

**SPJ Detroit Minutes – January 15, 2026**  
**Atwater Brewery**

**Attendees:** Marty Fischhoff, Rob Davidek, Tracy Wolf, Mark Lee, Beth Konrad, Annalise Frank, Mary Zatina, Jeff Payne, Vince McCraw, Jeremy Allen

**Absent:** Nicole Avery Nichols, Kennan Oliphant, Christine Ferretti, Anna Clark, Briana Rice, Peg McNichol

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order shortly after 4 p.m.

**Minutes** – The minutes from the November meeting were approved unanimously.

**President’s Report**

- Marty Fischhoff thanked everyone for attending this in-person board meeting and social networking event. He promised that he would keep the proceedings short in order for the socia to resume.

**Programming – Tracy Wolf**

- Tracy reported on a meeting that was held to discuss a cross-regional conference in 2026. It was learned that a grant received by the national SPJ grant may influence the conference being situated somewhere other than Detroit. Our plan is to support the 2026 regional from afar as we have in the past (attending meetings and supporting a few programs), stating our desire to host a regional conference in 2027.
- Marty mentioned that there have been other programs suggested including ones focused on food journalism, attracting a younger audience and open government.

**Banquet – Tracy Wolf**

- The 2026 banquet will be held again at the San Marino Club in 2026. We will be reaching out to the club for dates and other details.

**Contest – Walter Middlebrook**

- Marty thanked the Content Committee for its work on updating the categories in the competition to bring parity and broader recognition for journalists working in all news platforms. Work is being done to finalize the Call for Entries, which should go out in early January.

**Elections – Marty Fischhoff**

- Marty was pleased to announce the chapter’s new Secretary, Briana Rice. The announcement was cheered by all.

**Campus Outreach – Annalise Frank**

- At Annalise’s suggestion, the chapter decided to simplify the process for college students applying for our scholarships, mainly by asking for only one letter of recommendation or support. Marty read the new language that will be part of the upcoming Call for Entries.
- Mary Zatina said that Wayne State journalism students toured the WDET studio on Nov. 24 to learn about the operations of a public radio newsroom. The response from the students was very positive.

**FOIA – Beth Konrad**

- Beth reported that there was unlikely to be much movement on FOIA reform from the current Michigan legislature.
- The chapter has paid for its ongoing membership in the Michigan Coalition for Open Government.
- The Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame is currently accepting nominations for the upcoming year's potential honorees.

#### **Membership – Rob Davidek**

- Membership remains at about 54.

#### **Other Business**

- Vince McCraw reported that the 2025 Show the Love fundraiser was a major success both in terms of attendance and donations.

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

- There was no financial report as Walter was out of town.

**Next meeting** will take place on Thursday, January 15, back on Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 p.m. The networking function resumed, with a number of members and nonmembers of the chapter in attendance.

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

- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Mark Lee, 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
- 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, Phoebe Wall Howard