

Society of Professional Journalists/Georgia Chapter
July 17, 2017 Board Meeting 8 p.m.
Meeting by Conference Call

MINUTES

The Meeting was Called to Order at 8:05 p.m. by Ellen Eldridge. Meeting was publicized on the web well in advance. June minutes were mailed to Board Members 10 days in advance.

PRESENT: Ellen Eldridge, Dan Whisenhunt, Lou Phelps, Haisten Willis, Jay Suber and Jennifer Matthews, and Student Representative Sierra Hubbard. Also joining the meeting was member Bobby Rodrigo.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Dan Whisenhunt, President-Elect and Treasurer reported on the balance in the Chapter's account. Eldridge and Whisenhunt informed the Board that they decided to move the Chapter's account to the Bank of the Ozarks, at a branch in Brookhaven, GA from Chase Bank due to security concerns. The last week of June, Whisenhunt noticed that all of the Chapter's money was removed from the account, but then returned three days later. He does not know if it was done by an individual or was bank fraud that they resolved. Whisenhunt felt that the bank was not helpful in arriving at an explanation of what had occurred.

He also recommended that the amount of money in the account no longer be publicized; the board was in agreement, but all Board members will receive a monthly report, including performance to budget.

MINUTES: The minutes of the June 22 were approved by a vote, on a motion by Ellen, seconded by Haisten by a vote of 4 to 2. A motion made by Jay Suber and second by Dan Whisenhunt to amend the minutes failed by a vote of 2 in favor, 4 opposed.

PRESIDENTS REPORT / NEW BUSINESS

Regarding Proposed changes to National Bylaws: President Eldridge suggested that the Board read all the available information over the next month regarding the proposed changes to the bylaws that govern the Society of Professional Journalists, for a discussion and vote at the August meeting on the Board's majority position. Several bylaw changes will be considered at the upcoming National Convention in September.

Board member Jay Suber asked "What does the National Board look like, and how does it relate to the Georgia Chapter?"

All of the detailed information about the bylaws changes to be voted on in Anaheim can be found at SPJ.org. A task force of the National Board is proposing two major changes:

- The Regional Director positions be removed from the board but remain in place as Regional Coordinator positions. Their function and stipends would remain. They would have a direct line of contact to the board through a designated board member and could hold meetings on their own.
- A smaller, national board of nine members that includes three officers and six individuals chosen for their knowledge base, diversity, and ability to think strategically for SPJ.

Eldridge is still asking each board member to plan and host a small meet-up with a featured speaker sometime in 2017. She is planning one in Woodstock on Sept. 9 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on community news reporting with Patch editor Kristal Dixon

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Eldridge has identified a volunteer to help with future newsletters. A July newsletter was sent out on July 15 by Eldridge. Newsletters will include the upcoming Board meeting time/location so members can attend should they wish.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Chaired by Jay Suber. The committee will hold its first meeting next week, and report to the Board on progress at the August Board meeting. Suber has written an outline of the mission of the Nominating Committee. There is still an open discussion on the number of seats to be filled. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board on whether the President-Elect and Treasurer positions be combined, and also consult the Bylaws. Eldridge has sent some ideas to the Nominating Committee for individuals to be considered.

Eldridge has also proposed that the position of President-Elect and Treasurer be combined through a Bylaw change of the Georgia Pro Chapter. There is still incomplete discussion on the number of board members. Suber suggested that it be an uneven number. Seven had been discussed at the June Board Meeting.

SOCIAL MEDIA - Bobby Rodrigo has volunteered to help the Chapter with our Facebook and Twitter presence. He manages over 100 social media pages, and suggested that there be a fixed schedule, whether once a day, three times a day, etc. plus graphics or short videos. The focus will be on journalism subjects. Current Chapter Twitter: 885 followers, and 453 likes on the FB page.

Board members discussed the mission of the page, with the agreement that it be Georgia-journalism focused, primarily, and that all posts will go through Eldridge for approval. Board members were encouraged to send FB posts and ideas to Rodrigo at mrbobbyrodrigo@gmail.com who will coordinate with Eldridge.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ASSIGNMENTS: Ellen wrote about Bill Phelps for July
Adina Solomon has one for August
September will be written by Lou Phelps on a new member from the Coastal Georgia area.
Haisten Willis volunteered to write the October Spotlight.

FREELANCE COMMITTEE: Haisten Willis updated the board on the freelance committee's lunch next Tuesday in its regular series. There are no other major events planned before the end of the year except for the August 17 'Hyper-local Digital Panel.' The panel will include Board members in digital news, and Wendy Parker, who recently launched the East Cobb News.

A motion was made by Jay Suber at 9:12 pm to adjourn. Seconded by Eldridge.

Minutes submitted by Lou Phelps, Secretary