

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS**  
**SEPT. 21, 2016**  
**SHERATON, NEW ORLEANS**

With President Lynn Walsh presiding, the meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. CT on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2016, at the Sheraton New Orleans.

In addition to Walsh, the following were present: Immediate Past President Paul Fletcher; President Elect Rebecca Baker; Secretary-Treasurer Alex Tarquinio; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; At Large Director Bill McCloskey; Campus Advisers At Large Becky Tallent and Leticia Lee Steffen; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Michele Day, Joe Radske, Kari Williams, Eddy Gallagher, Ed Otte, Ethan Chung, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac; and campus representatives Keem O. Muhammad and Maggie Gottlieb.

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

President Walsh began the meeting with a welcome and introductions. She then asked everyone to share their favorite part of EIJ16. McCloskey noted that this is the first time the SPJ Board has been led by three women and has a majority of women board members.

**SPJ PRESIDENT'S GOALS**

Walsh said communication is going to be one area of focus for her presidency. She said while we are doing much better in our communications efforts, we are still largely reactive and she wants to move to being more proactive. To help determine communications priorities for the association, she has appointed a Communications Committee. Members of that committee are Andrew Seaman (Ethics Committee chair); Robyn Sekula (Membership Committee chair); Michael Koretzky (board member); Gideon Grudo (FOI Committee chair); Michelle Boyet (from Florida Chapter who specializes in social media); and we are still looking for someone with lobbying and/or PR experience to sit on the committee. Please let Walsh know if you have any suggestions. Walsh continued that she would like for SPJ to choose one area of focus, maybe FOI, ethics or diversity, whether it impacts people on the state or national level, and go fight for it. While that may not happen this year, she hopes to lay the groundwork so that can happen in the future.

**COMMITTEE CHAIR APPOINTMENTS**

Walsh announced her committee chair appointments: Andrew Seaman stays on as Ethics Committee chair; Gideon Grudo is FOI Committee chair; Richard Gaspar, who is also a diversity fellow, is Education Committee Chair; Andy Schotz continues as Awards Committee chair; Robyn Sekula continues as Membership Committee chair; Bob Becker continues as Bylaws Committee chair; and Dori Zinn has been named Diversity Committee chair.

## **BOARD EXPECTATIONS**

Walsh encourages and wants everyone to participate. We want to hear from everyone, different points of view from different backgrounds, she said. Email is always good for reaching Walsh, but she said for urgent matters, call or text her cell phone. She expects board members to always be cordial, respectful and encouraging of new ideas.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

Bylaws determine that the president, president-elect, secretary-treasurer, immediate past president and two at-large board seats are automatically on the Executive Committee. Two more positions are nominated. Walsh asked for nominations.

**Under proper motion by Schotz and second by Kopen Katcef, McCloskey was elected by voice vote to the Executive Committee.**

Koretzky asked if student representatives can be nominated. It was determined that they can.

**Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Kopen Katcef, Gottlieb was elected by secret ballot to the Executive Committee.**

## **APPOINTMENTS TO SIGMA DELTA CHI FOUNDATION BOARD**

In addition to herself, Walsh appointed the following people to the SDX Foundation: Gallagher Newberry, McCloskey, Fletcher, Baker, Tarquinio, Kopen Katcef. Although a board vote is not required, Walsh desired one.

**Upon proper motion by Walsh and second by Baker, the board unanimously approved the appointments.**

## **SIGMA DELTA CHI ELECTION RATIFICATION**

SDX Foundation President Robert Leger asked the board to ratify the election of officers and board members of the SDX Foundation Board – Dave Carlson, Russ Pulliam, Dana Neuts, Robert Leger (two more years as president), Irwin Gratz (vice president), Hagit Limor (secretary) and Howard Dubin (treasurer).

**Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the SPJ board unanimously ratified the elections of the SDX Foundation board.**

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Although at-large finance committee seats are presidential appointments, Walsh preferred a board vote. **She moved to appoint McCloskey and Schotz to the Finance Committee. Kopen Katcef seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Skeel shared the Society's conflict of interest policy with board members. Each was asked to read and sign a copy.

Koretzky wanted to discuss how the Wells Key recipient is selected, stating that the board should be aware of those being considered before the selection is made. He said it was not a commentary on this year's recipient, but the process. Tallent said because it is a surprise to the recipient during the President's Banquet at EIJ, the fewer people who know, the better. Koretzky said it is offensive to him that some would think the board cannot be trusted to keep that information secret. They are trusted with other information. But he believes the board should be involved in the selection to reflect where SPJ's values are – to include things like diversity, people who aren't former SPJ presidents, etc. New members are not going to look like our old members, he said, and that should be reflected in who receives this award. Fletcher said this conversation has been had at least twice in the recent past. There is always a spirited debate before the Wells Key honoree is selected. He suggested that anyone who thinks the executive committee "doesn't get it" to make nominations themselves. If someone has an issue with the optics, they should work to change it.

The nomination process was explained for those who were unfamiliar. Methods of asking for nominations were discussed. Several said more diverse candidates should be nominated, that the executive committee can only choose from those who are nominated.

Koretzky made a motion that the Wells Key be included with other awards and that the board review the list of nominees. If the board likes the list, they do nothing. If there is a question whether the pool is diverse enough, they can call a meeting online and have a conversation in executive session.

Schotz seconded.

There was more discussion about women and people of color missing from the nominations lists, look at communicating to members how important it is to nominate diverse people, align other diversity initiatives with this, reach as many people as possible. Schotz said everyone should also look at what the criteria are, because people tend to think it is a lifetime achievement award, but that is not what the website says about it. Muhammad said instead of voting now, he thinks efforts should be increased to reach more people, review what changes were made and see if it changed the nominees. Look at the process first, and if changes don't work, then revisit it.

**Muhammad made a motion to table. Fletcher seconded. Motion passed. Koretzky, Schotz and Radske voted no.**

Tallent said people of color need to reach out to other people they know and make sure they are nominated. Koretzky said if it is the will of the board to do a better job advertising the Wells Key, can a committee come up with new ideas on how to better spread the word? Fletcher said it sounds like a job for the communications committee. Walsh said she would add it to their agenda. Primerano suggested emphasizing that it is NOT a lifetime achievement award.

In other new business, Walsh told the board one of her goals is for SPJ to speak to groups outside of where SPJ would normally speak. Shortly after EIJ16, she scheduled to speak at a domestic violence summit in Los Angeles, mainly about the "minimize harm" portion of the SPJ Code of Ethics. She submitted a proposal to speak at a Wiki Conference in San Diego. The proposal was very broad about journalism and Wikipedia, vetting sources and ethics. She welcomed other ideas. There was also a Race and Broadcast Media conference in Washington D.C. sponsored by NAB and the NAB Foundation to

develop beset practices for TV newsrooms to cover race issues and she was trying to find the right person to go.

SPJ staff members Chris Vachon and Katie Hunt discussed the Day of Giving and explained they were in the concept phase of planning.

Schotz said the awards committee is looking at three different systems to see if many chapters can collaborate to get better rates from one of these companies.

Koretzky discussed the Diversity Fellows and their role at EIJ, asking if there could be more opportunities for interaction with board members and attendees. There used to be a mentorship program, but it was dropped a few years ago because mentors were inconsistent. Dori Zinn, diversity committee chair, said she spent a lot of time with the fellows this year and they had a rigorous schedule. Everyone agreed more needs to be done to foster those relationships beyond EIJ. Anyone with suggestions should contact Zinn.

#### **BOARD ORIENTATION**

James Romoser, an attorney from Baker Hostetler, presented orientation, focusing on each officer and director's responsibilities and duties while serving as a member of the SPJ Board of Directors.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. CT.