

SPJ/SDX Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2002 - Fort Worth, Texas

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With Presidents Al Cross and Paul McMasters presiding, the meeting of the boards of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation was called to order at 12:25 p.m. on Thursday, September 12, 2002, at the Renaissance Worthington Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas.

ROLL CALL

In addition to Presidents Cross and McMasters, the following board members were in attendance for all or a portion of the meeting:

SPJ President-Elect Robert Leger
SPJ Secretary-Treasurer Mac McKerral
SPJ Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Jim Highland
SPJ Directors At-Large Jim Parker and Jamie Gonzales
SPJ Student Representatives Brian Joseph and Elizabeth Bienvenu
SPJ Campus Adviser At-Large David Carlson
SPJ Regional Directors Irwin Gratz, Holly Fisher, Bruce Cadwallader, Vicky Katz Whitaker, Dave Aeikens, Patrick Dobson, Todd Gillman, Jay Evensen, Steve Maynard and Mark Scarp
SDX Vice President Sue Porter
SDX Secretary Steve Geimann
SDX Treasurer Howard Dubin
SDX Directors Betsy Ashton, David Boardman; Fred Brown, Frank Gibson, Kelly Hawes, Jane Kirtley, Dori Maynard and Georgiana Vines
Executive Director Terry Harper

REPORT OF THE SPJ PRESIDENT

SPJ President Al Cross referred to his printed report, which was distributed at the meeting.

SDX OFFICER ELECTIONS RATIFIED

At its meeting immediately preceding the joint meeting, the SDX Foundation elected the following officers: Sue Porter, President; Steve Geimann, Vice President; Howard Dubin, Treasurer; and Frank Gibson, Secretary.

Upon proper motion and second by Leger and Carlson, respectively, the SPJ board of directors unanimously ratified the election of the SDX officers.

REPORT OF THE SDX PRESIDENT

SDX Foundation President Paul McMasters reviewed his written report, which was distributed at the meeting. He reported that the transfer of leadership on the SDX board has placed the Foundation in good hands. He praised the leadership of SPJ President Al Cross.

REVIEW OF GRANTS

McMasters explained the procedure for reviewing the grant requests to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation. The SPJ board will make a funding recommendation on each request after which the SDX board will vote on the request.

SPJ WEB SITE AND AWARDS COORDINATOR

The Society submitted two grant requests for maintaining and updating SPJ's web site and funding that portion of salary and benefits of the SPJ Awards Coordinator directly related to the Mark of Excellence Awards. The web site request was for \$30,000 while the awards coordinator request totaled \$21,200.

Upon proper motion and second, by Aeikens and Parker, respectively, the SPJ board unanimously

recommended that the SDX Foundation fund the grant requests.

ALABAMA CENTER FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

This \$6,000 request was for a statewide audit, or compliance survey, to determine the degree of access to public records currently upheld by government agencies.

Dobson and Highland offered the motion and second to recommend that SDX Foundation fund the request. Leger made a motion to table the request. Parker offered the second and the motion carried unanimously.

IRE-SPJ BETTER WATCHDOG WORKSHOPS

At its April 27, 2002 meeting, the SDX board approved a \$25,000 to Investigative Reporters and Editors and SPJ to conduct a series of "Better Watchdog" workshops. The original grant request was for a total of \$100,000. This follow-up request asked for an additional \$50,000 to conduct regional workshops aimed at journalists at small- to medium-sized news organizations (print, broadcast and online) and bureau reporters at larger organizations. These workshops will focus on FOI issues to stimulate investigative and enterprise journalism.

Parker and Cadwallader moved and seconded, respectively, to recommend that the SDX board approve the \$50,000 request. Carlson offered an amendment to lower the amount to \$35,000. Gratz provided the second. The amendment failed. Leger offer an amendment to lower the amount to \$40,000. Carlson provided the second. The motion, as amended, carried unanimously. As a student employee of IRE, Joseph abstained.

CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

SPJ Diversity Chair Sally Lehrman presented her \$51,000 request to build upon the success of the Rainbow Sourcebook by creating a campaign that would make every SPJ member aware of the news values that drive diversity efforts, encourage them to incorporate these in their daily practice and provide them techniques and tools including the Rainbow Sourcebook.

Leger and Gratz moved and seconded, respectively, to recommend that the SDX board fund the grant request in full. Dobson offered an amendment to limit the recommendation to one-third of the request, or \$17,000. Parker provided the second. The amendment failed. The original then motion passed unanimously.

ADDITIONAL GRANTS

In order to move the meeting along, Leger moved to recommend that the SDX board fund the remaining grant requests. Dobson provided the second. Given that funding during this grant cycle was limited, Highland moved to table the remaining grant requests until a future meeting. With Parker providing the second, the motion to table carried unanimously.

SDX ACTION

With the SPJ board funding recommendations in hand, the SDX board then took action on the grant requests.

SPJ WEB SITE MAINTENANCE

Upon proper motion and second by Highland and Geimann, respectively, the SDX board voted unanimously to approve SPJ's \$30,000 grant request for web site maintenance.

SPJ AWARDS COORDINATOR

Upon proper motion and second by Gillman and Brown, respectively, a majority of the SDX board voted to approve SPJ's \$21,200 grant request to fund the portion of the awards coordinator's salary and benefits related to the Mark of Excellence Awards.

CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY CAMPAIGN

McKerral and Ashton moved and seconded, respectively, to fund the \$51,000 Celebration of Diversity

Campaign grant request. Given the Foundation's limited resources, the motion was amended by Cross and Carlson, respectively, to approve \$18,800 now with consideration given to additional funding in the future. The motion carried.

PUERTO RICO EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The SDX board reviewed a request from SPJ for \$6,000 over the next three years to fund an exchange program with Puerto Rican journalists.

Boardman moved to approve the request. Geimann seconded the motion. The motion failed.

IRE-SPJ BETTER WATCHDOG WORKSHOPS

Upon proper motion and second by Vines and Geimann, respectively, the SDX board approved IRE and SPJ's \$40,000 grant request to continue funding the Better Watchdog Workshops.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS

The SDX board observed that all the funds available for grants at this meeting had been allocated.

Upon proper motion and second by Vines and Ashton, respectively, the SDX board voted affirmatively to table until spring 2003 grant requests from the University of Missouri, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and the National Freedom of Information Coalition.

The organizations will be sent letters to that effect instructing them to confirm their requests before the grant deadline in February.

ALABAMA CENTER FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

Upon proper motion by Vines and Dubin, respectively, the SDX board voted affirmatively not to fund this request.

ACEJMC

The boards discussed the Foundation's membership in ACEJMC due to SPJ's recent financial situation. The SDX board feels strongly that this should be an SPJ obligation, but that SDX did agree in its earlier meeting to pay the dues for one more year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the boards of directors, Presidents Cross and McMasters declared the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. on Thursday, September 12, 2002.