

SPJ Detroit Minutes – June 6, 2025, via Zoom

Attendees: Marty Fischhoff, Rob Davidek, Tracy Wolf, Mark Lee, Peg McNichol, Walter Middlebrook, Monica Williams, Beth Konrad, Annalise Frank, Anna Clark, Mary Zatina, Vince McCraw and Marcia Hart, Administrator. Jeremy Allen attended as an SPJ member.

Absent: Kennan Oliphant, Nicole Avery Nichols, Brianna Rice, Jeff Payne, Christine Ferretti,

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order at about 8:05 a.m.

Minutes – Peg McNichol shared the minutes via Google Doc. Mark Lee made a motion to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded and approved by a unanimous vote of the board.

President's Report

Marty Fischhoff reported that the SPJ annual report is due July 14. The SPJ National Conference will be held in Washington, D.C. Oct. 15-18. Marty plans to attend.

Programming - Tracy Wolf

- Rob Davidek discussed a program that he and Mark Lee would like to propose – a public forum with the Detroit mayoral candidates. In contrast to some of the recent debates, which have turned into screaming matches, the forum would be conducted by journalists who would control the conversation and give the candidates an opportunity to share their views on policy issues. We would invite the local chapters of NABJ and AAJA to collaborate. It was yet to be determined if the event would be in-person, virtual or hybrid. We would determine a date based on the availability of the candidates.

- Anna Clark asked if it was an all-or-nothing event – what happens if one candidate is unavailable to attend? Rob said if four or five candidates were available, that would be sufficient. Mark agreed.
- Discussion followed about the best date, the venue if it was to be an in-person event, the potential for livestreaming the conversation, the mechanism for audience questions, the selection of moderators, whether there should be a small fee for those attending.
- The Programming Committee would meet on June 9 to work out the details.
- Marty said that Rod Hicks, the SPJ director of ethics and diversity, is offering to arrange training sessions in Google Tools for SPJ chapters. Besides providing reporters with professional development, chapters would also receive \$500 in compensation. Rob has stepped forward to host the session at WWJ sometime in August. Chapters are asked to select the areas of Google Tools they would like the training to concentrate on.
- Tracy Wolf said the Programming Committee was planning to repeat last year's August networking Happy Hour, which was well received.

FOIA Committee -- Beth Konrad

- Beth said Speaker Matt Hall has stalled progress on FOIA bills before the Michigan House. She offered to provide a one-page summary of the chapter's work promoting open government for the annual report.

Contest Committee – Walter Middlebrook

- Marty reported that the A-Mark Foundation said that the \$2,000 it provides chapters for promoting the A-Mark Prize in Investigative Journalism could be used for a reception to announce the winners of the competition. The Atwater Brewery would be the likely venue for such an event to be held in September. The deadline for content entries had been extended to June 30. Tracy has used her extensive media list to spread the word to newsrooms throughout Michigan. We have also boosted posts on Facebook.

Membership Committee -- Rob Davidek

- Rob said the chapter has gained seven members to expand our ranks to 47. It looked to him as if five of those new members joined as the result of our work at the banquet.

Financial Committee – Walter Middlebrook

- Walter said the chapter received an additional \$250, beyond the initial \$3,000, from the APME Foundation for the scholarship fund.

Account balances of May 31:

- \$3,528.05: Checking
- \$7,219.10: Scholarship savings
- \$13,014.65: E*Trade
- \$20,747.32: PayPal
- \$44,509.12: Total

- Walter noted that this does not include the payout for scholarships. Also, he said signatories on the bank accounts needed to be updated.
- The silent auction made approximately \$1,000. Marty called it a nice gift for the scholarship fund and thanked Monica Williams for her hard work making it happen.

Beth offered a motion to adjourn, Vince McCraw seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

Next meeting: 8 a.m. on Thursday, July 10.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

Committee Assignments (chairs in bold text)

- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Mark Lee, Monica Williams, Briana Rice, Anna Clark, Jeremy Allen
- 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**, Jeff Payne, Marty Fischhoff