

SPJ Madison Monthly Business Meeting

6 pm, Monday, January 14, 2019

Next Door Brewing, 2439 Atwood Ave, Madison

Attendance: Acting President/VP/Treasurer Lauren Fuhrmann, Breann Schossow, Hayley Sperling, Shelley Mesch, Emily Neinfeldt, Sam Martino, Victoria Davis, Secretary Briana Reilly, Gordon Govier, Terry Shelton and Lauren Sklba.

Agenda

I. Call to order by Acting President Lauren Fuhrmann: Fuhrmann calls the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

II. Approval of December 2018 minutes: Shelley Mesch makes a motion to approve the minutes without changes; Gordon Govier seconds.

III. Treasurer's Report: No treasurer's report this meeting, Acting President/VP/Treasurer Lauren Fuhrmann says. She notes she deposited a \$620 check that day and the account balance is around \$4,162. She says the chapter has to also cut a \$900 check to the UW School of Journalism for the Holiday Party.

IV. Appointment of Interim President until April 2019 election: Breann Schossow notes Acting President/VP/Treasurer Lauren Fuhrmann had agreed to step in as president through the end of the year following former head Mark Pitsch's resignation in August 2018. Shelley Mesch nominates Breann Schossow as interim president until the chapter holds its elections in April. Hayley Sperling seconds the nomination. Members make no further nominations, and unanimously agree to elect Schossow as interim president. Schossow says she will send out a list of board positions available for members to run for come April.

V. President's Report

- A. Membership Report: Interim President Breann Schossow says updated membership figures weren't immediately available, though when she last checked, the chapter was at 31 members.
- B. Holiday Party Overview: Schossow highlights the more than 35 prizes available to attendees at last month's annual Holiday Party, thanks Hayley Sperling for emceeding the event and notes the chapter raised \$845 to support student journalists. She adds that SPJ Madison had paid \$125 for extra raffle prizes. Asked for recommendations for future events, Shelley Mesch suggests members find a new venue or book Argus for longer in the evening, until 11 p.m. or so, because many attendees had had an interest in sticking around to continue socializing but were unable because the club had only booked the basement until 10 p.m. Schossow also suggests rather than raffling off individual books next year, the club should put together book baskets. Secretary Briana Reilly asks members to send thank you cards to donors. While the club doesn't have SPJ-themed thank you cards, Schossow says she asked SPJ Region 6 Director

Joe Radske for cards in the future. Mesch then recommends getting more plates for food in future years, noting when she arrived later in the evening, they were gone. She adds the venue felt crowded. But Sperling said the space had a casual feel and made for easy networking. Victoria Davis said while the space was fine for socializing, it began feeling crowded when people sat down to eat. Schossow notes Argus' sound system is problematic, and that could be reason enough to search for a different venue come December.

VI. Discussion: Mission Statement: Members reviewed six different iterations of the chapter's mission statement from last month's meeting. Hayley Sperling notes some of the versions mention "integrity," and the chapter's role in supporting and advocating for it. She says while she's not sold on it, because reporters' integrity is being called into question quite frequently, it's a good thing to highlight. She notes its inclusion adds another layer to the notion that journalists are just fact-finders or writers. Interim President Breann Schossow says she will prepare mission statement samples for next meeting that include and exclude the word. Emily Neinfeldt says she likes how Natalie Yahr's statement highlights the club's role in "help(ing) the public/community better understand how journalism works." Other members agree. Schossow suggests removing the phrase "Madison-area" from the mission statement, arguing it's redundant. Mesch suggests the mission statement should say the club is advocating for "journalism" not "journalists." Others question the use of the word "advocates" over "supports." Schossow says while nationals would want the club to use "advocates," the chapter could choose "supports" if members want. Sam Martino questions the need to use the chapter's mission statement to differentiate the club from nationals. The Madison chapter, he says, does a lot of outreach. He asks if members might want to include something about that aspect of the club. And he suggests building off of national's mission statement and adding something about how the Madison chapter "seeks to connect with the community -- academic, professional and business interests -- to promote a better understanding of journalism." Schossow suggests using Yahr's statement as the basis of discussion for the next meeting.

