RTDNA Full Board Meeting 9-3-14

Nashville TN

Called to order at 2:15 pm

In attendance: Mike Cavender, Amy Tardif, Vincent Duffy, Chris Carl, Scott Libin, Jerry Walsh, Loren Tobia, Sean McGarvey, David Louie, Randy Bell, Jam Sardar, Christy Moreno, Harvey Nagler, Terence Shepherd, Kathy Walker, Dan Shelley, Bill Roswell, Andrew Vrees, Ed Esposito, Janice Gin, Brandon Mercer, David Steinberg (Unity), Holly Gaunt. Legal Counsel Greg Jacobs, Bob Butler (NABJ)

Public/members in attendance: Kevin Benz

The meeting began with Ex-officio member David Steinberg from Unity giving his report:

Steinberg said Unity is going through a rebuilding this year, trying to work with other groups. They are excited to work with other groups including RTDNA.

Gin asked what is the future of Unity and will there be a conference in 2016?

Steinberg said he has been to all the journalism summer conferences to try to figure out where Unity fits in and what roll they can play. They have not made a decision on a 2016 conference. Right now they are just working on building relationships

Gin asked if NABJ and NAHJ would be reuniting? Steinberg said he didn’t know.

Tobia asked for the logistical timeline to make a decision for 2016?

Steinberg said Unity would probably have a decision by the end of the year.

**Executive Director report** – Cavender:

Net assets for the Association/Foundation were up $171,379 for 2013. We now have $816,000 for both organizations in unrestricted assets. That’s 7 months operating expenses.

The Paul White reception netted $32,500 (compared to zero last year).

We saw another record year for Murrow entries with 4,040 entries and $512,000 in revenue.

RTDNA/F had clean audits this year.

Membership up 19%, due mostly to new corporate memberships with Gannet, Nexstar and Sinclair.

We have increased our emphasis on student memberships and chapters.

We renewed partnerships with CCT and NEFE and Gannett and ICFJ and NAB on a variety of issues.

Cavender said RTDNA has been a major league player in regulatory activities this year including Ferguson, drones, and First Amendment issues. Cavender is now serving on the FAA advisory board working to come up with rules for drone use.

Website growth was up 12% this year, and social media up 28%. Media coverage for RTDNA had more than 2 million impressions.

We saw good scholarship growth in applications this year. Quality of applicants was up as well.

RTDNF cleared $70,000 from First Amendment Dinner in March.

We have an agreement for a $125,000+ gift from a retired Denver broadcaster for a new RTDNF scholarship for Rocky Mountain area students.

Scholarship assets in total now more than $1.275 million.

New sales team is doing very well, should come close to annual goal, but selling digital still remains a challenge.

Cavender proposed the board accept a plan to begin talks regarding returning to Anaheim, CA for the 2017 EIJ convention. Nagler proposed the motion and Libin seconded. Sarder amended that we allow the staff to talk about partnering with SPJ in 2017 as well as looking at sites. Liben seconded.

The motion was approved 16-5.

Amanda Meko from Greenwalt CPA joined the board meeting by phone for a discussion of the audit. There were two adjustments to the audit, but no control deficiencies. It was a clean audit and a majority of the recommendations from last year’s audit were either implemented or are in progress. The audit received the highest level of assurance we can receive. There was an error that was discovered in previous financial statements. That has been corrected.

2013 saw improvements in our financial position. We paid off all our remaining debt and increased our reserves while maintaining a stable cash balance.

Cavender updated the board on RTDNA’s involvement in the issue of acquiring drones for newsrooms. RTDNA has joined with NAB to ask for an exemption from the FAA to use drones for commercial purposes. RTDNA will pay up to $5,000 for this, with NAB and Richard Wiley (former FCC chairman) will pick up the rest of the cost. If we don’t get the exemption, we won’t have to pay. We are essentially asking for an industry wide waiver, and the FAA usually only gives them individually. Duffy recommended that RTDNA work with SPJ to come up with some ethical guidelines for drone use before they become available to our newsrooms.

**Chair report** – Carl:

A journalism summit will be taking place on Friday at the convention, hosted by ACES. Both Carl, Tardif and Cavender will attend as schedules allow.

**Chair-elect report** – Tardif:

Tardif thanked Libin for his help in putting together the convention program. A last minute session on Ferguson has been pulled together.

Before walk-ups there are 901 registrants for EIJ, with 19% members of RTDNA only and 6% members of both RTDNA and SPJ.

**Budget Committee report** – Walker:

Walker reports RTDNA is prepared to begin the year with a balanced budget, and pointed out specific areas of what is in the budget, including an expectation of an increase in revenue.

The budget increase is 1.2% more than last year’s budget.

Walker said Cavender has been very responsible in creating the budget, and that we are still putting money ($5000 quarterly) into our investment account.

Walker moved for acceptance of the budget, and Esposito seconded.

Esposito asked about the money given to the accrediting council. Walker reminded that it was only $3,000 a year. Discussion ensued about the value of RTDNA’s participation and spending money to belong to the organization. No action was taken and the expenditure remains in the budget.

Shelley proposed that we move into executive session and Esposito seconded. The board moved into executive session at 4:05

Esposito moved we return to regular session, Shelley seconded.

Shelley moved to spending the pool money available for 5% raises for staff subject to the review of the Exec Committee, Esposito seconded. The motion failed 14-6.

Walker called the question on the budget and it passed unanimously.

**Awards Committee** – Shelley:

Shelley moved that we establish the student Murrow awards, including three awards judged as part of the national process. The three awards would be overall excellence in student reporting in video, audio and digital. Entry fees would be $10 for student members and $75 for non members. Esposito seconded.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding the pricing and submission and judging calendar of the awards.

The motion passed unanimously.

Shelley moved to take the motion of creating a CNN Breaking News Award off the table so it could be further discussed.

Shelley moved that if a CNN Breaking News award was created, that it would be presented at the EIJ convention. Bell Seconded.

Shelley reminded that this award would be only available to local stations.

Harvey shared that he thought this award named for CNN was a bad precedent and sends a bad message to other networks.

McGarvey suggested we are allowing ourselves to sell the brand for sponsorship dollars.

Sardar said we are the Murrow organization, and we shouldn’t be setting up more second tier awards.

Tobia said we are selling ourselves for $3500.

Esposito said Murrow awards and our scholarships are branded with individuals, not networks.

Shelley amended the motion to add a complimentary EIJ registration to the prize and to distribute the award at the annual EIJ conference. Esposito seconded.

The motion failed, 13-8.

Shelley motioned that we create a CNN breaking news award. Esposito seconded.

The vote was unanimously opposed.

The board went into executive session at 5:05 pm – the board left executive session at 5:23 pm.

Motion from Shelley that the award formally known as the RTDNA Unity award be renamed as the RTDNA Kaleidoscope award, and be marketed as the RTDNA Kaleidoscope award for diversity coverage and be presented at EIJ each year, and the name be subject to investigation by counsel. Esposito seconded.

The motion passed.

Shelley moved that we move the Gannett award presentation to the EIJ starting 2015. Gin seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Ethics committee report** – Libin:

Libin provided an overview of the new proposed ethics code. There will be a session to discuss it further at the EIJ convention.

**Governance committee** - Gin:

Gin reviewed the amendments that are up for vote this weekend and promoted the new board member handbook that has been completed.

**Membership committee** – Nagler:

The membership drives with reduced rates for membership have been very successful.

Nagler motioned that we continue these membership drives. Esposito seconded.

It passed unanimously.

Chairman Carl presented a Priddy award to Janice Gin.

Esposito moved we adjourned. Vrees seconded.

The motion passed.