

SPJ Madison Monthly Business Meeting

6 p.m., Monday, May 14 2018

Next Door Brewing Co., [2439 Atwood Ave., Madison](#)

Members Present: President Mark Pitsch; Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann; Secretary Briana Reilly; and Executive Board Member Sam Martino.

Not present: Executive Board Members Breann Schossow and Nick Heynen.

1. Call to order: President Mark Pitsch called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes: Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann makes motion to approve minutes after requesting a phrasing change. Executive Board Member Sam Martino seconds.
3. Treasurer's Report: Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann says the ending balance as of April 30 is \$3,482.32 after bringing in \$283.45 in March and April from the trivia event. Expenses in March included annual dues to Wisconsin FOIC and reimbursements to Briana Reilly and Mark Pitsch for trivia, as well as a \$125 check to Hunter award winner Emily Hamer. In all, the expenses in March and April were \$465. Fuhrmann also notes three people need to sign off on the club's finances.
4. Membership Report: President Mark Pitsch reports the chapter still has somewhere in the mid-teens of lapsed memberships and adds he hasn't done anything to promote re-upping. Secretary Briana Reilly shows board members two mock-up designs of punch cards, which have been previously discussed as a way to promote membership. Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann notes that \$75 is a lot of money to pay for a membership. Pitsch says trainings help get members but are hard to organize. Executive Board Member Sam Martino says brown bag lunches are opportunities people can take advantage of (including the recent science writing workshop). Pitsch points out there isn't a dividend for local chapters with membership fees. Everyone acknowledges that's a challenge. Fuhrmann raises the possibility of holding membership canvassing events a few times a year, but wonders how much energy the club should devote to it since the national chapter doesn't seem to be heavily prioritizing it. Pitsch says the difference between 25 and 45 members doesn't mean a lot for the club, while Fuhrmann says the chapter wouldn't prohibit non-members from attending the holiday raffle, for example. On the punch cards, Pitsch says he received three WORT punch cards we can use as a model for the club's own incentives. He suggests SPJ-Madison punch cards be finalized before the August picnic and be provided to members there as a thank you.
5. President's Report
 - o Watchdog Awards: President Mark Pitsch says the event was well attended, while Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann says it moved along well but the food needed to be brought out faster (entrées, she said, took an hour to be distributed). Executive Board Member Sam Martino says the food and Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council head Bill Lueders were good.
 - o Ethics Week: President Mark Pitsch notes the chapter didn't participate in SPJ Ethics Week (April 23-27), adds it's hard to get excited about what the national office is doing.
 - o Excellence in Journalism, September 2018: President Mark Pitsch notes the event is in Baltimore this year, and Breann Schossow is attending.
 - o WCCA: President Mark Pitsch says nominations this summer are needed for the WCCA. Pitsch says he'll nominate people already on the board: Phil Brinkman of the State Journal, Gwyn Gunther of Wheeler, another from the Journal Sentinel and Noah Ovshinsky of WPR. Executive Board Member Sam Martino suggests recruiting people in press corps for WCCA and SPJ memberships. Pitsch says those reporters are already aware of both groups. But Martino says it's important to make specific asks, saying many of the members do come to SPJ programs already. Pitsch says more Executive Board members are needed and suggests members reach out to other potential candidates. Secretary Briana Reilly recommends reaching out to WisContext's Hayley Sperling for social media help. Vice President Lauren

Fuhrmann notes the chapter could see more turnover from younger membership, but says the club needs more involvement. Pitsch suggests everyone compile a list of between three and five people that would be good SPJ additions. Fuhrmann notes the list is for Executive Committee membership.

- Annual Report: Secretary Briana Reilly says Executive Board Member Breann Schossow told her the report will be done by Friday. It's due May 30.
6. Upcoming Events:
 - FOIC 40th Anniversary: President Mark Pitsch notes the anniversary is this fall. Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann says WCIJ's Andy Hall has said there is a planning committee for the event.
 7. Olbrich Biergarten Happy Hour Event: Secretary Briana Reilly says June 7 or 14 are best options. Members raise concern that two purely social events won't draw a large crowd. Executive Board Member Sam Martino suggests summer picnic be coordinated around baseball/softball game. Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann notes that she wouldn't make a June 14 event. But she says there's a journalist panel/event that week from June 14-16 called the "Madison Reunion" that perhaps the club could draw speakers from. But President Mark Pitsch notes the lineup isn't great. Members agree it's not worth trying to draw a speaker for the happy hour event from those in town for the "Madison Reunion." As for holding the event June 7, members agree the event likely won't draw many but there's general agreement the event should go forward.
 8. Summer Picnic: Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann says the event needs a good playlist. President Mark Pitsch asks if the city does refunds, should the event get rained out. Secretary Briana Reilly says she will follow up with the city and ask. Members agree on Brittingham Park, but Pitsch says reserving it from 4-10 p.m. or 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. isn't ideal. Pitsch asks Reilly to check-out all-day price, saying best case scenario would be reserving the park from 2-8 p.m. or so.
 9. Branding/Promo/Website: President Mark Pitsch says discussion on stickers/etc. is important but adds with Executive Board Member Nick Heynen leaving, the priority is getting through the summer. Pitsch also says revamping the website should take a backseat.
 10. Reimbursements/Justin Gillis Event: Secretary Briana Reilly says the event was well-attended, Genna's a good location for a private, intimate discussion – and the free food there was a plus. Reilly requests a \$10 reimbursement for promoting the event via Facebook. Executive Board Member Sam Martino makes a motion and Vice President Lauren Fuhrmann seconds. Unanimous approval follows.
 11. New Business:
 - Nick Heynen resignation: Secretary Briana Reilly makes motion to accept, Executive Board Member Sam Martino seconds. Approved unanimously.
 - Upcoming meetings: Members agree to meet the first Monday of June, again in mid to late July and then note meet again until September. Next month's meeting will be June 4 at 6 p.m., members agree. The following meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 18.
 12. Adjourn: Sam Martino motions to adjourn, Lauren Fuhrmann seconds. Approved via voice vote, meeting adjourns at 7:10 p.m.