

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
MAY 18, 2015
SKYPE CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Dana Neuts presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1 p.m. ET on Monday, May 18, 2015, via Skype conference call.

In addition to Neuts the following were present: President-Elect Paul Fletcher; Immediate Past President David Cuillier; Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Walsh; Directors at-Large Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Student Representative Jordan Gass-Pooré; Regional Directors Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Joe Radske, Rob McLean, Eddy Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Pia Hallenberg, Matt Hall and Tony Hernandez.

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

The primary purpose of the call was to select an interim director for Region 12. Current regional director Tony Hernandez moved out of the region, making him ineligible to hold office according to the Society's bylaws (Article 7, Section 5). The selected candidate will serve until EIJ15, when an election will be held (Article 7, Section 9).

The board also considered an application from the Generation J Committee, which desired to become a community.

GENERATION J COMMUNITY APPLICATION

Neuts explained that the Generation J Committee felt the best structure moving forward was to become a community instead of operating under its current committee structure – which limits participation to a handful of individuals.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Tarquinio, the board approved the community application from the Generation J Committee.

INTERIM REGION 12 DIRECTOR

The board considered application materials from Amanda Womac, Kathleen Wickham, Patricia Roberts and Rachel Wedding McClelland.

Neuts asked board members to share any information about the candidates. McCloskey asked Hernandez to share his insight into the candidates.

Hernandez said he knows three of the candidates. He has been grooming Womac in hopes she would have interest in becoming a regional director. She currently serves as the regional treasurer. He explained that Wickham is a longtime chapter advisor at the University of Mississippi. At one point under her guidance, her chapter was named collegiate chapter of the year.

Hernandez said Wedding McClelland called him about the position a few weeks ago. She seemed eager and excited, but didn't have a lot of experience with chapters or regional business.

Koretzky shared that he knows Wedding McClelland from the Collegiate Media Association. She has done a lot of SPJ programming there. Koretzky shared that the appointed RD is required to help with the Green Eyeshade awards. Revenue generated from this contest supports much of what Region 3 and Region 12 do.

Koretzky said because of Hernandez's transition in his new job, the awards suffered about \$5,000 this year. From his perspective, the Region 12 director must be on the ball.

Koretzky asked which candidate would do a great job on the contest.

Hernandez said Womac has experience running chapter contests. He felt Wickham would also do well. Neither have direct experience with Green Eyeshade.

Schotz felt the only candidate that showed real passion in the submitted materials was Wedding McClelland. He questioned if that is something that comes through, perhaps showing more of a commitment than the other candidates.

Koretzky said he was split on the candidates. He thinks Wedding McClelland would bring a lot of energy, but is also cognizant of the fact that Hernandez has been grooming a replacement in Womac.

Hallenberg said it was important to keep in mind this was an interim position. The board's task is to choose someone who can run the region until the conference in September. Therefore, she said it's important to be able to hit the ground running.

McCloskey asked Koretzky when the Green Eyeshade contest occurs. Koretzky replied that the awards would not start up until after the September conference.

McLean asked Hernandez to describe Womac's enthusiasm and her overall SPJ excitement. Hernandez shared that she is very enthusiastic: She runs the chapter website, social media and communications for the East Tennessee chapter. She is always very positive.

Neuts added that Womac has always impressed her, but also liked that Wedding McClelland sent a letter to the board of directors showing her passion for journalism and enthusiasm for the position.

Fletcher shared that Womac and he were in the same Scripps Leadership class. Fletcher has watched Womac from afar since that class and was pleased that she has decided to step forward.

Schotz asked if Hernandez was recommending Womac. Hernandez said he wasn't comfortable recommending anyone. But, if he were to rank the candidates, he would place Womac and Wickham at the top based on their SPJ experience. He said that the work between now and the conference would focus on annual reports. Experience with the region and chapters would be helpful.

Neuts asked Matt Hall, who was selected as an interim regional director last year, what his biggest challenges were. He said the board should choose someone who is a quick study, willing to ask questions and has the time to do the job.

Koretzky asked Hernandez which of the candidates might make the best assistant regional director if they aren't chosen. Hernandez said when he talked to Wedding McClelland, she was interested in helping the RD if she weren't chosen. Wickham would be another good person because she understands the chapters and regional structure.

Hernandez shared that the Region 12 bank account is a Regions Bank account, so ideally the treasurer would be in a city that has personal access. Wedding McClelland, Womac and Wickham all live in a city with a Regions bank account, Hernandez said.

Neuts addressed comments made about diversity, stating that SPJ should seek out diverse candidates instead of waiting for them to come to us.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by McLean, the board selected Womac as interim Region 12 Director. Hernandez and Neuts abstained. Schotz voted no.

Schotz asked to make it standard practice that the Society ask for a résumé when individuals apply for office. McCloskey said SPJ could solve Schotz's concern by having a standard operating procedure for interim-selection process.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Tallent, the meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2015.