

**MINUTES**  
**SPJ Georgia Pro Chapter Board of Directors Meeting**  
**September 20, 2017**

MEETING: Called to order at 10:15 a.m. CNN, 190 Marietta St NW, Atlanta, GA 30303

PRESENT: Ellen Eldridge, Dan Whisenhunt (by phone), Lou Phelps, Jennifer Matthews, Haisten Willis.

ABSENT: Mark Thomason, Julius Suber

TREASURER REPORT: Presented orally by Dan Whisenhunt. Balance reviewed with Board; up slightly. Ellen Eldridge reviewed the need to spend a little money to improve the email the Chapter is using, to increase open rates. Motion made to accept the Treasurer's report. Vote unanimous.

AUGUST MINUTES: Were approved as written.

NEW BUSINESS: Ellen Eldridge began the meeting by reading into the record the Convention Report by Sienna Hubbard who was our Chapter's official delegate at the Anaheim SPJ National Meeting. Decisions by the convention were briefly discussed. (Attached.)

OLD BUSINESS:

- **FREELANCE COMMITTEE:** Report presented by Haisten Willis. The October Freelance Committee Meeting is set for Wednesday, Oct. 11, 7:30 p.m. at Dunwoody Long's Bakery. There is a listing for the meeting on SPJGeorgia.com

The next freelancer lunch meetup will be Wednesday, Sept. 27, noon at Café Intermezzo in Dunwoody. Registration is available at Eventbrite (free admission). There was discussion about whether to charge for various events. Jennifer Matthews pointed out that charging at least a small fee adds a perception of value. It was decided to make that decision, per event. Nine people attended the last luncheon. And, Charles Bethea will be the featured speaker at a Freelance Lunch and Learn on Weds. Oct 25 at WSB from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. WSB-TV News 2 is located at 1601 West Peachtree Street Northwest, Atlanta, GA 30309. All events are featured on the website and through our Facebook page.

- **BYLAW CHANGES:** Ellen Eldridge proposed a change to the Chapter's Bylaws that would combine the Vice President and the Treasurer's position. Because members must be informed sixty days in advance of when they will vote on a Bylaw Change, the discussion moved to setting the date of the Annual Meeting. Lou Phelps proposed that it be held one hour before the members holiday party, which was approved. This is a suggestion from Jay Suber and Lou Phelps, representing the Nominating Committee. Phelps also shared with the Board that if the positions were combined, it would take effect as of the election to be held in December 2018, effective January 2019.

Phelps also raised a possible Bylaw change to make clear that the Student Member of the Board – as provided for in the Bylaws – be just a one-year term. It was then concluded that for this year, the person proposed in the Nominating Committee's Slate could be specified as filling out an uncompleted term – to serve for one year.

There was no second to Eldridge's motion to combine the two executive positions.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT:** Bobby Rodrigo, who is heading up the Chapter's Facebook page, was unable to attend the meeting, so no new data on metrics were reviewed. He is testing best times of the day to post to achieve more likes.

- **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:** Lou Phelps represented the report for Chairman Jay Suber. The Committee holds a weekly telephone meeting, and is on track to publicize the process to all paid members, and invite members to nominate themselves or others. Dates for the election were also reviewed: to be held Mon, Tues and Weds, Dec. 4, 5 and 6, 2017, by electronic means. Survey Monkey will be used.

Positions to be elected are: President, one year; Vice President/President-Elect, one year; Treasurer, two years; a Student Board Member, to fulfill a one-year unexpired term; and two board members, two-year terms.

- **FEES FOR SPEAKERS:** Ellen Eldridge raised the issue of whether the Board supported paying speakers. The conclusion was that, in general, this was not supported. But, there was approval of \$200 to host the photography workshop, tentatively being scheduled for Jan. 17, 2018, at Elevator Factory. Maura Friedman has shot for publications including the New York Times and Wall Street Journal (learn more about Maura at [MauraFriedman.com](http://MauraFriedman.com)).

- **HOLIDAY PARTY and ANNUAL MEETING:** The Board unanimously approved returning to Taco Mac in Atlanta for the holiday party. Saturday, Dec. 9 was voted as the date, with the Annual Meeting to be held one hour earlier than the scheduled start time. Ellen has started reaching out; AAJA will contribute \$100; waiting to hear from AABJ; APC plans its own event "so maybe we can group with J-orgs this year," she reported.

- **STUDENT CHAPTER REPORT:** Ellen Eldridge reported that Alisen is helping again with newsletter and website posts. Ellen is also talking with Bill Phelps about a journalism career advice fair this fall. The Board voted unanimously to approve use of \$500 donated in 2015 by Rick Kenney for use in a breaking news contest at Harrison High School on Oct. 14.

- **MEMBER PROFILES:** Haisten Willis to write the October Member Profile for the website and Newsletter. Lou Phelps wrote the September profile.

October Board Meeting will be held Oct. 18 at 8 pm, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Meeting will be virtual. All members are welcome to dial in and listen. Information on the dial in will be posted to Facebook and on the website.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Lou Phelps, Secretary

National Convention Report  
Tuesday, September 12, 2017  
By Sierra Hubbard. Delegate, Georgia Pro Chapter

To the Board of Directors:

Hi, Ellen!

First, thank you for allowing me to represent the GA Pro chapter at EIJ17! It was a great experience and an honor to vote on the chapter's behalf.

On the bylaw change, we were unfortunately outnumbered by a large majority. Two amendments were put forth, and both were struck down but by a slightly better margin. The bylaw passed with an 86-14 vote (I believe that was the tally). The debate lasted for a while, but it was clear that it had pretty much already been decided at a previous business meeting. Now that the bylaws have been changed, there will be a two-year transition until the new nine-member board of directors is installed. The board that was elected this week will serve out its term, according to the website, so I'm not entirely sure how that will work in two years.

Other than the bylaw change, we voted on several resolutions. While most were congratulatory in nature, a couple were slightly more controversial. The first condemned "in the harshest of terms" President Donald Trump's rhetoric against the media and the First Amendment. It passed unanimously with no debate.

Another was focused on the damage that PIOs can do when they act as gatekeepers and censor information. The resolution basically called upon agencies to be open and transparent. While the majority of the resolution saw no contention, one paragraph in particular called upon news outlets "to follow the same policies of openness that they expect of other government and publicly oriented organizations." Plenty of debate and back-and-forth suggested that this left too much to interpretation, and this paragraph was struck from the resolution.

Please let me know if you need any other information from me about the conference. Thank you again for allowing me to attend and represent SPJ GA!