

Society of Professional Journalists  
Minnesota Pro Chapter  
Board of Directors meeting  
Oct. 22, 2007

Minnesota News Council offices, Minneapolis

Board members present: Joan Gilbertson, president; Dave Beal, treasurer; Scott Theisen, secretary; Art Hughes, past president; Sarah Bauer, Don Davis, Andrew Tellijohn, Amanda Lutz, Alyssa Ford, Jeff Achen, Karen Lundegaard, Jane Kirtley, directors; Nicole Garrison-Sprenger, president elect, by phone.

Guests: Sunshine co-chairs John Borger and Leita Walker, National SPJ President-Elect Dave Aeikens.

#### I. Welcome guests

Gilbertson called the meeting to order and welcomed attorneys John Borger and Leita Walker, Minnesota Sunshine co-chairs, and National President-Elect Dave Aeikens.

#### II. State FOI/Sunshine report

Borger addressed the board about taking a pro-active approach towards issues that may cause problems in gathering information about arrests during the upcoming Republican National Convention in 2008. In anticipation of an overwhelmed police/courts system, he would like to work with officials to create a system allowing journalists to obtain police reports and court documents in a timely fashion. He reported that he has had some preliminary discussions on the matter with the two city attorneys and a judge. The board agreed with Borger that the MnPro Chapter should take a pro-active approach and will solicit ideas from the membership on what type of information they may need.

Borger has talked with former chair Gary Hill about unfinished projects at the time of his departure from the SPJ board. Other than the push for cameras in the courts, there was an outstanding issue with Hennepin County asking too high of an access fee for accessing the property evaluation database. Board members plan to inquire about the fee that the county is currently charging.

In response to a question from Aeikens, Borger reported that a ruling on the case involving the Mankato Free Press in their coverage of a 2006 police standoff may be in around the first of the year.

#### Cameras in the courts:

Another hearing for cameras in the courts was held Oct. 22. There was little information on it at the time of the meeting.

### III. National Convention debrief

National election, report from Aeikens

National President-Elect Dave Aeikens thanked the board for its continued support over the last two years.

Since the convention and national elections the organization has been in the usual transition period following the elections. Aeikens has been assisting National President Clint Brewer with selecting committee chairpersons. Also, a strategic plan has been created to guide the organization for the next six years. Aeikens reported that there are plans for national-level professional development programs. Many things are happening on the national level in regards to FOI issues, mainly the passage of the Federal Shield Bill in Congress.

#### B) Student chapter reimbursement

The board discussed whether the members from the student chapters of MSU Mankato and St. Cloud State were eligible for reimbursement under the guidelines set forth in the written agreement for reimbursement. The issue at hand was that members from the two chapters were not present at the regional meeting at the national convention, a requirement that the students agreed to by signing the letter.

Following a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by board member Davis and seconded by Kirtley that the student chapter liaisons contact the student chapter members to discuss the situation and determine if partial reimbursement is appropriate, keeping in mind the direction of the board discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

### IV. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Beal reported that as of Oct. 19 the chapter had \$32,820 in the three Wells Fargo accounts: \$16,996 in savings, \$10,581 in a CD and \$5,243 in checking. The amount was slightly up from the report at the Aug. 27 meeting due to \$315 in income from local membership dues. Expenses since the Aug. 27 meeting were minimal.

Bills coming due were estimated to be between \$4,000-\$5,000. The bills will mainly consist of expensed due to board members and students who attended the national convention earlier in October.

A motion was made by Hughes, seconded by Kirtley, to pay Northwest Broadcast News Association (NBNA) \$1,045 that the chapter raised for the 2007 Midwest Journalism Conference. The motion passed unanimously.

### V. Programming

#### A. Intern night; November program; holiday party

Intern Night: The event went very well with approximately 80 students in attendance. Lutz will look into why a representative from the Star Tribune did not attend as planned.

Bauer reported that she and Beal are willing to plan a program to take place in the Mankato area to take place in the near future.

November program: A diversity program about reporting on the the Twin Cities Hmong community is scheduled for November 19. The event will likely take place in one of the Hmong Immersion School in St. Paul, possibly Como Park High School. Speakers/panelists may include representatives from the Hmong Times, mainstream media, Minnesota Legislature and other Hmong community outreach programs. The program committee will continue with the planning process and report back to the board.

Ethics in Online Journalism: The program committee is considering finding a high profile speaker for the event, depending on the availability of a program grant from National.

Holiday party: Bauer will begin working on plans for the upcoming holiday party. The party may be held at a board member's home or at a similar location to previous years.

#### B) Regional Conference

Hughes reported that the board needs to start thinking about panels for this year's regional conference March 28-29. The board will need to submit their panel ideas/panelist to NBNA by January.

### VI. Other business

A) Gilbertson reminded the board that the student scholarship applications should go out about this time of year. The student liaisons will begin working the process.

B) Beal, Hughes and Lutz plan to meet to discuss changes to the Page One contest categories.

C) Gilbertson reported that members at the Connecticut Pro Chapter have shown interest in trading contest entries for judging. National President-Elect Aeikens also provided contact info for Chicago Headline Club board members which may be interested in trading entries. Gilbertson will work on an arrangement for the contest judging.

VII. The next meeting is set for Nov. 12 at 6:30 at WCCO-TV in Minneapolis.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Gilbertson and seconded by Theisen.