



**MINUTES**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

DATE: APRIL 17, 2021

TIME: 11 A.M. EDT

**Meeting Called to Order**

President Matthew T. Hall called the meeting to order via Zoom at 11:05 a.m. EDT

**Roll Call**

Secretary-treasurer Ivette Davila Richards called roll. Those present were:

- Davila-Richards
- Matt Hall
- Rebecca Aguilar
- Lauren Bartlett
- Jerry McCormick
- Rafael Olmeda
- Claire Regan
- Bey-Ling Sha
- Yvette Walker

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Bartlett to approve the minutes, with a correction of a typo in her name in the January minutes, for:

- a. 1/16/21 Minutes
- b. 2/20/21 Minutes
- c. 3/20/21 Minutes

Walker seconded. Motion passed.

**President's Report**

Hall thanked journalists for their work the past year – and the past week – covering protests, trials, shootings and other news making headlines from Chicago, Indianapolis and Minneapolis and elsewhere.

He noted that Sigma Delta Chi Day was a success, Mark of Excellence winners were announced and he wanted to thank the judges, and noted that the deadlines for four member awards has been extended to Sunday. He also wished SPJ a happy 112th birthday.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director John Shertzer referred to his written report in the board folder and echoed a happy birthday to SPJ, adding that 112 years is not something to brush aside. It's a legacy and there are very few membership organizations can sustain that long and thrive. Mission remains compelling and relevant and the people have remained steadfast and committed to it, so here we are, as significant as it's ever been. Important that it exists and continues to champion journalism. He also said Sigma Delta Chi Day was a success and thanked those on the call for helping spread the word and giving, in some cases significant, gifts.

### **Public Comment Period**

Hazel Becker asked that something be put in Leads encouraging members to look at the Pro Act which is winding its way through Congress and would probably be bad for freelancers and others. Rollout of MOE regional awards was also discussed.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Shertzer gave highlights of budget memo and said generally it is a strong, positive financial position for the organizations. Controller Jake Koenig echoed that a lot of good things are happening from a financial standpoint and SPJ has momentum now. He mentioned SPJ receiving a PPP loan in February.

### **SPJ Foundation Board Member Approval**

As a procedural measure the Board voted to approve election of two new members of the SPJ Foundation Board of Directors, Patricia Gallagher Newberry and Andy Schotz, for three-year terms. Bartlett moved to approve their appointment. Olmeda seconded. Motion passed.

### **2021 SPJ Convention Discussion**

Meeting Planner Katie Riggs presented case studies showing what other groups have done related to in-person, hybrid or virtual conferences in the past year. After discussion, Bartlett made motion that SPJ plan for a hybrid model for SPJ21 and at the June 26 board meeting check the latest public health information to see if we need to pivot to all virtual. Sha seconded. Roll call vote was 5 no, 4 yes – motion failed. Votes were as follows:

- Ivette Davila Richards – no
- Rebecca Aguilar – no
- Lauren Bartlett – yes

- Jerry McCormick – no
- Rafael Olmeda – no
- Claire Regan – no
- Bey-Ling Sha – yes
- Yvette Walker – yes
- Matt Hall – yes

Aguilar made a motion for SPJ21 to be entirely virtual. Davila Richards seconded.

After discussion, Bartlett made a motion to table Aguilar’s motion until the board reconvenes on May 1. Sha seconded. Roll call vote was 5 yes, 4 no – motion passed. Votes were as follows:

- Aguilar – no
- Davila Richards – no
- Bartlett – yes
- McCormick – no
- Olmeda – yes
- Regan – no
- Sha – yes
- Walker – yes
- Hall – yes

Bartlett moved that the Executive Director bring a report on May 1 on how to absorb the cancellation fee of up to \$157,000 and explore options with the hotel to minimize the financial impact. Sha seconded. Voice vote was taken and motion carried.

### **Campus Chapter Task Force Report**

Sha and McCormick presented the Campus Chapter Task Force report. Sha made a motion to approve the recommendations in the report. McCormick seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Elections Task Force Report**

Task Force Chair Nerissa Young presented recommendations from the Elections Task Force. Aguilar made a motion to approve the recommendations as-is. Davila Richards seconded. The board discussed several wording and requirement changes to the task force report. Bartlett made a motion to amend language regarding endorsements to say “Members may endorse candidates individually or as a group. Those members include national board members, regional coordinators, national committee chairs and national committee members. The only group that cannot endorse candidates is the sitting Nominations Committee –individually or as a group.” The motion was not seconded. During the discussion the board approved an amendment to require holding at least one candidate forum. Aguilar then made a motion to accept the task force recommendations for the elections process as amended. Davila Richards seconded. Motion passed with Bartlett being the only “no” vote.

### **2021 Election Voting Process**

Bartlett made a motion and Walker seconded to open this year’s elections at noon EDT Sept. 2 and close them at noon EDT Sept. 4 to give time to notify candidates and winners can be presented at the President’s Banquet Saturday afternoon or evening. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Chapter Action Report**

Aguilar made a motion to accept two new student chapters – University of Texas, Austin and University of Dayton, to be chartered. Davila Richards seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Proposed Bylaws Changes and Proposed New SPJ Communities**

Due to time, Hall decided to move agenda items 14 and 15 to the June meeting.

### **Committee and Community Reports**

No reports were given but those available are in the board packet.

### **Executive Session**

Bartlett made a motion to enter executive session. Walker seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Board entered Executive Session at 5:23 p.m. EDT.

### **Exit Executive Session**

Bartlett made a motion for SPJ to explore the sale of the headquarters building in Indianapolis and to empower the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with a real estate service. Davila Richards seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Bartlett moved to adjourn the meeting. Davila Richards seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m. EDT.