

PMJA Board Retreat Notes – January 11, 2021

Leo C. Lee Award Discussion – We did receive one nomination this year – Michele Martin was nominated by Julie Drizin. Reginald likes the idea of Michele Martin – she has been a leader in discussions and brings voices and content that we wouldn't hear otherwise. As a host she guides the content and it has made a difference. Vinnee – Farai Chideya is another person we could consider. She has moved the conversation about DEI forward and she is an incredible thinker. LaToya offers up Phillip Martin from WGBH. He was the first NPR reporter to focus solely on race and ethnicity. He worked on NPR's coverage of 911. He would be worth considering. Celeste Headlee (Brent & Ariel both thought she was a good choice). Brent also suggests George Bodarky – done a lot for getting students into the business. Mike Marcotte & Bob Beck – both sort of second tier nominations. Ariel also mentioned Michele Martin. Brent – I also think it's good for PMJA to give the award to someone who has done work at a station. LaToya – we should also put Traci Tong on this list maybe for future consideration. Ariel agrees. Gabrielle – of the list we have so far, my top three would be Michele Martin, Traci Tong and George Bodarky. Last year we had talked about Erin Hennessey and some others who were “founding mothers” of the organization. Ariel – I think Erin would be a worthy recipient not just because of her service to this organization, but for her other work. LaToya – choosing this award for this year, it seems we need to be very aware of where we are in the racial reckoning. Ariel agrees. Vinnee – I would second this. Gabrielle – I will say that we had some conversations last year about “the moment” and why we choose who we do.

Terry proposes that we do fist to five for the ones on the list:

Celeste Headlee - 30

Michele Martin - 35

Farai Chideya - 31

Erin Hennessey - 27

Traci Tong - 34

George Bodarky - 33

Mike Marcotte - 24

Bob Beck - 25

Philip Martin - 26

Top one on the list is Michele Martin – would we be fine with making her the recipient for 2021. Fives from everyone. Terry will notify Michele that she is our winner for 2021.

Emergency Contingencies conversation – Christine reported that Brent and Terry have access to Quickbooks, Brent and Terry have access to passwords, and Terry has access to the shared file in One Drive. Terry suggests that one or two board members should also have access to the OneDrive file. Reginald – do we have a way to contact each other quickly and how we communicate with each other and with the membership. Brent – I don't have any particular concerns. My only suggestion would be

to **put into the board and staff manual to outline it there**. Debit cards are currently held by Terry, Christine, Brent. Alicia's card is still available...but needs to be changed to Johnathan.

Strategic Plan Review: Johnathan reviewed a bit of history of the organization. Johnathan – I want to see us continue to move forward over the next couple of years. New board members felt that this document is a good outline of what PMJA does and should be doing. Reginald – There is some question of measurability – maybe even in terms of membership growth or number of journalists or even diversity. We should have some more measurable goals. LaToya suggests that we make every effort to have our committees be as diverse as possible as part of our goal to DEI. Gabrielle – the new website and the email marketing will have some impact on that. We should also be thinking about that in everything we do. I also hope we'll discuss the bylaws moving forward. We could open things up to an increase of diversity on the board.

Organizational Mission: The Bylaws/Membership Committee have met and developed a statement for consideration of the board. Suggested mission is:

Public Media Journalists Association supports, empowers and advocates for journalists working in public media. In that endeavor we seek to:

- Provide training and networking opportunities that allow our members to improve and excel in their work, giving stations a venue for sharing innovations and best practices
- Work for greater diversity, equity and inclusion throughout public media, especially by creating and cultivating a path to support diverse leadership
- Champion members working to create environments free of discrimination and harassment
- Advocate for a society where journalism can be practiced freely without threat
- Foster high ethical standards in the practice of journalism

Ariel and LaToya both like what's here. Gabrielle would like to see something shorter and more punchy.

Vinnee – I think this is a good list, but maybe the connection between the second bullet point and the last one. Sometimes DEI becomes its own topic – but we need to do more to connect DEI and high quality journalism. Terry: originally, the final bullet point was higher up and a member of the committee thought it should be on the bottom. The bullets are not supposed to be prioritized.

Reginald – I like everything I see here. I was trying to think of a shorter way to say it. Brent - For reference, the mission currently is "to enhance news and information services and programming throughout public media."

Brent – maybe a suggestion would be "...supports empowers and advocates for public media journalists who create, inspire...." Or something along those lines.

Ariel – I feel like supports, empowers and advocates for journalists working in public media. LaToya – I keep reading it and keep going back to those words. Gabrielle – when I look at it further, I think it's fine. I do like the idea Vinnee.

