

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
JANUARY 5, 2017
ZOOM CONFERENCE**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Lynn Walsh presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:35 p.m. ET on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017 via Zoom virtual conference service.

In addition to Walsh, the following were present: Immediate Past President Paul Fletcher; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Campus Representative Keem Muhammad; Campus Advisers At-Large Becky Tallent and Leticia Lee Steffen; At-Large Director Bill McCloskey; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Michele Day, Joe Radske, Kari Williams, Ed Otte, Ethan Chung, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

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

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss:

1. Allocation of money from the Mid-Florida Pro chapter.
2. Discuss the upcoming strategic planning meeting set for Jan. 28 in San Diego.

MID-FLORIDA PRO CHAPTER MONEY

Walsh shared the background and timeline of her communication with the Mid-Florida chapter. The local chapter president said they weren't happy that the board voted to give the money to the regional directors. They would prefer that the money go to a local open-government group instead.

McCloskey said ignoring the 60-day deadline would go against the bylaws. Walsh explained that technically the chapter did respond before the 60 days. They didn't, however, direct how the money should be used.

Koretzky shared that he was in contact with the chapter four years ago. He said the chapter didn't raise the money. It was the result of a past chapter contest. He also explained that the chapter hasn't been willing to bring in new people on the board and hasn't done any programming. He said 10 years ago it was an awesome chapter. That is not the case today.

Koretzky doesn't believe SPJ should bend over backward to please three people that weren't interested in improved the chapter over the past several years.

Walsh moves to reconsider the September vote and to respect the wishes of the Mid-Florida and give the money to the SDX Foundation or somewhere else in SPJ instead.

Fletcher seconds.

Otte said Koretzky's background was helpful, but thinks Walsh's suggestion buys us some good public relations. Koretzky shared the amount was about \$12,000.

Koretzky says he is floored because they are rewarding a bad chapter.

McCloskey commented that “we aren’t rewarding them. We are talking their \$12,000.” Radske said awarding them would be to let them keep the money.

Koretzky said he would like to hear from other RDs because it was voted to give them money.

Hall said at a time when we are hemorrhaging members, it’s not a bad idea to listen to members' wishes. He also think that the money can go to the RDs. He likes the idea of splitting the money between the RDs (as voted in September) and the LDF.

Gallagher Newberry proposes to give the money to the SDX Foundation, but ask that this money go toward Regional grants.

Hall’s thought is that if the RDs wanted to take that money, now it would mean we would need to go hat-in-hand to the Foundation. Would rather keep the money in hand.

Chung also likes the idea of splitting. He can see it from the other side, as he mentioned chapter leaders in their area would want the money to stay within the region. He could see how it would be most useful to stay in the place it was raised.

Otte says he likes the compromise idea.

Koretzky added that SPJ Florida doesn’t need money, nor does Region 3. While the money should stay in the area in most cases, it’s really not money that will make a difference in Region 3. He thinks the money can go further in other places.

Kopen Katcef says the money should go unencumbered to the RDs. Sitting on the SDX grants committee has shown her that nothing is guaranteed.

Gallagher Newberry said she finds it very agitating. There was a vote in September to have a pool of money, and now there is no money. She understands we are dealing with human beings, though. She supports Sue’s idea of splitting the money.

Walsh shared that the bylaws say a chapter has 60 days to respond, and she feels like we are dealing with a technicality. They did respond within 60 days, although they didn’t dictate where the money should go within that window.

Upon proper motion by Walsh and second by Fletcher, the board voted against the motion to reconsider the September vote, meaning the chapters money will go to a regional director fund for spending as they see fit.

Those voting no included: Muhammad, Primerano, McCloskey, Womac, Koretzky, Otte, Schotz, Steffen, Chung, Gallagher Newberry. Those voting yes included: Tallent, Fletcher, Kopen Katcef, Radske, Day, Walsh, Hall, Williams.

This means the original vote in September (to make the money available to the RDs) holds.

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

Walsh shared plans for the January meeting and asked that the board vote on the expenditure.

Skeel shared that the cost would be about \$6,100.

In response to a question from Gallagher Newberry, Walsh shared that the group in San Diego will evaluate our current practices and develop strategic practices/standards for moving forward.

Walsh said they are hoping to arrive at some set of standards about what we want to say and how we want to say it.

McCloskey pointed out that we have a manual and should follow it.

Schotz asked for an example of a "standard."

Walsh explained that when we find out about a reporter that has been arrested, we get together and decide if we want to send a statement, share via social media, loop in the local chapter, etc. She would like to have a standard that dictates how SPJ responds.

Every time, we go back to the drawing board, she said.

McCloskey asked if this was not covered in our current manuals. Joe explained the gaps that exist as a result of the varying stakeholders that are involved: regional directors, presidents and chapter leaders. Every year, the dynamics change. And that means every year things are handled differently.

Schotz asked why a PR company needed to be hired to do this.

Walsh said that we have tried to handle this internally, but it's not working. She agrees that there may be people internally that could make this happen. But so far we haven't been able to do that.

She is hoping that bringing in someone from the outside can help us move forward.

Fletcher shared that some of the questions he is hearing now are the same he heard last year during a similar discussion regarding a membership strategic planning meeting.

He echoed Womac's comment that having an outside perspective is important.

Schotz said he is skeptical of hiring a person to run the meeting. What specifically does this firm do for us? Is there advice or "facilitating"?

Walsh shared the trainer's background and said she expects that this individual will bring some her expertise and brain power to help us get started.

Koretzky said he is skeptical, but tends to vote for them because he thinks he should support a president's agenda.

Upon proper motion by Walsh and second by McCloskey, the board approved the expenditure for the strategic planning meeting.

Schotz and McCloskey voted no.

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. ET., Thursday, Jan. 5.