

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SIGMA DELTA CHI FOUNDATION  
SEPT. 19, 2016  
SHERATON, NEW ORLEANS**

With President Robert Leger presiding, the meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. CT on Monday, Sept. 19, 2016 at the Sheraton New Orleans.

In addition to Leger, the following were present: Vice president Irwin Gratz; Treasurer Howard Dubin; Secretary Hagit Limor; Directors Sonny Albarado, Rebecca Baker, Fred Brown, David Carlson, Jay Evensen, Todd Gillman, Evelyn Hsu, Bill Ketter, Jane Kirtley, Sue Kopen Katcef, Al Leeds, Sally Lehrman, Bill McCloskey, Mac McKerral, Dana Neuts, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Kevin Smith, Lynn Walsh, Al Cross, Dave Aeikens.

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

**MINUTES**

**Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the board approved the minutes from the April 17, 2016 board of directors meeting.**

**SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

In addition to the written memo in the board materials, Leger asked the directors their thoughts on moving the spring SDX Foundation meeting to Friday or Saturday morning, allowing it to adopt a budget before SPJ. SPJ could then meet Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning if necessary. There was general support for considering a time other than the traditional Sunday morning. Leger said he and Skeel would work more on this.

**SPJ PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Fletcher shared that we had a very successful year at SPJ. He had four major goals to begin the year, and said we accomplished them all: we "Fixed FOIA by 50" by pushing for passage of an updated federal FOIA law; SPJ leadership had a strategic planning session to address declining membership; It continued the roll-out of the new Code of Ethics; and Society leadership approved a system allowing all members of SPJ (not just chapter members) to have representation in its governance.

**FOUNDATION STAFF REPORT**

Vachon shared the idea (developed by her and Fundraising Coordinator Katie Hunt) for a Day of Giving – to be conducted in the Spring. She explained the concept of the one-day fundraising campaign, which is popular among colleges and universities.

She also shared that the Google News Lab was interested in expanding its partnership with SPJ and the SDX Foundation. Lehrman expressed concern that we are only working with Google, and asked if we should consider reaching out to other groups such as Facebook.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dubin shared that the Foundation's corpus is up about \$400,000 over the prior year. He pointed out that the Foundation is now in violation of its own investment policy because there aren't enough bond assets in the portfolio. However, he also pointed out, that bonds are no longer a good investment. Rather than align with the policy, he recommended the board revisit the policy during its next meeting.

He also noted that the market is stagnant, and there should be no expectations of movement in the coming years.

**Under proper motion by McCloskey and second by Albarado, the board voted to suspend the requirement of requiring a certain percentage of investments to be in bond funds for the next three years.**

### **PASS-THROUGH CONTRIBUTIONS**

Vachon shared that there were four contributions that needed to be passed through to SPJ. All met the Foundation's mission of education and recognizing excellence. They are:

- \$7,500 from Scripps Howard Foundation for EIJ16 (50/50 split with RTDNA)
- \$4,133 from Howard & Ursula Dubin Foundation for SPJ Newsroom Recognition Packages
- \$5,000 from Tegna Foundation for EIJ16 (split w RTDNA and NAJA)
- \$10,000 from Gannett Foundation for EIJ16

**Upon proper motion by Evensen and second by Cross, the board approved the pass-through contributions.**

### **NOMINATIONS REPORT**

Albarado shared that Aeikens, Cross and Geimann are not seeking another term and will step down from the board. Carlson, Dubin and Pulliam all indicated a desire to be re-elected to the board. Furthermore, SPJ past president Dana Neuts expressed desire to join the board.

In addition, all current officers (Leger, Gratz, Limor and Dubin) announced their desire to remain in those positions.

**Upon proper motion by Albarado and second by Brown, the board elected Carlson, Dubin, Pulliam and Neuts to three-year terms. Carlson abstained. McKerral voted no for Carlson (in jest .... we think).**

**Upon proper motion by Albarado and second by Brown, the board elected Leger as president, Gratz as vice-president, Dubin as treasurer and Limor as Secretary.**

### **"BIG-PICTURE" DISCUSSION**

Prior to the meeting, Leger circulated an e-mail, asking the group to help define the Foundation's priorities. Directors took this opportunity to share some thoughts in person.

- Baker said she likes the idea of having flexibility to spend on our own programs, but still supports other groups as desired.
- Lehrman asked why "outside grants" ranked lower among board-member feedback.

- Albarado answered that if money is tight, and it seems like it will be for the foreseeable future, that outside groups is a last priority.
- McKerral answered that the grants committee always views SPJ as the top priority. This is because SDX is legally a supporting foundation of SPJ.
- McKerral said he think the Foundation should focus some energy on bringing in more money from the outside. He said if we don't find ways to do that, we will continue to be in the same spot. He suggested we change our message and approach when seeking outside funding.
  - Cross said in his experience, people don't support journalism for the good of the cause. Having specific projects when seeking support is the key.
  - Lehrman said the bigger our vision, the better chance we have to get more money.
  - Brown pointed to the Google partnership as an example of what the Foundation could do. We could approach their "enemies," for similar partnerships.
  - Smith shared that Ohio State University, where he works, just came off a campaign that raised \$2 billion over two years. He said the key was having a message that was strategic, consistent, meticulous and relentless.
  - Gratz said the message is "improving journalism."
- Dubin asked if the Foundation should consider bringing together a group of future-thinkers to help guide the Foundation's future programs and projects.

#### **DIVERSITY FELLOWS, HARPER SCHOLARSHIP**

Maynard Diversity Fellows and the Harper Scholarship recipients introduced themselves to the board.

#### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Limor and Leger presented an update on the "Dr. J" idea, and shared the new official name – much to the delight of the crowd: Journalist on Call.

Limor asked the board to vote on creating a position so that it may go forth in seeking funding from outside groups. She also asked the board to invest some of the Foundation's own money into the program. She asked for a three-year commitment.

**Upon proper motion by Limor and second by Carlson, the board approved the Journalist on Call position. McKerral opposed.**

**Upon proper motion by Cross and second by Neuts, the Foundation board pledged support of up to \$100,000 to help fund the position. McKerral opposed.**

#### **RAINBOW SOURCEBOOK UPDATE**

Lehrman reported that she and McKerral will be meeting to discuss the future of the Rainbow Sourcebook and she will bring ideas back to the board.

**Upon proper motion by Gratz and second by Fletcher, the board voted to go into executive session at 11:37 a.m. for the purpose of evaluating the Executive Director.**

**Upon proper motion by Albarado and second by Gratz, the board voted to exit executive session at 12:09 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by Evensen, the board voted to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 p.m. CT on Monday, Sept. 19, 2016.**

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