

National Press Club Board of Governors Meeting
February 23, 2015

Chairman Ken Mellgren calls the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

The Chairman calls on board members to submit their committee liaison reports no later than the Thursday before a the next board meeting.

Chairman urges all board members to wear their official name tags when in the Club.

Board committee liaison reports approved.

Membership Secretary Joseph Morton presents 33 candidates for membership. The Board calls for more information on two of the applicants. 31 accepted unanimously. XX members approved for retired status. Three members approved for dues assistance.

Motion to approve a reciprocal relationship with the London Club of London, Ontario is approved unanimously.

Treasurer Mark Wojno presents two reports, one regarding December, 2014 finances and one regarding January, 2015. An accounting error led to a significant shortfall in December vs projections. Initial investigations show that December projections were based on a month factoring in a payroll for 21 working days, when December, 2014 had 23 working days. The error is being investigated by the Club auditor, who will make a full report on the error as well as suggest ways to prevent it from happening again.

January was not a good month, revenue-wise. February is not looking much better. The Club took a significant loss in January because the Club did not host enough paid events. Events staff believe the downturn in business was caused by fears of a harsh winter that caused event planners to have cold feet when it came to booking space in January and February. This theory is backed up by initial sales figures that show March, April and May will be stronger in terms of sales than they were last year.

Executive Director Bill McCarren presents his report. The Club was voted a "Couples Choice" award winner by Wedding Wire, a sign that The Club has very good reviews from clients that have hosted weddings there. There will soon be signage denoting the news.

The Club's efforts to free Washington Post editor Jason Rezaian, jailed in Iran, have stepped up. Club leaders met with Rezaian's brother, launched an online petition, and are planning a March 12 press conference with WaPo editors and President John Hughes.

A motion approving a bonus plan for employees was approved unanimously.

The board discusses the recent Slate article about the Club hosting National Policy Institute, a group the article reported supports white supremacy. In a spirited discussion, the Board agrees it's not a good idea for the Club to draw up a list of groups that cannot rent out space for events and calls for exploration of options to help make more clear to members, attendees, guests and the media which events have the Club's backing and which don't.

President Hughes makes his report to the board. He says the first month of the year has put his goals for the club — a focus on press freedom, inviting members from new media into the Club and transforming the crowds usually found in the Club — front and center. Treasurer Marc Wojno gets a special shoutout for including press freedom in the pub quiz.

In the coming months, President Hughes says he's hoping to make the Club better at engaging on social media.

The Board went into executive session.

The Board considers legislation from President Hughes moving the Press Freedom Committee to the Journalism Institute and moving the Book and Author Committee to the Press Club. A vote will be taken on the plans in March.

Vice Chairman Jeffrey Ballou thanks the Board for attending the retreat and is applauded for his efforts.

Next BOG meeting set for March 23.

Chairman Ken Mellegren adjourns the meeting.

In attendance:

- Chairman Ken Mellgren, Associated Press (Retired)
- Vice Chairman Jeff Ballou, Al Jazeera
- President John Hughes, Bloomberg News
- Vice President Tommy Burr, Salt Lake Tribune
- Treasurer Marc Wojno, Kiplinger
- Membership Secretary Joseph Morton, Omaha World Herald
- Board member Frederica Dunn, Jamestown Post Journal

- Board member Evan McMorris-Santoro, BuzzFeed
- Board member Ed Barks, Barks Communications
- Board member Tom McMahon, Motorola Solutions
- National Press Club Executive Director Bill McCarren
- Ex Officio Myron Belkind, George Washington University
- National Press Club Institute President Barbra Cochran

Secretary Andrea Edney and board member Anthony Shop were not present.