

Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting – March 20, 2017

Call to order 6:38 PM

Attending: President Jeff Ballou, Vice President Andrea Edney, Board Chair Alison Kodjak, Deputy Chair Derek Wallbank, Secretary Jen Judson, board members: Celia Wexler, Ed Barks, Michael Freedman, Pat Host, Tom McMahon, membership secretary Michele Salcedo, NPC Journalism Institute's Barbara Cochran, Ex Officio Thomas Burr, NPC executive director Bill McCarren.

Via teleconference: Erik Meltzer

Chair Kodjak called meeting to order.

Brian Taylor provided a club business development update. He detailed building a new infrastructure to track status and pursuit of sales, built a new digital booking system for event space and a new process to analyze financial and customer data to understand business trends and opportunities for growth.

Wallbank, who served as secretary in the February meeting in Judson's absence, noted two changes to the minutes and moved approval of minutes with changes. Ballou seconded. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Liaison Reports – Wallbank noted the House and Bar team would have a list of priorities at the next board meeting, adding the previous report is reflective of current team activities.

Membership Report – Salcedo said club had received 85 applications for membership and the team was recommending 35 for membership. She noted the club is up 22 members from where it was last year. Communicators are still outpacing journalist memberships. The membership team will work on a strategy soon to increase journalist memberships. Salcedo said the membership team is also taking a fresh look at membership guidelines and how to vet news organizations, suggests reviewing organizations annually to see which ones stand the test of time in keeping criteria of a news organization.

Salcedo moved to accept the membership of 35 applicants. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Salcedo recommended members for retirement status, dues assistance and membership status changes.

Salcedo moved that the report be accepted. Ballou seconded. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report – Edney delivered report in al-Faruque's absence. Edney said February was a rough month for the press club with a revenue shortfall, roughly \$60,000 less than projected primarily due to four events moved to different months, two events were canceled, but nothing indicates a trend, so the treasurer is not concerned. Edney said she anticipates a much better March.

Host introduced a resolution commending National Press Club member, former board member and secretary Joseph Morton, the Washington bureau chief of the Omaha World Herald for his David Lynch Memorial reporting award on covering Congress from a regional perspective.

Barks seconded the commendation. The Commendation approved unanimously by voice vote. Resolution will be printed.

Special issue – Kodjak said the rules for playing on the NPC softball team is that only members, spouses and club staff can play. Long-time former staff member Sarah Driggs moved away but returns to DC frequently. The team has requested a waiver so Driggs can continue to play on the team when she is in town as she was a core member.

Wallbank suggested approval of a waiver come from more than one person to add flexibility and moved to amend the motion to authorize in perpetuity the president and/or the chair of the board of governors to be able to issue waivers for participation in press club sponsored teams and recreational activities. Edney seconded.

Waiver with amendment approved unanimously by voice vote.

Ethics guidelines – Ballou said there were no changes in the draft since presented. Wallbank said a large portion is to codify and update existing practices and ethics guidelines. Wording can still be changed, he added.

Kodjak moved to adopt the guidelines. Wallbank seconded.

Edney proposed an addition to the guidelines that would require, before a president accepts invitations to travel somewhere, that there is a check on that. Edney proposed the chair AND deputy chair sign off on travel opportunities.

Wallbank noted the guidelines are subject to an auditor's approval.

Kodjak amended Edney's proposal that approval should come from two out of three selected officers of club including chair, vice chair or treasurer.

Ballou moved to accept guidelines with amendment and noted the guidelines are still subject to review by an auditor. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Kodjak moved to go into executive session. Edney seconded. All in favor. Executive session starts at 8:02 PM. Board moved out of executive session at 8:14 PM.

NPC Executive Director Report – McCarren provided heads up on a broadcast project that could be a good opportunity in terms of scale. The project is not a done deal and there are some issues to consider. Kodjak asked that McCarren keep the board posted on any developments related to the project.

McCarren said the security gates will begin operation tomorrow when one of three gates will operate as it should while the two other gates remain open. Members have been sent a code to allow them to activate access through the gates. Two weeks from tomorrow the club will have all of the gates functioning and everyone will be going through the system.

Wallbank discussed concern with offering amenities in the restrooms on the member's level because small items would disappear quickly. Ballou suggested the possibility of offering items like mouthwash and shampoo in large bottles.

President's Report – Ballou said press freedom issues have kept him busy lately such as issuing statements. The club is looking at partnerships and public addresses related to press freedom and he's talking to the institute about possible partnerships with various likeminded organizations in things like Sunshine Week or World Press Freedom Day.

Ongoing implementation of the team concept this has been a monster lift, Ballou said, adding many have pitched in to do their part. Ballou acknowledge it's not easy to shift mindset but little by little it is working and we are trying to get teams to do things together instead of in silos.

Ballou mentioned a new entrance to the Cosgrove lounge to avoid walking through kitchen.

The events team is working on group rates for members to go to places together like the Arena Stage, the Kennedy center and to movies.

The president's office has a new manager – Laura Coker.

Ballou has plans to visit the Towson and Akron press clubs. LA is another possibility as well as Philadelphia.

Other business – Host said he'd like to examine the restaurant policy regarding credit card use at the next meeting. Kodjak and McCarren said they would look into it.

Kodjak set next meeting for Monday, April 17.

Kodjak moved to adjourn. Burr seconded. All in favor.