

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
SEPT. 18, 2015
ORLANDO, FLA.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Dana Neuts presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 18, 2015, at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Fla.

In addition to Neuts the following were present: President-Elect Paul Fletcher; Immediate Past President David Cuillier; Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Walsh; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Director at-Large Bill McCloskey; Director at-Large Alex Tarquinio, Campus Advisers at-Large Mike Reilley and Becky Tallent; Student Representatives Brett Hall and Jordan Gass-Pooré; Regional Directors Rebecca Baker, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patricia Gallagher Newberry, Deborah Givens, Joe Radske, Eddy Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Membership Strategist Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

Other visitors included SDX Foundation President Robert Leger, SPJ Fundraising Coordinator Katie Hunt and SPJ Communications Coordinator Maggie LaMar.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Neuts thanked staff for its hard work and dedication this year and thanked all the wonderful people around the room and from across the country for their support and hard work over the past year. SPJ has been asked to engage more on various things happening in the world of journalism and with the help of the addition of a communications strategist, and communications guidelines put into place, that has happened. It will continue with Paul Fletcher as he sets priorities and his team will continue the work in the coming year.

With the work of Andrew Seaman and the Ethics Committee, the Ethics Code has been translated into eight languages with more on the way and the code is now interactive. The Diversity Committee added the Region 7 Fellowship and the Reggie Stuart Fellowship. We've expanded from two to five communities and an advocacy fund was created, thanks to Dave Cuillier and the FOI Committee. The fund has \$105,000 in it so far and we hope to see more advocacy efforts in the future. SPJ has taken on some administrative work for ACES and JAWS, with NAJA joining us in 2016. Paul Fletcher also began working on representation for unaffiliated members, which will continue into 2016, and Lynn Walsh is working on a support category for media literacy,

exploring what we can do to reach out to people to support SPJ who aren't journalists themselves.

Neuts said she feels the collaborative spirit, good relationships between board members, staff, etc., have helped SPJ accomplish a lot in the past year. We didn't get everything done that we wanted to get done, "but every president probably feels that way," she said. But everyone's support and friendship is very much appreciated.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the board unanimously approved the minutes as a block: including April 18, 2015; May 18, 2015; June 5, 2015; July 23, 2015.

Dana Neuts asked that it be noted in the minutes that one person was in favor of allowing the SPJ national logo to be used in promoting the Airplay event in Miami that was not Michael Koretzky, who brought the motion to the table.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

SDX President Robert Leger said the Foundation is doing well. It is looking at creating a position that can serve as a one-stop-shop for journalists needing assistance, specifically in the areas of journalism ethics, rights and responsibilities, and open records. This person would be available to parachute in to a community facing a big story and provide "in the coffee shop" kind of training and advice. The programming committee is working on that. The committee will offer a job description tomorrow and decide how to move forward (or not) and how to support this position. The Foundation is also voting on adding two new members to the board – Evelyn Hsu, an active member of the D.C. Pro Chapter, and Sonya Ross, a diversity reporter for the Associated Press.

STAFF REPORT

Skeel introduced Katie Hunt, fundraising coordinator, and Maggie LaMar, communications coordinator, both new staff members who joined SPJ headquarters after the April board meeting. He also mentioned Chrystal Parvin, membership coordinator, who was not at the meeting.

Early budget calculations show we exceeded revenue projections by \$20,000. A huge chunk of that savings was from healthcare. We are up \$170,000 from last year in unrestricted cash, so doing well on the financial front.

With additional business from association management, Skeel shared the staff is maxed out. The board will hear more about this in the future, but one of the first positions we need to look at is another bookkeeper to help Sarah Beck, he said.

The NAHJ board wants to join SPJ and RTDNA again for EIJ in 2017 and 2019. RTDNA is excited about it. I'll leave it up to this board to make a motion. Neuts said she thinks it is a good idea.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Kopen Katcef, the board voted to partner with NAHJ in 2017 and 2019.

Neuts continued the discussion on staffing, asking if space is also maxed out at headquarters.

Skeel said yes, trying to find space to put additional staff members will be a challenge. He proposes remodeling the space we have, specifically replacing the old middle cubicles with something that takes up less space.

