

## **SPJ minutes – Jan. 9, 2025, via Zoom**

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

**Absent:** Nicole Avery Nichols

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

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

- Marty welcomed everyone and said he hoped everyone had a good holiday.

Mark Lee made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. It was seconded by Monica Williams and approved by all.

### **Programs – Tracy Wolf**

- Tracy discussed the planned program on DEI issues. It was originally planned for the end of January, but now we are looking at the first week of March. The program will examine pullback on diversity initiatives at many levels and how that might affect the media/newsrooms. Currently looking at venues and talent for the panel. Do we want it to be virtual or face/face? Live with virtual elements seems to be the preference. Also prefer a time in late afternoon.

### **Banquet – Tracy Wolf**

- The San Marino Club had offered a 15% discount on catering services. We signed the contract to hold our annual banquet there on May 14, 2025. We will start researching alternate venues starting in June/July of this year. Marcia Hart mentioned that we now receive many more entries from out-state and some media companies expressed concerns about the distance to Troy for the event. Perhaps we should consider something on the west side of Detroit.

### **Regional Conference – Peg McNichol**

- Peg said that the regional conference will be in Cleveland on April 4 and 5. Regional chapters were asked for contributions. Portage will be a sponsor. The venue was discussed. Peg suggested asking the Dart Center to sponsor. This event is very student-centered. Beth Konrad suggested that we donate by supporting Detroit students attending. [Note: Registration fee for student nonmembers was lowered to \$65 to encourage attendance. Other fees: student members, \$55; professional members, \$85; professional nonmembers, \$150.]

### **FOIA – Beth Konrad**

- Beth reported that Joe Tate didn't bring the bill to the floor, and it died. Legislature will have to try all over again. This is not good for Michigan transparency. Rob Davidek mentioned that he just learned from an editorial in The Detroit News that Moss and Broom reintroduced the bill yesterday.

### **Contest – Walter Middlebrook**

- Marty noted that we just made a few changes to the contest categories. Sojourner Truth was changed from the Award for Topical Reporting to the Award for Reporting on Racial Justice. The category Racial Justice was removed from other divisions. Tracy Wolf said she will create a press release to promote entries.

- The new A-Mark contest needs to be worked on. The plan is to introduce the contest in April. There will be money awards. Marty reached out to other states about the contest. We will be able to use the BetterBNC contest platform.

#### **Update on contest judging for 2025**

**SPJ Minnesota and for SPJ Fort Worth will judge for SPJ Detroit** – about 600 entries, during March  
**SPJ Detroit will judge SPJ Minnesota Page One Awards** – about 550 entries, judging April 1 to May 1  
 and **SPJ Fort Worth First Amendment Awards** - about 75 entries, Jan. 17 to Feb. 17.

#### **Communications – Peg McNichol**

- Peg wants to put together a calendar for social media and outreach to showcase last year's EIJ award winners and showcase board members and other journalism groups in Detroit. She'll schedule a committee meeting as soon as possible.

#### **Membership – Rob Davidek**

- Rob welcomed Mary Zatina to the committee. He plans to hold monthly meetings. National continues to have issues. Rob will create a spreadsheet of potential members. Mark Lee said he renewed his membership without any issues.
- Walter Middlebrook suggested that board members reach out to their newsrooms and groups. We would like to see more TV and radio members. Walter also suggested reaching out to retirees and asking them to join the chapter. National rate for retirees or those 62 and older is \$39.50 per year. They could also be asked to participate in program panels.
- Anna Clark will also promote membership opportunities.

#### **Campus Outreach – Annalise Frank**

- Annalise plans a committee meeting in the next few weeks to discuss outreach

#### **Financial – Walter Middlebrook**

- Walter thanks Jeff Payne for his help with a donation to our scholarship fund of \$3,000 from Michigan APME. Jeff said that the check is in the mail.

#### **Other Business**

- Vince McCraw noted that Detroit NABJ Valentine's FUNraiser. is Feb. 8: <https://bit.ly/4jdpN4A> Tickets: \$35 until 6 p.m. Feb. 8/ \$40 at the door. Working to get flyer out. SPJ Detroit will help promote it, as in previous years.
- Jeff Payne said that he would like to join a committee.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9 a.m.

[Next meeting has been changed to Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 8 a.m.]

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

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- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Mark Lee, Monica Williams, Briana Rice, Anna Clark
  - Membership Outreach: **Rob Davidek**, Mary Zatina, Walter Middlebrook
  - Communication Committee: **Peg McNichol**, Christine Ferretti, Tracy Wolf
  - FOIA: **Beth Konrad**, Mary Zatina, Peg McNichol
  - Banquet: **Tracy Wolf**, Marcia Hart, Monica Williams

- Campus Outreach/Scholarship: **Annalise Frank**, Kennan Oliphant, Christine Ferretti, Briana Rice, Anna Clark and Beth Konrad
- Finance/Fundraising: **Walter Middlebrook**, Marty Fischhoff
- Bylaws and elections (nominating committee): **Marty Fischhoff**, Mark Lee, Rob Davidek, Peg McNichol, Walter Middlebrook
- Contest: **Walter Middlebrook**, Marty Fischhoff