

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
NOVEMBER 4, 2017  
ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

**CALL TO ORDER**

With President Rebecca Baker presiding, the meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m. ET on Saturday, Nov. 4, 2017 via Zoom conference.

**ROLL CALL**

In addition to Baker, the following were present: President-elect Alex Tarquinio; Secretary-Treasurer Patti Gallagher Newberry; Immediate Past President Lynn Walsh; Vice President, Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Director At-Large Directors Lauren Bartlett and Rachel Wedding McClelland; Campus Representative Hayley Harding; Campus Advisers At-Large Leticia Steffen and Jeff South; Regional Directors Jane Primerano; Andy Schotz; Michele Day; Joe Radske; Eddy Gallagher; Ed Otte; Ethan Chung, Matt Hall and Kelly Kissel.

Staff in attendance were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey.

Baker shared that Free Press Friday is off and running, with support from other journalism organization, including the Journalism Education Association. Baker also shared some of the events and interviews she has coming up.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Upon proper motion by Bartlett and second by Tarquinio, the board approved meeting minutes from Sept. 6 and Sept. 10.**

**REGION 4 DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT**

The board entered Executive Session to discuss the appointment of an interim Region 4 Director.

**Upon proper motion by Hall and second by Bartlett, the board appointed Tom McKee of the Cincinnati Pro Chapter as the Region 4 Director. Walsh and Radske voted against.**

**REGION 4 SCRIPPS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY UPDATE**

Gallagher Newberry shared that she attended the Pittsburgh Scripps Leadership Program, in which there were about 20 participants. She said it always reinvigorates her commitment to SPJ, and feels that it does the same for others who attend.

One attendee decided to join the Pittsburgh Pro Chapter board as a result, and is now planning to help plan the Region 4 Spring Conference.

She said it's a very worthwhile program and encouraged other board members to attend, even if they have already done so.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH UPDATE**

Baker shared that the Executive Director Search Committee received about 70 applicants. Committee Chair Irwin Gratz will be dividing the resumes among committee members to start the vetting process. There has been no change to the timeline. The Society hopes to have an Executive Director in place by the end of January.

Skeel's last day will be Friday, Dec. 1. Baker shared that the SPJ Executive Committee agreed unanimously that Puckey should be the interim director as of Dec. 1. She asked the board to support this transition.

**Under proper motion by Gallagher Newberry and second by Primerano, the board voted unanimously to appoint Puckey as interim executive director. She will begin Dec. 1 and remain in place until the board hires a new executive director.**

### **EIJ DISCUSSION**

Baker was surprised with the number of people who responded that the main reason they attend is networking. The other thing that jumped out to her was that half of the attendees said they planned to attend next year, and half were undecided.

Gallagher Newberry shared that she was pleased the board had the opportunity to discuss EIJ, which it rarely does. She pointed out that attendees wanted more tech sessions, more hands-on, more networking at a lesser cost.

In general, she said attendees seemed to like the mix of programs, so we seem to be on the right track there. Some attendees said we didn't integrate our panels enough between SPJ, RTDNA, NAHJ and NAJA.

Radske said many attendees liked the critiques. He wondered if we should try to bring a job fair to the conference.

Walsh asked who would be leading the programming for EIJ18. Tarquinio shared that the president-elect typically serves from a volunteer standpoint. The programming committee hasn't started ramping up yet, but they did do a review of the EIJ17 survey results.

Regarding staff participation on the programming committee, Puckey shared that new Education Manager Michael Sanserino will be in charge. However, because he is new to SPJ, she will remain heavily involved for EIJ18. In addition, Programs Manager Abbi Booth will be involved to ensure the programming meshes with logistics.

Tarquinio shared that the programming is chosen by volunteers, not staff.

Regarding programming/planning, Schotz said that hosting SPJ regional meetings in one room was a bad idea. He also shared that there were no SPJ ethics committee sessions accepted. Tarquinio shared that the other groups involved didn't want SPJ to have the market on ethics. All four parties involved in EIJ have ethics codes. She shared there were ethics session at EIJ.

Bartlett said that Ethics and FOI are SPJ pillars, and they should have the opportunity to have those session. Tarquinio shared that the better approach in regards to partnerships is to have ethics session with SPJ representation. Bartlett suggested an offline conversation with Ethics Committee Chairman Andrew Seaman.

