

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS**  
**SEPT. 4, 2014**  
**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**  
***STREAMED LIVE AT WWW.SPJ.ORG***  
***AND ON GOOGLE + AND YOUTUBE***

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

With President David Cuillier presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

In addition to Cuillier, the following were present: President-Elect Dana Neuts; Immediate Past President Sonny Albarado; Secretary-Treasurer Paul Fletcher; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Directors at-Large Bill McCloskey and Carl Corry; Student Representative Brett Hall; Campus Advisers at-Large Kym Fox and Becky Tallent; Regional Directors Rebecca Baker, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Susan Stevens, Joe Radske, David Sheets, Eddy Gallagher, Pia Hallenberg, Matthew Hall and Tony Hernandez.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Chapter Coordinator Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

Newly appointed board members Brett Hall and Matthew Hall introduced themselves to the group, as did Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

President Cuillier shared highlights from his presidency, including advocacy efforts, the hiring of a full-time communications position (Royer), the ethics code revision and the launch of communities.

**UNDER-30 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

John Ensslin shared his task force's report. Ensslin explained the process: The group started as a name-change task force, but learned that there was little support for a name change. It morphed into a task force to look at SPJ's future and added several SPJ members younger than 30. The group of young journalists developed the list of ideas, which was vetted by the senior members on the name-change task force (Future's Task Force).

Ensslin asked the board to embrace the recommendations, some of which have already been adopted and implemented.

**Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Stevens the board voted to instruct staff to examine the financial impact of extending the post-graduate membership rate from three years to four.**

Staff is to report its findings to the board in April.

The board also discussed the SPJ job bank, questioning whether the \$14,000 it receives each year from Boxwood (the job bank host) is worth it, considering the job bank isn't very robust. The board agreed that it would like to see more jobs.

The board discussed the possibility of creating an online repository of links that directs people to other job boards, including national sites (such as journalismjobs.org) and chapter sites that list jobs.

**Upon proper motion by Gallagher Newberry and second by Albarado the board voted to create a sub-committee that will investigate the pros and cons of continuing the current job bank model with Boxwood. The subcommittee will deliver a report in April with concrete options.**

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Schotz asked whether the conference call to appoint the Region 11 director and student representative was considered an executive session. Cuillier explained that because this was similar to a personnel discussion, the answer was yes.

Skeel asked for clarification on how detailed the minutes should be. The board agreed that all actions and motions should be included, even if motions die with no second.

**Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Fletcher the board voted to approve the minutes with the following corrections (as suggested by Schotz).**

#### From April 26, 2014, meeting

- In attendance: Patti Gallagher Newberry (no hyphen), Don Meyers (sted Myers)
- Under "Streamlining" - Cuillier (sted Cullier)

#### From July 28, 2014, conference call

- Include missing motion: Schotz moved to approve Molly Dugan as Region 11 Director. There was no second.

#### From Aug. 20, 2014, Skype conference call

- Gallagher Newberry (no hyphen)
- Schotz objection, stated at the top, was not specifically because of the two points he recommended changing. Here's how that section could be tweaked: "He shared that he was hesitant about voting yes or no on the current version because it still needed work." The rest of that graf could be cut - the motions he made later speak for themselves.

- In the last sentence on p. 36, add an “s” to “journalist.”
- “Cook opposed the adding the principle...” - strike first “the”
- Schotz’s second motion for including a reference to anonymous comments did not fail in a voice vote. It was an 8-5 roll call vote: yes: Schotz, Gallagher Newberry, Hernandez, Kopen Katcef, Hallenberg Christensen; no: Matthew Hall, Cook, Albarado, Corry, Tallent, Fox, Sheets, Neuts

### **SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT REPORT**

SDX Foundation president Robert Leger covered the highlights of his written report, noting that the Foundation’s endowed funds have remained steady – as have the grant-making activities.

He hopes that the Foundation board will take action on during its meeting (Sept. 6) on taking over the educational responsibilities of SPJ. If this happens, the Foundation would become a working board, as opposed to mainly being a grant-making board.

Leger also shared an update on the First Amendment Award, which will be given out during the President’s Installation Banquet on Sept. 6. He also provided updates on the current Editorial Fellowship and past fellowship winners.

### **ADVOCACY FUND**

Cuillier shared a proposal that addressed questions he heard from board members in April. The proposal asked for three things:

- Approve the concept of endowed fund within the LDF. Shared that they could do fund-raising now, but that it could officially become endowed in a couple years.
- Allocate \$75K from the current LDF fund to this endowed fund.
- Adopt a policy that the SPJ’s board put excess funds into the endowment at the end of each fiscal year.

