

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
SATURDAY, DEC. 1, 2018  
VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 12 p.m EST. Members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; directors at-large Lauren Bartlett, Tess Fox, Mike Reilley, Michael Savino and Yvette Walker; Region 2 Director Andy Schotz; Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky; Region 6 Director Joe Radske; Region 10 Director Don Meyers; Region 11 Director Deb Krol and Region 12 Director Kelly Kissel. Members absent: Campus Advisor At-Large Jeff South. Others present were Director of Communications and Marketing Jennifer Royer, for the opening public session, and SPJ Foundation president Irwin Gratz, for a portion of the executive session related to the executive director's annual review.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Tarquinio presented her latest report; see below. There was no discussion.

**PROCESS**

The board voted to keep comments other than reports to two minutes. Motion: Schotz. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: unanimous. The board voted to suspend discussion at 1 p.m. or as soon as Gratz joined the call to discuss the executive director's annual review. Motion: Kopen Katcef. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous. Abstentions: Tarquinio because she was leading the meeting.

**MINUTES**

The board voted to approve the minutes of its Oct. 28 videoconference meeting. Motion: Newberry. Second: Reilley. Vote: unanimous. Abstentions: Bartlett, Krol and Schotz because they did not attend the meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board voted at 12:09 p.m. EST to enter executive session to discuss part of the president's report, an update on annual conferences, a sponsorship task force report and the executive director's annual review. Motion: Krol. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous. The board voted at 2:33 p.m. to exit executive session. Motion: Newberry. Second: Reilley. Vote: unanimous.

**SPONSORSHIP TASK FORCE REPORT**

The board voted to approve the recommendations of its sponsorship task force as modified in executive session. Motion: Newberry. Second: Krol. Vote: unanimous.

The board approved the following recommendations:

- Both media and non-media entities will be allowed to sponsor sessions/events, and propose session ideas. Proposals will be vetted by the EIJ Planning Committee. Once proposals are accepted, the Committee and its designated producer will assume full responsibility for participants, topics, times, places, etc.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may propose speakers for the sessions/events they sponsor.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may cover expenses for sessions/events they sponsor. SPJ, its EIJ partners or the EIJ Planning Committee may choose in certain circumstances to use sponsor or grant monies to defray expenses.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may offer speaking fees for sessions/events they sponsor.
- EIJ partners will retain the right of refusal over all sponsors, exhibitors or advertisers, with contracts reviewed by the executive directors of partner groups before accepting.
- EIJ partners will disclose its policies on sponsorship of sessions/events to potential sponsors in sales materials for EIJs and other appropriate publications or web pages.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNUAL REVIEW**

The board voted to create a working group chaired by the secretary-treasurer to assist with the executive director's annual review. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Fox. Vote: unanimous.

The working group was charged with the following:

- Draft specific standards to evaluate the executive director at the one-year mark, which is March 19.
- Draft a questionnaire for SPJ board and SPJ Foundation officers with open-ended questions. All responses will be confidential.
- Draft a self-evaluation for executive director to be completed and shared with SPJ board by Feb. 15.
- Draft a separate questionnaire for current and former staff with all the responses confidential.
- Review the six-month feedback from the previous board and executive director to monitor progress.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The board voted to adjourn at 2:40 p.m. EST. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Meyers. Vote: unanimous.

**DATE:** Saturday, Dec. 1  
**FROM:** J. Alex Tarquinio, SPJ President  
**FOR:** SPJ national board



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Colleagues,

Welcome to the new SPJ board. As we all know, the board size and structure will alter dramatically next year. Towards this admirable end, we're putting into place the philosophical realignment that inspired this structural transformation. We're addressing long-term questions about SPJ policies, partnerships and vision, while clarifying how we will operate in the future to achieve the goal set by the delegates who voted to form a more strategic board.

This report is one example of this evolving transition. Traditionally, the board had met in person for full-day meetings twice a year, in April and September, and the president had written a formal report for those meetings. Under the new model, focused on long-term strategic goal setting, I've scheduled video conference meetings for December, February and June. I plan to take each of these opportunities to update you about our activities since the prior meeting.

