

Society of Professional Journalists/Georgia Chapter
January 18, 2017 Board Meeting

MINUTES
APPROVED

Meeting Held at 7:00 p.m. at WSB/Cox TV Board Room, 1601 West Peachtree St, Atlanta, GA.

PRESENT: Ellen Eldridge, President; Dan Whisenhunt, President-Elect/Treasurer; Lou Phelps, Secretary; Haisten Willis; Roderic Graham, Jay Suber, Neha Negandhi. A quorum of the Board's nine members was confirmed.

ABSENT: Mark Thomason, Jennifer Matthews, Rebekah Fuchko (excused). Past president Sharon Dunten was traveling and unable to attend.

TREASURER's REPORT: Dan Whisenhunt

- There is \$2,877.00 in checking acct. There is also \$500.00 in a savings acct, per Eldridge*
- Payment of \$50.00 to support Region 3 expansion requested by SPJ national; Paid in January.
- New members check for \$341.00 received from National, and deposited in January.
- All checks rec'd from Fall activities are deposited.
- The Taco Mac gift cards purchased in 2015 to support room rentals in 2016 are now used by as of the Dec. Holiday Mixer, held jointly with the Atlanta Press Club and Atlanta chapter of Asian American Journalists. The APC will host and pay for the room rental for the next joint media networking event in Atlanta in 2017. The APC paid the \$50 tip required for the room for the December event.
- There are no outstanding bills or obligations.

PRESIDENT's REPORT: Ellen Eldridge

- President Eldridge welcomed new 2017 Board members Jay Suber, Mark Thomason, Roderic Graham and Lou Phelps.
- Phelps was asked to serve as Board Secretary and chair Membership Committee.
- Roderic and Jay will work on a monthly newsletter and content for the website.
- Mark Thomason working on a drone flying program, including journalism ethics of use
- The holiday mixer, held jointly with the Atlanta Press Club in December, was well attended -100 to 200 people. Suber suggested capturing names and email addresses at all such future events to assist with membership and outreach efforts of the Chapter. (Note: We did have names and emails of those who registered as SPJ guests; we did not ask for records of APC or AAJA members)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COLLEGIATE/PRO: Ellen Eldridge

- Reported on her work to date on a MediAtlanta student-focused event, scheduled for Feb. 4, but due to lack of time to promote, board consensus was that it should be postponed while the collegiate pro committee works to strengthen relationships between academic advisers and the Chapter.
- Bekah Fuchko is the chair of the Collegiate Pro committee as the student representative on the Board.
- Matt Duffy is the adviser for the student chapter at Kennesaw State University and helps on this committee as does Carolyn Carlson, the former adviser.

- Larry Johnson is chairing a MusliMedia planning committee for an event to be held in April. A location near the Refugee Center is being sought. Volunteers are welcome to attend a planning committee meeting 7 p.m. Jan 25 at WSB.

FREELANCE: Haisten Willis (board member), Mark Woolsey (chair)

- Plans for a SPJ Georgia Freelance Job Fair are underway, to be held May 6 at WSB from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Attendees will be charged \$20, which includes a catered lunch.
- Hiring editors and companies will not be charged.
- There will be a registration sheet where attendees can sign-up to meet with those hiring in 15-minute increments.
- H&R Block will present a breakout session on how freelancers can save money on taxes. The first year SPJ membership dues will be paid by H&R Block for those members who hire the firm to do their taxes.
- There will also be a website/graphics person to do a breakout session on designing a website, with critiques available on the existing websites of freelancers who attend.
- A business card raffle will be held with prizes, including a gift card and free SPJ Georgia membership.
- Goal is 25 to 50 attendees. 25 attendees would generate \$500, which would cover lunch costs for 33 people at \$15 per plate. No other costs are anticipated.
- Outreach to publications has begun, promoted through email, social media and an FB 'Event'
- Next Freelance committee meeting will be Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m. at Starbucks on Ashford-Dunwoody Rd. There are six active members of the committee, Willis reports.

ASSOCIATIONS: Neha Negandhi

- Working actively on expanding relationships.

NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA: Roderic Graham and Jay Suber

- A monthly newsletter will be produced and distributed next week by Graham for January. He asked for suggested content by board members.
- A "From our Members" standing column will be included, with standing invitation to all paid members to submit items to Roderic for publication.

FOIA: Mark Woolsey and Matt Duffy (Not in attendance.)

- Eldridge reported that member Larry Johnson is chairing a committee to plan MusliMedia in April. A planning committee is meeting at WSB 7 p.m. Jan. 25 (one week)
- Phelps noted to board that her company is working with a State Senator on possible language changes to the Georgia Open Meetings/Open Records laws. Asked for SPJ/Georgia support, including suggesting that officers seek to meet with new Attorney General and Asst. AG in charge of enforcement, to introduce SPJ and Georgia Chapter, and gage interest/support in changes.
- Phelps suggested using Survey Monkey to poll members and journalists across Georgia about their issues, challenges and experiences with Georgia's Sunshine Laws to gain data to validate need for legislative changes. Will call committee chairmen to discuss.

MEMBERSHIP: Lou Phelps

- Eldridge reported that Phelps has added over 200 names to the Chapter 'Master List' of journalists in Georgia.
- Because this is a new committee of the Chapter, Phelps reported that she will be contacting Region 3 leadership and other state chapters to learn how they are building membership.
- A report will be made to board at next meeting on exact number of current, paid members, including providing board with a list of names, titles and companies.
- To build statewide membership, Phelps has been asked to form a committee to consider an October 2017 training/ new member/member event in Savannah, including a proposed budget. She reported that a leading TV anchor in Savannah market has agreed to be a co-host of the proposed event, and will be joining SPJ. Board update on progress at next meeting.

OTHER DISCUSSION:

- New Board members were reminded that a copy of the Bylaws is on the website.
- Board affirmed recommendation by Eldridge to hold four in-person meetings in 2017.
- Other monthly meetings will be held by Skype or 1-800 Conference Call.
- Whisenhunt suggested that Board only take on activities it can do well, with an emphasis in strong pre-planning.
- Eldridge requested that Committee reports and/or board members' items for the Agenda including New Business be received by her two weeks in advance of the Quarterly meetings, and in writing. Her goal for 2017 is that board members will receive Agenda one week in advance.
- Board Agendas and subsequent Minutes will be posted on website with links to Facebook page.
- Eldridge noted that the Bylaws should say that the Past-President shall be voting member of the board for one year after their term expires.
- New board members were encouraged by Eldridge to attend the Ted Scripps Leadership Training offered to new SPJ Chapter Board members. The next two in Dallas in February and Kansas City in April.

The meeting was informally adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

** \$500 in savings is a gift from an SPJ member, designated solely for the work of the Collegiate/Pro Committee of SPJ/Georgia.*