

SPJ minutes – November 14, 2024, via Zoom

In attendance: Marty Fischhoff, Rob Davidek, Beth Konrad, Tracy Wolf, Mark Lee, Annalise Frank, Mary Zatina, Walter Middlebrook, Vince McCraw, Christine Ferretti, Anna Clark, Kennan Oliphant, Monica Williams; Administrator Marcia Hart

Absent: Jeff Payne, Nicole Avery Nichols, Peg McNichol, Brianna Rice,

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Marty welcomed our newest board members to the meeting – Anna Clark and Kennan Oliphant – and explained that Briana Rice could not join the meeting that morning.

President’s Report – Marty Fischhoff

- Marty noted that the board had approved a \$300 donation to the Detroit Writing Room’s Summer Journalism Camp. In addition, several board members planned to make personal donations. Stephanie Steinberg of the Writing Room very much appreciated these donations and said that the chapter would be recognized in the materials related to the camp.
- Ginny McCabe of SPJ Region Four has announced that the 2025 Regional Conference will be hosted by the Cleveland Chapter at Cleveland State University on April 5-6. The organizers are seeking people interested in helping to plan the event.

Beth Konrad made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes. It was seconded by Vince McCraw and approved by all.

Board members introduced themselves and welcomed the new members.

Board Elections

- The following slate of officers was recommended:
 - Marty Fischhoff, President
 - Mark Lee, Vice-President
 - Rob Davidek, Vice-President
 - Walter Middlebrook, Treasurer
 - Peg McNichol, Secretary

Mark Lee made a motion to approve the slate of officers. The motion was seconded by Mary Zatina and approved by all. We will post this information on the chapter web page.

Programs – Tracy Wolf

- Tracy said the Program Committee met a couple of weeks ago. For the fourth quarter the committee is suggesting an informal happy hour in Detroit on Thursday, December 12. There will be a short board meeting at 5:30 p.m., followed by a happy hour/mixer. Members of the committee are looking at possible locations. Beth noted that our bylaws indicate that board meetings are to be open to all SPJ members.
- Perhaps in late January, a post-inauguration event focused on issues related to DEI both in the journalism industry and in its coverage. Among the names mentioned for such a panel were Felecia Henderson, Bryce Huffman, Chastity Pratt, Kat Stafford, Stephen Henderson, Erin Perry, Orlando Bailey, Nicquel Terry and Deon Hampton. Monica Williams said that the panel should include some more youthful perspectives, and Anna Clark suggested Eleanore Catolico. Mark offered to be the moderator. It was suggested the Programming Committee meet again soon to further plan the event.

- Tracy said the committee also suggested a program on local public radio, but she thought that planning should be placed on hold for the time being.

Committee Assignments

- Marty noted that with changes in the composition of the board it was time for everyone to assess their involvement in the chapter committees. With some departures, we will need new committee chairs.
- Marty expressed the importance of members of the board being active members of committees or to suggest projects or activities that they would like to manage and direct. He offered his own recommendations for the priorities of the board moving forward:
 - Communications – with Kelley Root’s departure, the committee needs a new chair. Dorothy Hall, our new webmaster, is very responsive to posting chapter news and developments. Marty said he was trying to add new content more frequently to the chapter’s Facebook page but could use some help in this area.
 - Campus Outreach also needs a new chair. Annalise Frank offered to assume that responsibility. Marty suggested that the Campus Outreach and Scholarship committee be combined.
 - Banquet and Programs: Marty urged people to join these committees, as Tracy could do all this work alone.
 - Membership: With Rob taking over as Vice President, it could be time for someone else to take over these duties. The chapter needs to increase membership if it wants to accomplish all that it would like to do. Also, the committee needs to continue working with the national office to create an up-to-date and accurate membership roster.
 - Contests: The Call for Entries to the Excellence in Journalism competition. Walter is currently the only member of this committee and could use some additional support.
 - Finance/Fundraising: Marty suggested that these two functions be separated and that the chapter seek new ways to raise funding.
 - FOIA: Beth said she would welcome new members to this committee. She hopes to have more information soon on current legislative efforts in this area.
- Marty said that the executive committee should meet to examine the chapter’s committee structure and to report back. Again, he urged the board members to let us know which committees or activities they would like to pursue.
- Marty said that webmaster, Dorothy Hall, offered to begin working on a new design for SPJ Detroit emails, which she is also willing to manage. Marty said he would discuss the costs with her.
- Beth asked if the minutes for the meeting were being posted on the website. They are.

Contests

- We will soon sign a new three-year contract with BetterBNC. The 2025 “Call for Entries” notice will be sent out in December or January.
- Marty and Rob met with the A-Mark Foundation about being the state sponsor of an A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism, which would have a cash prize both for the winning journalists and the news organizations they work for. SPJ Detroit would be the ninth SPJ chapter around the country to conduct an A-Mark Prize competition. As we discussed previously, the chapter would host this competition separate from the EIJ contest. It would be announced in April, with a reception in the fall to announce the winners. Marty is working out the details with the foundation.

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Membership – Rob Davidek

- Rob is working with National for an updated membership list.

Financial – Walter Middlebrook

- Walter said that as of October 31, our balances were:
 - Checking 9,095.01
 - Scholarship Savings 3,278.82
 - E*Trade 13,300.40
 - PayPal 2,557.33
 - Total 28,231.56

Other Business

- The Detroit NABJ Share the Love fundraiser for financially distressed journalists will be held on November 26 at the Lager House. It is co-sponsored by SPJ Detroit and AAJA of Michigan. Luther “Badman” Keith’s band will perform.
- Mary reported on the recent visit of a delegation of Lithuanian journalists to WDET-FM, organized by Global Detroit. WDET had invited members of SPJ Detroit to participate in the event.

Mary made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Marty and approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:01 a.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 12, at 5:30 p.m., in person. Location to be determined.

Committee Assignments (chairs in bold text)

- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Mark Lee, Monica Williams
- Membership Outreach: **Rob Davidek**, Marty Fischhoff, Walter Middlebrook
- Communication Committee: ?
- FOIA: **Beth Konrad**, Mary Zatina, Peg McNichol
- Banquet: **Tracy Wolf**, Marcia Hart, Monica Williams
- Campus Outreach/Scholarship: **Annalise Frank**
- Finance/Fundraising: **Walter Middlebrook**, Marty Fischhoff
- Bylaws and elections (nominating committee): **Walter Middlebrook**, Rob Davidek, Marty Fischhoff
- Contest: **Walter Middlebrook**