- Provide training and networking opportunities that allow our members to improve and excel in their work, giving stations a venue for sharing innovations and best practices

- Foster high ethical standards in the practice of journalism including working for greater diversity, equity and inclusion throughout public media
- Champion members working to create environments free of discrimination and harassment
- Create and cultivate pathways to support diverse leadership.
- Advocate for a society where journalism can be practiced freely without threat

Suggestion – move the higher ethical standards to the top in this way:

Public Media Journalists Association supports, empowers and advocates for journalists working in public media. In that endeavor we seek to foster high ethical standards in the practice of journalism through:

- Providing training and networking opportunities that allow our members to improve and excel in their work, giving stations a venue for sharing innovations and best practices
- Working for greater diversity, equity and inclusion throughout public media
- Championing members working to create environments free of discrimination and harassment
- Creating and cultivating pathways to support diverse leadership.
- Advocating for a society where journalism can be practiced freely without threat

Bylaws discussion:

News manager requirement – there is an appetite for removing this requirement from the bylaws. We would allow anyone in the newsroom to run for any board position. Brent – I agree with eliminating the news manager requirement and it might be a big cultural shift for some people who have been around for awhile. Brent feels we should have the membership approve this one. Terry would suggest that this issue should be resolved before our elections in June. Gabrielle – my thought is that we should do that with any changes to the bylaws. LaToya – want to make sure that folks have an opportunity to see any changes we want to make. We should also set a date for when we want to do that prior to the business meeting. Terry would suggest that we hold a webinar and voting period in March or April so that those changes are known by anyone interested running for the board have the information about those changes in advance. Brent would be happy to delegate the plan to the ED.

Brent moves that we take to the membership elimination of the news manager requirement from the bylaws. Gabrielle seconds. Motion passed.

Christine will look at Section II and the mission statement and bring a proposal back to the board tomorrow.

Presidential succession: Gabrielle suggests that we not have a President-Elect, but have a Vice President who only takes over the President position in the event that the president leaves during his or her term. She also suggested adding two position – one for VP and one for Foundation President. Brent – I wonder what it would do to our pool of candidates to have the four-year commitment. As I understand it, the Foundation is primarily a financial organization that so far hasn't done its own thing. It could be possible to make the Treasurer the chair of the Foundation. Gabrielle wonders if that would be a lot to take on now or in the future for the Treasurer. Brent – maybe if that person didn't chair a committee it would be a trade-off. Brent – I like the size of the current board and I would be inclined to use one of the current at-large positions to VP or President-Elect.

There is some continuity offered by staff – even if we eliminated the one-year requirement for the president. The one year experience is important for the president because it helps define the role of the president and how the president interacts with staff. Rolling the VP up would give that person the tools they need to be President.

Brent moves that we convert one of the At-Large positions to a Vice President position. Seconded by Ariel. Motion carries. Brent – my intent is to leave the one-year requirement for President.

ED/Staff/Board relations – Gabrielle wonders if it's necessary to have this in the bylaws. Reginald – It seems like having staff is a key strategic item. Brent likes the paragraph that the staff suggested but would suggest that it should be “may hire” instead of “shall” in the first sentence of the paragraph. Terry suggests “may hire and employ....” In the first sentence.

Brent moves that we add the ED paragraph with changes. Seconded by LaToya. Motion carries.

LaToya moved the housekeeping items for the Bylaws, Ariel seconds. Motion carries.

LJC's RJC's and Collaborations – membership. What would the logistics be. Suggestion that if an LJC/RJC/Collaborative – if they want to enter as the entity separate from stations they need to pay the non-member rate.

Nothing in the bylaws to remove a board member if we needed to do so.

Training Plan – Terry has talked to the trainers about doing the virtual training sessions. Some have already come back with potential dates. Reginald – I could see long-term that the virtual training sessions could be very good. Overhead of in-person is difficult. Gabrielle – the training committee or staff should look at the reviews and have a conversation with the trainers about how changes should be made to any of the training sessions. Ariel – hearing from someone else about potential improvements would be good.

Ariel – hearing from early career journalists about the fact that 2020 has been really rough and they are unsure how to handle what's happening. Maybe this is part of training or mentoring issues.

The training committee is working on some training webinars that will start with a webinar from Dart on self-care.

Sponsorship planning – We've mostly focused on sponsorships for conferences. We will still be asking for sponsorships for the virtual conference. We have other ideas for sponsorships, too. Gabrielle – wondering if there are other things we should be considering including e-newsletter and website ads.

Editor Corps – CPB extended the time we have until April. We have probably into March before we exhaust the current funding. The fellowship idea is interesting to some of the board members as a way of developing a pipeline for editors within the system.

Mentoring Program – This program is coming out of the DEI Committee. Gabrielle – we're hoping to help create pathways and pipelines for younger journalists of color and helping those who are already in leadership positions. Hoping that we could maybe take a “if we build it they will come” approach and put about \$5,000 in seed money into the project. This is very on-brand for PMJA. Johnathan – I appreciate the work of you spearheading this. I like the idea. Latoya agrees. Reginald agrees it's a good investment. It makes a statement that we're serious about DEI issues.

Motion to add \$5,000 to the budget for the mentoring program expenses by LaToya. Reginald seconds. Motion carries.

Brent moved approval of the 2021 budget as presented. Seconded by Gabrielle. Motion carries.