**Upon proper motion by Koretzky and second by Matthew Hall the board voted to launch the endowed advocacy fund immediately, funding it with \$75,000 from current LDF account.**

**Baker moved to amend Koretzky’s motion by also creating a policy that would move excess funds at the end of the fiscal year into the endowment fund. The motion was seconded by Hernandez.**

Debate ensued on whether the current board should put this onus on future boards. Also, there was discussion on whether this would “handcuff” SPJ in the future.

There was a move to call to question. The board voted to end debate.

Baker's amendment was voted down. The original motion stands as passed.

After that, the board voted in favor of the original motion.

### **SPJ TORCHBEARERS**

Puckey shared the highlights from her memo, explaining the ongoing trial with a core group of members in Nebraska. The trial is to see if SPJ could sustain/support a group of people who can't make a chapter structure work, but still want to do work on behalf of SPJ.

Puckey noted that this "centralization" concept is a national trend among chapter-based organizations. Many groups are finding it harder to sustain a nationwide chapter structure, as the number of volunteers shrinks. She hopes this provides a flexible solution for SPJ.

### **PARTNERSHIP/ADVOCACY UPDATES**

Skeel shared updates about the advocacy/partnership efforts that have taken place over the past few months.

- The PIO letter (signed by 40 journalism organizations) that was sent to the White House.
- A letter to the EPA regarding transparency and access to scientists working for the federal government.
- Statements on the deaths of journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff.
- A leadership summit scheduled for Sept. 5 at EIJ.
- Two groups are interested in talking to SPJ about providing back-office management services.

### **FUTURE SPRING BOARD MEETINGS**

Skeel shared that Indianapolis is becoming a top convention city, making it harder to secure hotel space for spring meetings. He asked the board to support the idea of moving spring meetings to other parts of the country, namely coinciding with future convention locations. The board supported the idea.

### **CHAPTER ACTIVITY**

Puckey shared her memo on the chapters that should be declared inactive. She also shared that the California State University – Sacramento chapter be chartered.

Those that were voted to become inactive:

Boston College

Curry College

Lyndon State College

Temple University

Georgia College & State

Georgia Southern University  
Georgia State University  
Kent State University  
Western Michigan University  
Ball State University  
Franklin College  
Louisville Collegiate Satellite  
University of Southern Indiana  
Marquette University  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
Iowa State  
University of Iowa  
Oklahoma State  
Southern Methodist University  
Stephen F. Austin University  
Texas Christian University  
Texas Tech  
Texas Woman's University  
Southern Utah University  
University of Colorado  
Wyoming Pro  
California State - Long Beach  
Pepperdine University - Malibu  
Arkansas State University  
East Tennessee State  
Greater Tri-Cities Pro

**Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Neuts the board voted to accept staff's recommendation on chartering CSU-Sacramento and de-activating the chapters above.**

### **COMMUNITY UPDATE**

Neuts provided an update on the Freelance Community. She shared that the group will be meeting during EIJ14 to build interest in the community. The goal is get enough interest to conduct elections.

She also updated the board on the Digital Committee, and shared that the Gen J committee is interested in shifting into a community.

She explained that one of her major focuses in the coming year will be supporting and building communities in the coming year.

### **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Neuts shared that while it isn't required in the bylaws for the president to ask for board approval of committee appointments, she felt it was important in the name of transparency.

She asked the board to support her committee chair appointments.

**Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by Tallent the board voted to approve Neuts' committee appointments.**

### **BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION**

Cuillier recognized, and presented certificates, to retiring board members David Sheets, Carl Corry, Sonny Albarado, Susan Stevens and Kym Fox.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Cuillier asked committee chairs in attendance to share information regarding their reports. Those in attendance answered questions from the board.

Tallent shared more detail about the Journalism Education Committee's ongoing high-school journalism book project.

Committee chairs in attendance were Michael Fitzgerald (Freelance), Claudia Amezcua (Gen J), Tallent (Journalism Education) and Neuts (Membership).

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION**

**Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker the board voted to go into executive session – for the purpose of discussing the Executive Director's evaluation – at 11:25 a.m.**

**Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Baker, the board voted to exit executive session at 12:05 p.m.**

Discussion ensued about the evaluation process.

Some board members shared frustrations, noting they didn't have enough time to read and digest the written evaluation (which was handed out during executive session) before voting on a pay increase. They encouraged a process where the board gets the evaluation sooner.

Cuillier explained that the evaluation process has evolved over time, and it can continue to evolve.

**Upon proper motion by Corry and second by Fox the board voted to approve a 4-percent pay increase. Koretzky voted no.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Baker the board voted to adjourn at 12:12 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 4.**