was founded by just 10 members at the very same location. Ensslin added that the original chapter seems to be off to a good start and is taking shape again.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Bartlett, respectively, the board approved meeting minutes from the April 28, 2012 and June 16, 2012 meetings.

The following edits were requested:

— April 28, 2012: Carcinelli requested changes to Campus Chapter Requirement wording, to reflect the final decision of the board at that meeting. "Schools seeking a charter will have one confirmed faculty adviser who teaches or works in the field of journalism..."

Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Report

Steve Geimann submitted his report on behalf of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation.

Limor asked the board to thank Geimann for his hard work and dedication to the Society and Sigma Delta Chi as he steps down from six years as president of the Foundation.

Chapter Action

Upon proper motion and second by Eckert and Meyers, respectively, the board approved a charter for High Point University in North Carolina.

Staff Report

Skeel delivered the report of the executive director and reported that in the most recent fiscal year SPJ's revenue exceeded the budget by \$157,000. However, expenses were also more than expected and totaled roughly \$93,000 over budget. Overall, Skeel concluded that the Society made more than it spent.

Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon spoke briefly about the convention, reporting that attendance numbers are around 1,000 and that roughly 60 percent of attendees are members of the Society. She also cited several reasons numbers are low in comparison to Excellence in Journalism 2011: UNITY took place this year, it is an election year, the partnership with RTDNA is no longer "new," Online News Association is holding their convention at the same time in San Francisco.

Turmelle asked Skeel about billing members in increments. Skeel explained that the database upgrade is in full swing and should be available within a few weeks. The upgrade, however, does not include billing in increments, although Skeel noted that it is feasible. McCloskey asked for further discussion.

Skeel expressed a concern for the cost of incremental billing, noting that the Society would be taking a fiscal risk to implement this feature. Turmelle reported he felt members need the feature to make expenses more manageable, while Neuts said the cost would be returned to the Society in the end. Cuillier urged Skeel to move forward.

McCloskey made a motion that Skeel "install whatever it's called," referring to the ability of members to pay dues in installments. The motion was seconded by Neuts.

Further discussion directed that the installment billing feature should be implemented by the end of the year, pending any technical glitches. Ralston made a point to say that in communication, the Society should be up front about fees or additional charges that members may be required to pay to take advantage of installment billing.

Discussion Items

Regional Fund Oversight

Albarado reported that he asked Eckert to poll other RDs about their regional finances and inquire about sending HQ a yearly report. Eckert said that he found regional funds are handled in a variety of ways and it would be difficult to find a solution to meet all needs. Discussion followed to include concerns about: the need for additional reports, locating missing bank accounts when passed through multiple RDs, emails and reports can be fabricated, who actually retains control of regional funds.

Suggestions included a committee formed to talk about best practices (report and presentation were already created and are available on the SPJ website), adding second signers on the account and asking chapter leaders to access online regional accounts. Hagit suggested the Secretary-Treasurer help develop oversight of regional funds and help guide RDs to ensure best practices.

Upon proper motion and second by Theisen and Gallagher, respectively, the board that the Secretary-Treasurer work with RDs to develop oversight of regional funds. Eckert opposed.

International Memberships

A quick discussion and overview of the policy was given by Skeel and Puckey.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and Meyers, respectively, the board voted to adopt the policy as SPJ's international policy.

Institutional Memberships

Neuts expressed concern that the proposed membership discount is 33 percent, which she believed was too high. Ensslin thought that the levels should be renamed Bronze, Silver and Gold, and also expressed concern about the membership discount, saying he thought \$60 was a better number. Ensslin urged Staff to reevaluate policies for the Collegiate Institutional Memberships.

Upon proper motion and second by Bartlett and Carnicelli, respectively, the board voted to approve the adoption of Institutional Memberships at the levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold to include a \$60 discounted membership rather than \$75 and to put a cap at 10 Gold Memberships for the first year and to give Staff the ability to make changes without board approval.

Ted Scripps Leadership Program

Bartlett explained her concern that the movement of the program would only give chapter leaders the opportunity to participate every four years, which could likely be problematic for chapters with a high rate of turnover in leadership. Limor talked about the ultimate goal of reaching more leaders and her belief that the new proposal will be able to achieve that goal.

Upon proper motion and second by Meyers and Fox, respectively, the board voted to direct Staff to proceed with the plan for Scripps Leadership Program as outlined by Staff and return with a progress report at the next national convention. Bartlett opposed.

Fair Use Project

Skeel spoke briefly about the Fair Use Project being created at American University. A report included in the board materials explained that the project was at the halfway mark and that Columbia Journalism Review recently showcased the effort.

Partnership with NPPA

Ensslin talked again about his ideas for a partnership with NPPA and was met with some concern that students would not be in session during the time of the World Press Freedom Day project. Ralston remarked that we see press freedom issues too frequently and expressed his desire to push a lawsuit forward at some point, making an example of an important case. Limor commented on the amount of funds in the Legal Defense Fund, adding that she wonders if we should be more offensive as opposed to defensive.

Old/New Business

Election Process Update

Skeel and Puckey spoke briefly about the process, addressing various points to include: ways Staff has tried to connect with members, process for filling out a paper ballot, report of 27 paper ballots returned to HQ and a negative response to email correspondence with members regarding the election. Puckey said unsubscribe rates were high and several members complained. The Election Communication Committee will explore other options moving forward.

EIJ Registrations for Committees

Meyers proposed giving one free conference registration for each committee chair or a designated member of the committee, not to exceed one per committee. He expressed that it would be a good way to reward chairs for their hard work and bring them to convention where they continue to do work on behalf of the Society.

Skeel questioned the number of committees that work exclusively at convention, as well as smaller committees. Neuts inquired about the cost of a proposal such as this and wondered if this would only reward committee chairs who already planned on attending the conference.

Turmelle seconded the motion, but both Meyers and Turmelle withdrew their motion and second, respectively, with the intention the proposal be discussed at the meeting on Saturday, Sept. 22, 2012.

Classifying the Size of Chapters

Eckert proposed that for the purpose of classifying chapters by size for awards, only chapter dues paying members of record on Oct. 1 of the year in question should be counted. Bartlett seconded the motion.

Skeel provided information that not all chapters charge dues and the limitations of our database. Both Eckert and Bartlett withdrew their motion and second, respectively, so that the issue could be discussed further during the meeting on Saturday, Sept. 22, 2012.

Executive Session

Upon proper motion and second by Theisen and Ralston, respectively, the board entered executive session to discuss the Executive Director's evaluation.

The board exited executive session and adjourned at 12:35 p.m. Sept. 20, 2012.