Maryanne Zeleznik asked if there was anything in the Bylaws that allows the board to remove a board member. This is worth discussing. We could give this to the Bylaws Committee and ask them to come back with some language. Brent – I think RTDNA or SPJ recently removed a board member. We would want to come up with guidelines about what might constitute dismissal. Should removal from office involve a vote of membership? RTDNA's bylaws provide for removal being initiated by the board then voted on by membership. Gabrielle suggests borrowing from RTDNA's bylaws. Terry suggests that we provide RTDNA's language to the bylaws committee for input.

Board Manual Conversation – Conversation about the communications issue with PRPD and the NYT. Terry essentially followed the communications policy drafted in the manual – speed is always one of the issues when we've been approached by others. Ariel – given the complications about who needs approval, etc. She feels that having the President be involved is enough, but having the board notified would be helpful. If there's something we're not leading, we will end up following, but it would be good to have the board aware. Gabrielle – totally agrees with moving things forward fast, but would have liked to have the heads-up. Suggestion that we add "with notice to the board" on page 12 section 3.

See notes on the board manual.

Communications Planning Questions:

Gabrielle – bottom line is there needs to be someone who is paid to do this as a task. It could be an intern, a paid staff member, etc. We need to look forward in a budgetary realm. I'd like to see a plan where board members can pitch in a little more and scale expectations for the staff. I think we should still have a communications committee. But the nuts and bolts has to be under the staff and board. Reginald – have we ever considered doing a fellowship or internship or contract. How do we choose the messages that are going out. Gabrielle – brand identity plan. Gabrielle is happy to sit down with staff to look at what channels we are currently on and what are the basic brand identity guidelines. Then set out a content calendar. Featuring a board member might be a good idea. Feature award winners from last year. Use some of the trainers as content providers for communications.

Christine and Reginald and Gabrielle will meet to further discuss this.

Suggestion that a member of each committee be designated to report to the Communications Committee.

Website review: Expect to have the website ready to go live right after the awards deadline (to avoid any issues in transition).

Conference Planning – Conference Comp policy: For Let's Go Live, we gave all speakers a comp to the virtual conference. PRPD is hoping to have its in-person conference. There is an appetite to have each group have a presence at each other's conferences. As a general rule, there is support for paying people for participating and there is an appetite for prioritizing that over some other things, but there is an understanding that the organization has to be financially sound. Brent – we also talked about the idea

of a scholarship if we were not paying all speakers. That might be something that a foundation could work on.

Gabrielle would suggest that we get gifts for the conference presenters (gift cards or something along those lines).

Question about keynotes and breakout sessions. Gabrielle went to the ONA conference this year, and it was kind of a monster. They were recorded and archived. Gabrielle would like our conference to be two days. There is a feeling that having the conference condensed is a better way to go.

Brent moves that all speakers at the virtual conference receive a full comp. Seconded by Gabrielle. Motion carries.

Review of conference registration. LaToya liked the sessions that had real takeaways. Ariel – my impression that the practical sessions got the most attention. Lots of talk about digital and digital workflow. There was also a fair amount of mention for training up reporters who want to be editors. Some mental health throughout. Small and mid-size stations want to make sure things are scalable for them.

Gabrielle – we did this main election panel that was with CPB. There was some feedback that it was not as valuable and a little bit more “come join us with CPB”

LaToya – there were some suggestions about tracks being offered. It would allow people to congregate with like-minded folks.

Reginald – the issue with the elections coverage panel – it was sold as how local stations could be involved, but when you got there, it was a bit of a waste of time. The panel at NPR was very good – it was a highlight for him. Gabrielle agrees. We need to make sure we have some “secondary” events in the same space.

Terry – would the board be interested in planning a virtual event like the Friday night event.

Christine - We also need to consider the awards banquet – during the conference, some other time?

Reginald – one thing other organizations do is tweeting the awards out as you release them. I did like the virtual awards banquet being an hour long.

Terry – I got a lot of questions from stations asking for the full list.

Terry introduced the lenses that we consider. Gabrielle think of these as overarching principals. One is diversity, These are high level goals that every session aspires to. Brent identified the other lenses as making sure we consider all size stations and job types. Practical tips, digital elements and audio in all sessions.

See conference session outline in Google spreadsheet.

Dates for conference will be June 22, 23, and 24.

Conference fees – Terry suggests \$200 per person for this conference. We will likely make the announcement that we’ll have a virtual conference and what the dates are in the next week or so.

Discussion about recorded content after the conference. Ariel – paying the \$200 and having it available

after for a lower price doesn't feel worth it to me. Brent – maybe you make it more after the conference – maybe you give some discount after. Gabrielle – would suggest not offering an after-the fact rate. She would be okay with having the content available later to members.

Motion that we set the price at \$200 member rate with group rates of \$150 per person for 5 to 9 and \$100 per person for 10 or more. Non-member rate of \$300 per person. Seconded by Reginald.

Meeting adjourned.