

### **SPJ minutes – February 8, 2024, via Zoom**

**In attendance:** Marty Fischhoff, Kelley Root, Rob Davidek, Beth Konrad, Tracy Wolf, Mark Lee, Walter Middlebrook, Kat Stafford, Monica Williams, Vince McCraw, Mary Zatina, Peg McNichol, Annalise Frank, Christine Ferretti; Administrator Marcia Hart

**Absent:** Ro Coppola, Nicole Avery Nichols, Jeff Payne

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order.

Beth Konrad made a motion to approve the January minutes. The motion was seconded by Vince McCraw and approved by all.

It was noted that the incorrect date (March 15) was used in the January minutes for the Health Care Media Access event. That will be corrected to March 12. There was also discussion of posting the minutes of the board meetings on the SPJ Detroit site. Marty will follow up with Max White.

### **President's Report – Marty Fischhoff**

- Marty discussed committee assignments, asking everyone, especially new board members, to become involved and make sure they are serving on at least one committee.
- Ginny McCabe, SPJ's Region 4 coordinator, hosted a teleconference to discuss the upcoming Region 4&5 annual conference, which will be held April 12-13 in Cincinnati. Marty read a list of possible sessions that the planning committee proposed including what is ahead for journalism in 2024, reporting on incidents of mass murder, coverage of trans issues, grant writing, food and sports coverage and nonprofit newsrooms. Marty asked if the board had any suggestions; members mentioned AI's impact on journalism, pets in the newsroom, beat management in smaller newsrooms, DEI issues and the mental health of journalists. The regional conference planning committee will continue to meet every two weeks via Zoom on Monday evenings.

### **Programming committee update – Tracy Wolf**

- Monica Williams offered further details on the plans of the local Solutions Journalism Cooperative to host a media access event for healthcare nonprofits, in partnership with SPJ Detroit. Approximately 40 such organizations have been invited. The event is scheduled for March 12 at 9:30 a.m. at the Michigan State Detroit Center on Woodward. The Solutions Journalism Collaborative approved a \$500 contribution to the chapter's scholarship fund. Marty thanked Monica for her leadership and asked as many board members as possible volunteer to help that day, particularly in the small group discussions.
- Marty thanked Kat Stafford for the fine presentation she gave on her award-winning AP series on racial disparities in health care and the broader issue of how the media should approach issues involving race. The event was a collaboration between SPJ Detroit and the Solutions Journalism Collaborative. We have posted the program on the chapter website.
- SPJ Detroit is a partner organization in the Collaborative Journalism Summit that is taking place on May 9-10 at Wayne State University. All members of the chapter are invited to attend the conference for free.
- Beth Konrad provided an update on our planning for a FOIA event. The Michigan Senate Oversight Committee is holding hearings on proposed Freedom of Information legislation, which is seen as the first positive move in ten years. Beth said that yesterday's hearing of the committee was carried live on Sen. Jeremy Moss's Facebook page and suggested that we post a recording on the SPJ Detroit website. Beth is

planning to hold a meeting of the chapter's FOIA committee meeting in February and invite Lisa McGraw of the Michigan Press Association to join it.

Kat Stafford asked if we might consider a program that would teach the public and community groups how to use FOIA. Christine Ferretti said that DetroitBridge has a similar program planned.

#### **Contest – Walter Middlebrook**

- Nominees for the Lifetime Achievement Awards were discussed. Marty said he would send out a ballot to the board, asking them to vote for three of the candidates in order of preference.

#### **Scholarships – Kelley Root**

- Kelley said she will continue to reach out to universities – Central, Michigan State, Wayne State, Eastern and Oakland. She has distributed flyers.

#### **Banquet – Tracy Wolf**

- Tracy Wolf said that we have confirmed a banquet date of Wednesday, May 15, with the San Marino Club. She urged us to send a "Save the Date" notice.

#### **Membership – Rob Davidek**

- Rob Davidek said he received good feedback on the letters he recently sent, which included appeals to Michigan journalists who were members of national SPJ but not the Detroit chapter. He also plans to send renewal reminders.

#### **Other**

- Marty thinks we need an updated logo.
- Kelley noted that recent University of Michigan and Detroit Lions successes generated much interest for newspapers.
- Vince McCraw discussed the upcoming I ❤️ Detroit NABJ event.
- Marty noted that WDET turns 75 on Tuesday and was throwing a party to celebrate.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 14 at 8 a.m.

#### **Committee Assignments (chairs in bold text)**

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- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Katrease Stafford, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Ro Coppola, Mark Lee
- Membership Outreach: **Rob Davidek**, Marty Fischhoff, Walter Middlebrook
- Communication Committee: **Kelley Root**, Rob Davidek
- FOIA: **Beth Konrad**, Ro Coppola, Kelley Root
- Banquet: **Tracy Wolf**, Marcia Hart
- Campus Outreach: **Beth Konrad**, Kelley Root

- Finance/Fundraising: **Walter Middlebrook**, Marty Fischhoff
  - Bylaws and elections (nominating committee): **Walter Middlebrook**, Beth Konrad, Marty Fischhoff
  - Contest: **Walter Middlebrook**
  - Scholarship: **Kelley Root**, Beth Konrad, Annalise Frank
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