Walsh feels we have a bigger question to answer before tackling the programming: Do we want the conference to be where SPJ is presenting its best content? Or, do we want the best content – not necessarily SPJ based? And if it's the latter, that needs to be better communicated to committee chairs.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN RESEARCH/PROCESS**

Gallagher Newberry shared that the Governance Task Force is in the process of gathering information on how to construct a strategic plan. They have reviewed the last plan from 2006, which Gallagher Newberry described as “very dense.” She said it’s early in the process, but wanted to let the board know they are continuing to gather information.

#### **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

Walsh said that she shared a draft policy via e-mail with the board. She based the policy off the documentation created by the Governance Task Force. Walsh asked for a vote so that she may move forward as soon as possible.

Kopen Katcef said she is glad to see the one-year term for students, but would prefer it say “undergrad” student to more clearly define the appointee.

Walsh went over the proposed policy with the board.

Gallagher Newberry shared that the task force recommended that the Immediate Past President serve as chair, but this document says that in accordance to the bylaws, a board member wouldn’t chair the committee.

Walsh realized, and pointed out, that the bylaws address the process once the governance makeover is complete in a year or two. We did not anticipate the interim issue, she said. She asked if the board should adopt one policy now and change it again next year.

Skeel recommended that Walsh, as past president, be heavily involved in the nominations process. But for practical purposes, the board could appoint another person as chair that Walsh would support and guide.

Hall asked if there should there be a provision of when people can go from the nominations committee to run for office? He said there could be a conflict.

Hall also said we are silent on what happens if the Nominations Committee doesn’t recommend a candidate, but they choose not to withdraw from the election.

Skeel shared that Walsh’s recommendation is different than the discussion from April. It’s his understanding that under her proposal, candidates would be vetted for minimum qualifications, then could ask committee for a recommendation from the committee. The discussion in April required all candidates to go through a more rigorous vetting process.

Walsh said she doesn’t like the word “recommendation,” and would prefer something like “qualified,” which states you rise above the minimum standards.

Schotz is opposed to the committee labeling any candidate over another. Walsh said she believes there is a difference between meeting minimum standards verses those that are “qualified.”

Gallagher Newberry shared four points. She said:

1. The point of the committee is not to reject good folks. We want to beat the bushes for the best big thinkers we could bring to the board.
2. We have talked and talked about this idea of giving candidates “seal of approval.” I thought we voted on this course. If we aren’t doing this, it dramatically changes the role of the nominations committee. We need a resolution on this.
3. We need to give the committee maximum latitude in Year 1. It’s new, so we are going figure some of this out along the way.

4. Lynn's got a good approach, and I would be happy to have those documents to vote on via e-mail.

Walsh offered to draft two documents: One that has the nomination committee conducting a more rigorous check, and ultimately determining if candidates are "qualified." The other would describe a more basis role, having the nominations committee simply vet for minimum qualifications.

Baker asked Walsh to draft the two opposing documents then share with the group.

Tarquinio asked if we should have two-year terms on the nominations committee. She also asked what the nominations committee does after its work is complete. Should it go to the board before presenting to members, she asked.

#### **QUILL BYLAWS**

Skeel explained that the Society's legal team recommended it remove the Quill section of the bylaws, and move them to the SDX Foundation. This is in response to the SDX Foundation now managing the member magazine. The move doesn't change the fact that SPJ has the ultimate control over the magazine. However, because the Foundation is directly managing the publication, it makes more sense to have the guiding document under its umbrella.

**Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Bartlett, the board voted to recommend that the delegates remove Article 14 from the SPJ bylaws so that they could be added to the Foundation bylaws. Walsh voted no.**

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Kopen Katcef shared that her dean is part of a task force and they are having a campus-wide open forum on Monday. They have learned that the president of the university has spoken about how the First Amendment might need some changing.

Steffen said that her new university president is pulling together a First Amendment task force. She isn't concerned, but she is keeping an eye on it.

Walsh asked if there is something SPJ could do. Kopen Katcef said she didn't think so at this time.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Under proper motion by Steffen and second by Kopen Katcef, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m. ET Saturday, Nov. 4, 2017.**