

SPJ Detroit minutes from Oct 10, 2024, meeting

Attending: Marty Fischhoff, Walter Middlebrook, Tracy Wolf, Jeffrey Payne, Monica Williams, Beth Konrad, Vince McGraw, Kelley Root, Mary Zatina, Kat Stafford, Rob Davidek and Administrator Marcia Hart.

Meeting started at 8:02 a.m.

Marty offered condolences to Marcia Hart for the loss of her husband, and Beth Konrad suggested a moment of silence, which was observed.

Marty Fischhoff presented the Presidents Report, starting with an update on the request from Global Ties Detroit for the chapter to host a delegation from Lithuania. Mary Zatina had already agreed to host the delegation at WDET on Tuesday, October 22, from 10 a.m. to noon, and she invited members of the SPJ board to join that event instead of holding our own. Rob Davidek relayed that plan to Global Ties. Mary asked that chapter members who want to attend the meeting to notify her.

Mary also said on October 20, WDET is partnering with the CBC on a cross-country project called "In the Middle." Ian Hanomansing, who hosts "The National" on CBC, will be involved. Everyone is invited to attend the program from 4-6 p.m.

Marty thanked Beth for serving as the chapter's representative on the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame selection committee, which is getting ready to start accepting nominations. Beth reported that there had been a strategy meeting about how to involve more people in the nomination process, which can be very arduous and time-consuming. Anyone who is interested in learning more should contact Beth.

Walter Middlebrook moved to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Beth seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously

Tracy Wolf gave a Program Committee report with a recap of the Journalists Election Prep virtual event. Vince McCraw, who was one of the organizers, said it was well done. Tracy said there were approximately 190 people who registered for the event, and 75-80 of them tuned in for the entire 90-minute program. They came from several states including Alabama, Texas and Nebraska. Vince said the full cost of the event was being picked up by Graham Media, which owns WDIV Channel 4. Tracy said she was going to keep the StreamYard contact because it was such an impressive platform to use. It was suggested that a link to the program recording be posted on the SPJ Detroit site.

As for future programs, Tracy said Monica and Peg had sent ideas for us to consider, and Marty suggested that Tracy call a meeting of the program committee to evaluate them.

Attention then turned to board election. Marty said the Nominating Committee was suggesting three candidates to fill vacancies on the board: Kennan Oliphant, News Director at CBS Detroit-TV. Anna Clark, investigative reporter for Pro Publica, and Briana Rice, reporter for Michigan Public and a former Young Journalist of the Year award winner. They have all agreed to join the board if elected. Agreeing to run for re-election are Rob Davidek, Annalise Frank, Beth Konrad, Mark Lee, Peg McNichol, Nicole Avery Nichols and Jeff Payne. Ballots will be sent out soon.

The vacancies were the result of Kat Stafford's reaching her term limit and Ro Coppola and Kelley Root deciding not to run for re-election. Marty also thanked Kat, Kelley and Ro for their support and service to the organization.

Election of officers will take place at the November board meeting. The seats of President, two Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary need to be filled. Marty also talked about committee assignments and asked that every board member become involved. Among the chapter needs he cited were membership, social media, fundraising and college outreach. He also encouraged board members to propose a program that they wanted to oversee.

Marty provided an update on contests. He said the main contact for the A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism has been out of the office but is returning soon. A meeting with will be arranged. He reminded the board that SPJ Detroit would receive \$1,500 for managing the contest and up to \$2,000 being available for publicity. The board has decided to make this a separate competition from Excellence in Journalism, with a reception to announce the winners. More information is expected at our November meeting.

Beth presented information on FOIA. She said not much is happening because of the election campaign, but she has been in touch with Lisa McGraw at the Michigan Press Association. The MPA is hosting a virtual event on Oct 24 at 3:30 p.m., focused on legal do's and don'ts for covering the election. Beth said she would send the information to Marty.

During the Membership Committee update, Rob explained that some people are still having trouble finding how they can join the Detroit chapter when signing up for the national organization. He said that Jim McFarlin was the latest to report this problem.

Walter gave the financial report. Checking- Savings— E*Trade--- PayPal--- (((please get specific numbers))

Total in account is \$30,567.51. Walter says we are stable, but there is a constant drain of funds.

Old Business: Marty mentioned we received a request from the Detroit Writing Room to help support a scholarship for its 2025 Journalism Camp. Several members of the board spoke up to praise the program. Walter offered a motion to support the program at the \$300 level, with Tracy seconding it. Board members could also donate additional funds themselves either through the chapter or to the Writing Room directly.

In other business, Kelley mentioned the October 24 Internship Fair at Wayne State. The Detroit News has an opening for a data reporting position and asked if board members could help spread the word. The job description is on the website. The newspaper is looking at new grads and talented journalists. It has been receiving applications from outside Michigan but would prefer local talent.

Mary said there would be a Detroit Story Fest that night at the DIA. Several hundred people have signed up to attend.

We set the next meeting for November 14 at 8 a.m.

Walter made a motion to adjourn. Tracy seconded. Motion was approved, and the meeting ended at 9:04am.

