

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
JUNE 25, 2016
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the executive committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:11 a.m. ET on Saturday, June 25, 2016.

In addition to Fletcher, the following were present: President-Elect Lynn Walsh; Secretary Treasurer Rebecca Baker; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; at large members Joe Radske and Bill McCloskey; Region 4 Director Patti Newberry Gallagher, also serving as the Governance Task Force Chair.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon; Membership Strategist Tara Puckey and Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall.

Guests included SDX Foundation President Robert Leger, Bylaws Committee Chairman Bob Becker, Region 2 Director Andy Schotz and D.C. pro member Kathryn Foxhall.

GOVERNANCE BRAINSTORMING

Fletcher began the meeting indicating that the majority of the meeting would be spent on strategic discussions about the Society's governance, specifically board structure. The discussion was sparked by a proposal by Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky that attempted to shrink the size of the SPJ board. While it failed to pass, it sparked debate and Fletcher asked Skeel to provide information for consideration by the board and appointed Newberry Gallagher as the chair of the task force dedicated to the overall governance discussion.

Skeel gave a brief introduction, encouraging the group to think about high-level goals and what is best for SPJ, leaving the questions about actual possibilities to the task force. He shared information from *Race to Relevance*, a book that highlights radical change for associations. In addition, Skeel invited the group to ask questions about the memos he created about SPJ's governance overall (Appendix A).

Baker noted that she felt five board members was incredibly small and Skeel explained the advantages of having a smaller number: culture, being more nimble, creating a competency-based board. Walsh, Baker and McCloskey discussed the size of the board and how helpful, or hurtful, a large group was for earlier strategic brainstorming sessions.

The discussion continued, covering topics from ideal number to moving away from a representative structure. Kopen Katcef and McCloskey asked Leger for historical perspective on the numerous board restructure efforts that have happened in the past.

Questions arose about how board members might be selected and what the nominations committee might look like, as well as whether or not a competency-based board would encourage contested elections. The group also discussed how leadership within the board would be selected – by election, selection by the board itself, etc.

Discussion continued for the rest of the morning and ended with an overall timeline. Newberry Gallagher will work with others to establish a small working group before convention and provide reports to the full board at the September meeting. If possible, more concrete ideas will be in place for 2017.

Upon proper motion by Baker and second by Kopen Katcef, the group voted to adjourn for lunch at 12:24 p.m. ET.

At 1:42 p.m. ET, the group reconvened and conducted the roll call, noting Immediate Past Present Dana Neuts was absent from the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

McCloskey moved that minutes from meetings dated Jan. 6, Jan. 30, Feb. 29, April 11 be approved. The motion was seconded by Baker. The motion passed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Fletcher shared that his goals have been accomplished for the year. Membership is a top priority, the FOIA bill is moving toward being signed, the board recommended a bylaws change to address unaffiliated members that will go before the delegates at EIJ16 and the Code of Ethics rollout has taken place, sharing information about the new code through all different avenues and channels.

He also shared information about the frequency that SPJ has spokespersons talking about journalism and his personal appearances and interviews over the past year. In addition, Fletcher reported on his travels on behalf of SPJ, including his trip to the White House.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Puckey shared that membership numbers are steadily increasing following a large invoice initiative of expired members. She reported that the Associate category has been adjusted on the website, though the rollout is quiet. Briefly, she explained other initiatives, including sharing information about Prospects – people who visit the website and share information and do not join - and the SPJ After Deadline event that took place at more than 20 locations around the country.

EIJ16 INFORMATION

Skeel provided information about Excellence in Journalism 2016, including changes to the pattern of days, a Sunday to Tuesday, and how that will impact the convention schedule. Vachon explained specific changes that might be noticeable to long-time SPJ members, such as breakouts starting immediately on Sunday and Tuesday being many SPJ-centric items, followed by the banquet.

Newberry Gallagher asked about engaging SDX winners in convention programming. Vachon and Abbi shared challenges about timing and finding ways to ask winners to be involved.

AWARDS

Upon proper motion by Baker and second by Walsh, the committee voted to enter executive session at 2:01 p.m. ET for the purpose of selecting the Society's awards and honors.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the committee voted to exit executive session at 2:50 p.m ET.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m. ET, June 25, 2016.