Neuts mentioned a couple of housekeeping items – the meeting is being livestreamed and will be available online at spj.org afterward. Plans to go into executive session at 10:30 a.m. Diversity fellows are also planning to join at some point during the meeting.

CHAPTER ACTION

Puckey explained there were eight chapters on the list to be inactivated. This list keeps getting smaller because of some good work done a few years ago getting a better handle on chapter health. Puckey explained their charter is still with SPJ, so they are not gone forever. This is more of an administrative house cleaning, she said. The chapters can reactivate at any time.

The chapters are:

Region 1

University of Massachusetts

Region 2

Regent University

Region 4

Eastern Michigan University

Region 6

Minnesota State University – Moorhead

University of Northwestern St. Paul

Region 7

University of Nebraska - Omaha

Region 11

California State – Fullerton

San Jose State University

Upon proper motion buy Gallagher and second by McCloskey, the board voted to inactivate the chapters.

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Neuts shared that she worked with others to create model bylaws for communities – using chapter bylaws as a guide. McCloskey edited them and they are ready to send to communities for them to take a look. Also, after the community elections in early February, Alex Veeneman decided to step down as leader of the Digital Community and is now coordinator of all communities.

MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATION TASK FORCE

Fletcher discussed the membership task force, which is charged with developing options to ensure the 41 percent of SPJ members not represented by a chapter has some sort of representation. Since the April board meeting, Fletcher has had discussions with several people who say this has been an issue for quite a while. The task force includes Lauren Bartlett, Michael Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Baker, Walsh and Tarquinio. The group developed a survey that was sent to members. It then identified six different models to consider. Each task force member studied two groups of journalism organizations and non-journalism organizations, learning about their governance structures.

The bottom line, Fletcher said, is that the task force recommends the simplest and easiest to adopt model – creating at-large delegates from each of the regions. That would give them a direct voice in who they have moving forward. Since Fletcher is being inducted as SPJ President, he is stepping down as chair and Tarquinio has agreed to chair the task force. We need to keep looking at the issue and develop other ideas, Fletcher said, but this at least puts a proposal on the table that can be considered, and it would be the quickest and easiest way to accomplish representation.

Fletcher gave an update on the Louisiana religious freedom issue, which was a big issue when the board last met in April, in part because EIJ16 will be in New Orleans. A letter was sent to Louisiana Gov. Jindal and the Louisiana legislature defeated the bill, but the governor issued an executive order, however the Supreme Court decision has muted the issue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The SPJ representative for the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) has been Steve Geimann, who is stepping down due to his position with Bloomberg changing and his move to England. Until now, Geimann paid for it out of his own pocket, attending meetings across the country and some other expenses. Fletcher put it on the agenda for Monday morning's board meeting. Cuillier highly encouraged the board to continue SPJ's participation and name someone to replace Geimann. Cuillier said it is another way for SPJ to make sure journalism programs across the country are doing a good job and producing good journalists. It's a way for SPJ to contribute to higher education.

Michael Koretzky reported on the Airplay event in Miami in August. He said teaching news literacy is boring, but he thinks events like Airplay is a good way to do it. Neuts asked about the

bomb threat and Koretzky explained there were four, with the last one being about 30 minutes before the end of the program. He then had Walsh talk about the event. She said overall, it was a great experience for her and was one of the best panels she has ever sat on. Specifically after the first half of the conversation, she said they were able to educate attendees about education, the ethics code, what journalists do, what bloggers do, how social media fits in to journalism and what an anonymous source really is. More of these types of events should be done to educate people about journalism, which will benefit everyone, she said. She thought it was a fair, positive experience and she thinks SPJ should do more of this type of outreach.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

Neuts recognized Cuillier, Jordan Gass-Poore and Brett Hall for their service.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Baker, the board voted to go into executive session at 10:02 a.m. to discuss the executive director's evaluation and board-related matters with SPJ's attorney.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Walsh, the board exited executive session at 11:55 a.m.

Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by McCloskey, the board voted to issue a four-percent raise to the executive director.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Brett Hall, the board meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18.