

Society of Professional Journalists/Georgia Chapter
FEBRUARY 15, 2017 Board Meeting

MINUTES

Meeting Held at 8:00 p.m. by Conference Call.

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

ABSENT: Mark Thomason, Jennifer Matthews, Rebekah Fuchko and Haisten Willis.

JANUARY MINUTES were APPROVED without alternation. Vote was Unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Dan Whisenhunt

- Bank account has a total balance of \$3,240.87
- Checkbook has a total balance of \$3,230.09.
- We had a deposit of a dues check totaling \$437.54 on 1/25 and an additional \$20.00 deposit.
- Expenditures since last report included \$15.00 to Godaddy.com for domain renewal, and \$50.00 for Chapter dues to SPJ National.
- Motion made by Jay Suber to approve Treasurer's Report, Seconded by Ellen Eldridge. No discussion. Vote was unanimous.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Ellen Eldridge

- Reported on upcoming events: April is still target month for MusliMedia journalism effort. Location to be finalized by end of February.
- May 6 is the Freelancers Job Fair at WSB Studios, Atlanta, on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Haisten Willis has confirmed a number of companies. Ellen urged all board members to use their social media universes to help promote the program to freelance journalists.
- Ellen is hoping to develop a drone flying program/curriculum with Mark Thomason, including journalism ethics of use.
- One area of her focus has been on consistency of outbound communications to current and prospective members. Newsletter is going out monthly.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COLLEGIATE/PRO: Ellen Eldridge

- No report

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

- See January Minutes for all the details on the May 6 Freelancers Job Fair.

ASSOCIATIONS: Neha Negandhi

- Working actively on expanding relationships.

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

- February Newsletter went out by email on Friday, Feb. 10.
- A “From our Members” standing column was included. Dan Whisenhunt suggested calling a journalist to be featured – reaching out personally by a Board Member. He suggested that the topic be added to the March Board Agenda for further discussion, and recommended that Ellen assign a Board Member each month, giving them three proposed names.

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

- See President’s Report

MEMBERSHIP: Lou Phelps

- Phelps has worked with SPJ National to review Roster of GA Chapter Paid members. List distributed to Board members. She asked that board look at gaps, and suggested people to be called.
- Phelps distributed analysis report of composition of current Chapter members; sent by email.
- Phelps is working with National to insure Atlanta Pro chapter records and Georgia Pro chapter records are consolidated, to determine SPJ National Members who did not join Georgia Chapter; There is a significant number who will become the Top Prospects for Membership activity for next two months.
- Sharon Dunten and Dan Whisenhunt emphasized that issues with the technology of National to support circulation is an issue – a long-standing issue. Discussion topic: Adding a Chapter Membership is “not user friendly. Dunten stated that National Board needs to hear our problems. Phelps agreed to draft a proposed letter from the Board to go to National. Will be presented at March meeting.
- Jay Suber agreed to call three former members whose Georgia Chapter membership recently expired, after reviewing the lists sent to board members of expired’s.
- In the past month Phelps held conference call with Region 3 leadership to gain ideas on building members. It was recommended to hold a series of small FREE/or Low cost training sessions around the State, rather than expecting all members to go to Atlanta for training.
- Phelps working on a date in April in Savannah; June in Valdosta and August in Newnan/Coweta County are targets. Co-sponsors for Savannah and Newnan secured. No overhead for the event anticipated. Program with three topics to be finalized; repeated at all three sessions. Target is 8 to 10 attendees per session. Marketing using Mail Chimp database of 1,100 journalists, and managing editors in Georgia.
- Phelps asked Board their opinion on testing online/Skype training to member prospects, to show SPJ value. Topic to be added to March Agenda. Eldridge has a module she can present: “*Using Linked In to Develop Sources.*” Costs, timing, board members to be involved yet to be discussed. Ellen noted that it is important to think through how to translate interest by trainees into joining SPJ/GA.

OTHER DISCUSSION:

- Jay Suber stated that he would like to see the Board go through a process of prioritizing ideas, increasing structure of the organization and the Board, and looking at costs of ideas. “How much can we really do?” to insure that what the Chapter does, it does well, he said.
- He suggested events need to be put on a calendar, for example.
- Suber also stated that the ‘business portion of the meeting’ needs to be closed before Committee reports are presented.

Motion was made by Eldridge, seconded by Suber to adjourn at 9:04 p.m.