

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
FEB. 25, 2008
Maureen Groppe, Secretary**

Chairman Keith Hill called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Present were President Sylvia Smith, Vice President Donna Leinwand, Treasurer Alan Bjerga, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Secretary Maureen Groppe, and Governors John Hughes, Lou Priebe, John Gallagher, Theresa Werner, Dipka Bhambhani and Gayela Bynum. Also members Valentine Wilber and Bill Royce, General Manager Bill McCarren, Membership Director Sarahanne Driggs and Webmaster Ryan Howell.

Groppe moved and the board approved the minutes of the January meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Hamrick moved and the board approved waiving initiation fees for all new members whose applications are received and processed this year, in honor of the Club's Centennial.

Hamrick moved and the board approved the applications of 45 members. Hamrick moved and the board approved retired dues status for one member and a six-month dues waiver for one member.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bjerga said the the Club has had it's third straight monthly loss. While there are mitigating factors, Bjerga said there are also reasons to think business may be softening so the budget committee discussed preparing for a potential recession.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

McCarren said the Club lost \$4,000 in January and would have lost more without the Aviva contribution to the Centennial DVD. Business was a little slower than expected, possibly because the busy presidential primary season discouraged newsmakers from holding press conferences. McCarren said he's not ready to say there's a recession, but he remains watchful.

Howell updated the board on improvements to the Web site, including work on the membership directory and steps to generate more ad revenue. Howell said the Club needs to get more traffic to the site to attract advertisers. McCarren said he made an agreement with JournalismJobs.com to give them a button on the Club's homepage in exchange for our banner ads on their home page. He asked for the board's agreement that Howell's top priorities should be the Web advertising and directory improvements.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE LIASON REPORTS

Affiliate-associate -- Received \$13,700 in pledges and collected \$12,700 for the Centennial party.

Smith moved and the board approved a motion congratulating Bynum and Priebe and the affiliate-associates who are donating money to make the Centennial party a wonderful one.

Broadcast -- Working on building radio space exclusive for members on the 4th floor.

Travel -- Picked Dublin as next year's Martin Luther King weekend trip. Member Rod Kuckro worked with the travel and young members committees to organize a Habit for

Humanity trip to New Orleans in May. Smith noted that two members who couldn't go have offered to sponsor other members.

Photography -- Washington Times photographer Katie Falkenberg is speaking to the committee.

Young members -- Is having a Breakfast with Champions event with one of the Washington Post's Reliable Source writers.

Communications and Marketing -- Contacted CBS about doing a story on the Club's Centennial. Fundraising for the DVD continues.

History -- Scheduled interviews include former General Manager John Bloom and former presidents Gil Klein and Sheila Cherry.

Events -- Drew more than 100 attendees to the Super/Fat/Mega Tuesday party. The ski trip was cancelled due to insufficient interest.

Speakers -- Upcoming luncheons include the FDA commissioner.

Newsmakers -- Held 10 newsmakers so far this year. Miss America is coming Feb. 27.

International Correspondents -- Held a forum on the future of Cuba. Future events include a reception at the Canadian Embassy and a May 20 recruitment reception.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Smith asked if anyone had an objection to her sending a letter to the judge who found former USA Today reporter Toni Locy in contempt of court for refusing to name the confidential sources who shared information about a person of interest in the 2001 anthrax attacks.

OLD BUSINESS

Hill reported that, in accordance with the rules allowing for electronic votes between monthly meetings, the board voted electronically on the following motion by Smith: That the board instruct the general manager to inform the architect that sketches of the proposed library complex on the 4th floor be delayed until after a meeting of the membership of the Club has been conducted on the proposal to expand and relocate functions of the 13th floor library complex. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Smith, Hughes, Groppe, Hamrick, Leinwand, Gallagher and Bjerga. Those voting against were Bhambhani, Hill, Sergent, Werner and Donnelly. The motion was approved Feb. 4th.

Smith said she called for the town hall meeting, conducted Feb. 22, at the request of those opposed to moving parts of the library complex to the 4th floor. Regardless of the merits of the idea, Smith said it has become a distraction for the board and management. Smith proposed that she spend the next month talking to various constituencies about how to improve the library while keeping it where it is.

Smith read an email from John Donnelly, who was unable to attend the meeting, arguing that the board should stick with the original idea. Donnelly said trying to split the baby in half would not achieve the intended results and may not please opponents anyway. He said the Club would become more clubby, not less so, after the changes and would be able to afford membership services that could not be provided under other options.

Werner said the new proposals for the library should potentially include other areas on the 13th floor, and not just the current space.

Bjerga said he thinks a space study would still be valuable.

Priebe asked if the results of the membership survey could provide guidance. McCarren said there's not a lot in the survey that is relevant.

Hamrick agreed the issue has been a burden and distraction and praised a possible compromise.

Hughes said Smith shouldn't be limited to a month to look at other options. And he said any new proposal should include a communications strategy.

Smith moved and the board approved that Smith spend the next month consulting with various Club constituencies about ideas and concepts for rejiggering library complex services within the 13th floor that would include potential revenue streams.

Wilber said she thinks both sides are coming together. She said the attendance at the town hall meeting should the depth of feeling of opponents.

NEW BUSINESS

Bjerga questioned whether the Club should continue to provide free meeting space to journalism organizations, regardless of whether the organization has a Club member. Bjerga said that would help maintain the benefits of being a member as well as help the Club financially. McCarren said the Club provides free space to about 20 groups. Smith said it will be interesting to see how many of those groups respond to her suggestion to purchase a table for the Centennial gala. Bjerga said he would wait to offer his motion until he refines the language.

Gallagher moved and the board approved creating a medal to commemorate extraordinary contributions of past presidents, if the Club is able to raise the money to cover the costs. Recipients would be nominated by the sitting president in an executive session with the board. The award would not have to be bestowed on an annual basis.

Priebe suggested board members get nametags so members know who they are. Smith said the board used to have nametags and no one wore them.

Bhambhani moved that the board give the membership department the green light to begin work on the membership directory. Money would be saved by only mailing it to older members and nonresidents. Bhambhani said the cons are that not printing the directory, and relying on the online directory, saves money. She said the benefits would include giving people a tangible representation of their membership; it could be used while the online directory is being improved; some members have no access or limited access to a computer; and it could be memorabilia for the Centennial year. Hamrick said he's concerned that the membership department doesn't have the time to put the directory together while adequately focusing on recruitment and retention. He said the \$35,000 could be better spent on other member services. Hughes said he's torn because he likes the print directory but the Club needs to worry about its finances. Leinwand suggested the board wait to decide the issue until Howell has had more time to improve the online directory. Bhambhani withdrew her motion.

Smith reported that she will hold her first roundtable lunch with members March 1st.

The next meeting was set for March 17th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.