

SPJ Georgia Board Meeting – Nov. 8, 2018. Conference Call 8-9 p.m. EST

Present: Ellen Eldridge, Stell Simonton (incoming board member), Haisten Willis, David Armstrong, Danielle Douez, Larry Johnson, Toni Stauffer (acting secretary), Jay Suber – quorum established.

Absent: Mitchell Northam.

October Minutes: Approved 7-0

Treasurer Report: (Danielle Douez) – current balance is \$3,600.00, last transaction was \$75.00 reimbursement to Stell for Starbucks gift card for the Freelance Job Fair. Audit started. Bank statements are being reviewed. Nov. 16 is the date for the report. Haisten said tax form 990 had to be filled out annually and the last form was late by five months. Haisten said he'll have it ready on time this year to help the next president. He will send info to Danielle next week.

Freelance Committee: (Stell Simonton) – The yoga event “Movement and Mindfulness” was postponed due to lack of signups. Ellen originally opposed the event and David said he doesn't think the board should try again. Ellen suggested a blog promoting yoga for freelancers, etc., might work better, or have the event held by a different org. Haisten recommended that we could add the event into a larger event, like a job fair. Haisten liked the blog idea—a yoga instructor could use the blog to promote their business. Stell said the event could be scrapped. Ellen said more health journalists are becoming involved, and that the blog could be tailored more to journalism than self-improvement. Next SPJ grant deadline is March 31. The event is postponed pending further discussion.

Stell discussed her position on the Freelance Committee. Freelance Job Fair has been discussed as a future event, but no other events have been discussed yet. They are waiting for a meeting with the chair (Adina). Ellen suggested scheduling the Job Fair and promoting it as soon as possible. Haisten said there was a conflict with space being double-booked this past year, and that they lost money due to the high cost of food. It was our biggest event of the year.

Diversity Committee” (Larry Johnson) – 90 RSVPed, but fewer than 30 came to the “Midterms and the American Muslim Voter” event. More people in the audience than last year. The event was filmed for an American Muslim women documentary (GSU project), which will air sometime on GPB. Larry reported that the panel was great, as usual. Ellen said we should charge, because people will tend to show up if they pay. GPB also had an event during the same time that may have caused a conflict. Haisten agreed selling tickets would probably be fine, even if they are just \$5. And Larry said selling tickets would contribute to the food bill. Food was split three ways (3 X \$215=\$645). Audio of the event is available from Larry. He'll send link to his Google drive, if anyone is interested. Recommendations for incoming Diversity Committee: shortcoming is that this year there wasn't really a committee. Larry spent so much time on the event, he didn't spend enough time on the committee and believes work on the committee should be done. Larry thinks an Immigration Panel would be a good idea, because there is more newsworthy stuff going on now. A good focus would be on how to report on ICE and the Stewart Detention Center. Louis Estrada was mentioned, because he was with Telemundo and knows a lot about ICE, but Larry said he doesn't think he's with them anymore. Ellen agreed. Larry mentioned Charles Cook who knows an enormous amount about the Detention Center. Haisten liked the idea of an Immigration workshop. He thinks covering the SDC would be a good idea,

as well as the charity that gives visiting families a place to stay for free. The workshop would give SPJ a way to work on something outside of Atlanta. Ellen recommended finding a seasoned journalist, someone familiar with ICE and immigration. Larry said that's why he recommended Louis Estrada. Larry said there might be someone else at Telemundo that was involved in the documentary. Haisten questioned how to get records from SDC. Larry mentioned Charles Cook who is an immigration lawyer who has experience with people at the center. Ellen agreed Charles Cook would be a great contact. Ellen had written about EI Refugio in the AJC and Haisten asked if anyone from their group would be interested. Ellen said yes.

Nominations Committee: (Ellen Eldridge) - Stell is joining as co-chair of the Freelance Committee. Sean Powers initially agreed to be president, though the GPB managing editor is concerned about the time commitment. Brenda Goodman, WebMD, has agreed to come on board as an At-Large member. Carol Gantt has agreed to come on as Vice President. Mitchell Northam is moving out of state. Darius Goodman agreed to serve on board, but that would have pushed it to 10 people; Ellen suggested he serve on the Diversity Committee. KC Wildmoon is willing to join as Secretary. Ellen expressed concern over lack of options for president if Sean backs out. Haisten said we should get an answer from Sean tomorrow. Ellen said she would follow up tomorrow.

Jay thinks the board should look at having an official non-voting advisory committee going forward, to look at what holes are on the board and to find expertise. Most organizations have them. He said that they're ad-hoc without all of the responsibility board members have, and that it's a good idea that it becomes official, so that we know where information comes from and that it was advisory approved and not just off someone's head. Advisory Committee members are chosen from the community and carry particular expertise that can be tapped into. The caveat is that they are a Committee that gets particular questions that they can discuss among themselves and then give feedback/recommendations to the board. This helps lessen the burden on the president of the Board. Jay said, "It's a way to have more people in the conversation without them being in the power center of what's going on." Ellen agreed that it made sense. This gives people a way to serve the board without actually being on the Board, so they don't just disappear after their terms. Jay said we always want to broaden access to the information which allow the organization's root to become a tap root...organized. Having an advisory board allows the committee to ask bigger questions. We should get out of the business of paying for food and get sponsors like Coca-Cola (example). Someone on the advisory board could be a member of a corporation who could help connect the Board to the sponsor. The advisory Committee would be a right and sound thing to do and the Board should try to put it in place so that the next board can think about adding the people to it, said Jay. Haisten asked Jay if he would be interested in leading the effort to form the advisory committee and Jay said yes since he will be off the board after December. He said he doesn't mind taking it on.

The election will be announced tomorrow. It will be Dec. 10-12. Last year the election was done through Survey Monkey, but Jay was unsure about technical difficulty. Haisten said it was emailed out. Jay agreed. Ellen also put it in the newsletter and it was posted on the website. Ellen said the Board needs to look at getting more chapter members involved. Haisten said some of the committees need to be bolstered, like the Diversity Committee. Thanks to Ellen for how good next year's Board looks.

Holiday Party: Party hosting will not be collaborative this year. Gathering will be smaller and more intimate at the Taco Mac at Lindbergh. Date proposed is Saturday, Dec. 8. \$300 to reserve the space, which provides \$300 value in food. Ellen said with tip it comes to about \$360. \$300 does not include tip, so board will need to cover the \$60 tip. She suggested limiting it to SPJ Georgia members. Haisten opened the floor to suggestions before voting. Ellen made the motion to approve the \$360 for the mixer. Larry seconded. Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m. EST

Upcoming Meetings:

Nov. 17, 12:00 p.m. EST – Freelancer Lunch at Punchbowl Social - The Battery – Atlanta Braves Stadium - 875 Battery Ave., Atlanta 30039:

<https://spjgeorgia.com/2018/11/01/freelancer-lunch-set-for-nov-17-at-punch-bowl-social/>

Nov. 27 – Freelance Committee Meeting at Elon's Bakery:

<https://spjgeorgia.com/2018/11/01/freelance-committee-to-meet-nov-27/>