VII. Discussion: What do the first six months of 2019 look like for SPJ Madison? Members begin a 10-minute discussion outlining their goals for the club. Shelley Mesch references the idea of a "How Does the Editorial Process Work" panel. Sam Martino says it's important for SPJ to have a table at the Wisconsin Newspaper Association conference in March. The staff at WNA, he adds, have submitted the Hunter awards project. He notes no submissions have been filed yet but there will likely be more closer to the deadline. Lauren Fuhrmann says the WNA conference last year was quiet and there were few attendees. The setup was also different, she said, and she doesn't think the conference is worth a big investment of the chapter's time. Interim President Breann Schossow adds SPJ should have a table at the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association conference in April. Members also highlight other events: spring trivia and speed networking for UW journalism students. Schossow suggests looking at dates near the end of February, since spring break is in mid-March. Secretary Briana Reilly asks if members want to devote time to planning trainings. Fuhrmann says it isn't worthwhile, noting interest varies widely depending on the topic. Otherwise, she suggests only doing trainings that are half-day sessions or just

evenings. Mesch suggests an evening training event could be on “How to Cover New Studies,” a topic that she says is particularly relevant given the proximity to UW-Madison. Members support the idea, and Reilly volunteers to reach out to UW-Madison to get the name of its science writer in residence this spring. Reilly also suggests reaching out to existing groups in Madison that offer evening trainings and trying to partner with them first. She volunteers to put together a list for next meeting. Schossow raises the idea of a “creative outlet” for journalists, like classes on how to draw. Fuhrmann mentions a woman who ran a group drawing lesson via Skype. Mesch suggests the club build up to drawing lessons, adding the chapter can establish credibility with other training sessions first. Victoria Davis and Hayley Sperling suggest trainings on using social media or developing newsletters. Sperling also suggests metrics tracking/using Google analytics. Martino mentions mapping or illustration or a general conversation about how to use graphics to supplement reporting. Davis talks about an Adobe Spark training. Lauren Sklba says evening training classes are very appealing. Fuhrmann notes a consistent schedule would be helpful for parents. Members transition to talking about trivia, and Schossow says a date for mid-February would make the most sense. She suggests a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday night, and adds she’s been looking at Coopers Tavern as a possible venue. Members set Feb. 13 as the potential date. On panels, Schossow suggests one on covering crime and child abduction following Jayme Closs’s abduction. But she says it would be a tough turnaround. She adds members should look at the end of March for the “How to Cover New Studies” panel, and members decide on Wednesday, March 27. Martino suggests the panel should include an assignment editor from a TV station.

VIII. Discussion: Hunter contest

- A. Deadline? Sam Martino says he’s currently waiting on applications to come in for the award.
- B. Promotion plan? Martino says WNA has already promoted it. Interim President Breann Schossow and Victoria Davis volunteer to promote it on SPJ’s channels.

IX. Update: Mark of Excellence Judging: Interim President Breann Schossow says she’s working on finalizing judges, which is going well. She adds a new category this year is podcasts.

X. Update: Creating a fund for SPJ-supported journalism: Interim President Breann Schossow says she has yet to call the IRS back to get more information. Shelley Mesch says she will set up a Slack channel dedicated to the fund and bimonthly committee meetings. The first, she says, will meet Feb. 18 at Next Door.

XI. Update: Social media strategy and budget: Victoria Davis says there’s a need for more consistent posts across all the club’s social channels, as well as more promotional ads. Interim President Breann Schossow says the marketing budget will stay the same this month. Davis also suggests more photos are needed of downtown Madison or journalists at work covering something. Shelley Mesch suggests everyone take a picture of their desks at work, adding the pics could be shared for a #MondayMotivation post. Davis says personal photos are really important. Hayley Sperling suggests taking a photo of the Capitol pressroom. Sam Martino says

the club should do “Get to Know Your Journalists” posts. Davis suggests sharing more local news links. And she says club members could do Instagram takeovers while at work. Sperling notes Jessie Opoien, of the Cap Times, would do an excellent job. Schossow says she could plan on doing a takeover by the end of the month.

XII. Update: Freedom of Information Council: The council meets on Jan. 24, Sam Martino says. He also highlights the recent successes in the secret 2017 lawsuit over Racine public records.

XIII: Next meeting planning: Feb. 4. Members agree on 6 p.m. at Next Door.

XIV: Action: Reimbursements: Emily Neinfeldt requests \$37.50 for her SPJ membership; Interim President Breann Schossow requests \$25 for a variety of gift card reimbursements, including Rockhound Brewing and Red Sushi. She also requests \$164.47 for pizza at the speed networking event, \$5.98 for water, \$37.50 for Hayley Sperling’s SPJ membership and more. The total comes to \$675.67.

XV: Adjourn: Secretary Briana Reilly moves to adjourn at 7:32 p.m.; Shelley Mesch seconds.