Each of the video meetings will have a theme. Today we're looking at how we manage our annual Excellence in Journalism (EIJ) conference and sponsorships. In February we'll focus on membership and in June we'll spotlight partnerships. We're spreading these discussions throughout the year in order to give us leeway in our spring meeting to debate the big ideas about how our society can better serve the needs of journalists and promote the preservation of freedom of speech and of the press in this dynamically changing news ecosystem.

Much of my time during the first two months has been spent rebuilding crucial national committees and launching new task forces. The new Diversity committee is already having some exciting conversations about how to strengthen our annual Diversity Fellows program. Another will connect with young members, particularly post-grads. I'd like both to coordinate with our membership committee, which also has a new chair. All of these committees are still being composed, so members should contact me if they're interested in becoming involved.

On the task force front, I would like this board to think of itself as the "new broom." For years, much of board policy has resided in old meeting minutes. The board would pass or revise a policy, but later there was no easy way for future board members to look this up or to feel confident that it was the most recent policy. President-Elect Patti Gallagher Newberry chaired a task force to bring our EIJ sponsorship policy into the modern era, as the last known policy was written before we began co-producing our annual conference. The Sponsorship task force completed its report at a brisk pace for the board's consideration in today's meeting. I've also appointed Secretary-Treasurer Matt Hall to lead a new board policy review task force that will inventory old policies and recommend updates for those that appear to be outdated. Once the

review is complete, all of these policies should reside on our website, in a place that is easy for all members to access, and a backup copy should be kept in print at our headquarters.

Advocacy is another key goal for this year. Our society has traditionally been strong in this department. One of the signature events of these first two months was the release of an open letter to the White House demanding an independent investigation of the killing of Jamal Khashoggi on Oct. 19. Furthermore, we made or joined in other advocacy statements supporting the reinstatement of CNN Chief White House Correspondent Jim Acosta's press pass and in NAJA's urging of the reinstatement of the free press ordinance. At the same time and to its credit, the Legal Defense Fund signed eight legal briefs.

We've been busy making statements to the media and personal appearances. I've appeared twice as a guest on the News Breakfast program of the Australian Broadcasting Corp., first to talk about President Donald Trump's anti-press rhetoric after our open letter to the White House, then, while in Paris during the Armistice Day celebrations, to talk about the importance of reporters in war, among other topics. I also participated on a panel discussion at the annual conference of the Connecticut Broadcasters Association. I gave a radio interview to Voice of America (VOA) about SPJ's statement condemning the revocation of Acosta's White House credentials. Ethics chair Lynn Walsh was quoted in the Chicago Tribune and in the University of Cincinnati's student newspaper, the News Record. Executive Director Alison Bethel McKenzie gave interviews to Sky News of London, the VOA and a student paper at Marist College.

When I ran for this office more than a year ago, I emphasized that I wanted to put the full weight of our organization behind advocacy and partnerships, both nationally and internationally. With this in mind, I've made two trips to the United Nations in New York. At the first, along with RTDNA's executive director Dan Shelley, I spoke to a group of 25 top-tier global journalists about disinformation on Oct. 5. At the second event, on Nov. 2, I attended UNESCO's "Day of Impunity," highlighting the need to end impunity for the killing of journalists.

On Nov. 11, the centennial of the end of the first world war, I attended a Reporters Without Borders (RSF) event within the first annual Paris Peace Forum. The president of France introduced the session, which was attended by many heads of state. Although I've documented this event thoroughly in my Quill column, it is worth noting some of the contacts that I made, or remade, while representing SPJ there, to include Christophe Deloire, RSF Secretary-General; Aidan White, founder and president of the London-based Ethical Journalism Network; Bertrand Pecquerie, CEO of the Paris-based Global Editors Network; Patrick Gaspard, President of the Open Society Foundation; Bruno Stagno-Ugarte, Deputy Executive Director of Human Rights Watch; Maria Ressa, a journalist and the CEO of Rappler, a news website in the Philippines that has been harassed by the country's president; and Roberta Annan, the daughter of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and a development advocate, as well as many global journalists.

It has been a busy two months, and we're still setting the wheels in motion to launch some of our signature projects for the year. Onward!