

**Minutes: RTDNA/F Board Meeting**  
**Sept. 4, 2019**  
**San Antonio, Texas**

Chairman Jerry Walsh calls the meeting to order at 2:19 p.m.

Minutes assigned to Scott Libin.

Attending in person: Dan Shelley, Jam Sardar, Janice Gin, Kathy Walker, Scott Libin, Sheryl Worsley, Blaise Labbe, Brandon Mercer, Chip Mahaney, Tim Scheld, David Wagner, Tony DeMars (AEJMC), Erica Hill, Sherri Jackson, Scott Diener, Kate Switchenko, Tara Puckey, Vince Duffy, Andrea Stahlman, Loren Tobia, Terence Shepherd, Lauren Olson, Karen Hansen, Michael Koretzky (SPJ Board)

On the phone: Ellen Crooke and Alisha McDevitt

Representatives of Greenwald and Associates present by telephone Association and Foundation audits.

Loren expresses an interest in getting future audits earlier, say June/July. Dan also urges accountants to alert treasurers (Association and Foundation) to any problems as soon as they are known. Loren and Kathy ask that the audits go to the two treasurers when they are sent to the executive director.

Dan says the single “material weakness” noted in the Foundation audit was brought to the attention of our accountant, and Dan has every confidence that it will not recur.

Dan continues his executive director’s report:

He has been involved in lots of outreach, most recently being quoted in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post and other news outlets. He and Karen participated in Power Shift training in Washington. Dan attended NAB and Midwest Journalism Conference. Dan spoke at Syracuse, AECJMC-Chicago, Cal State Fullerton, CUNY, RTDNA Canada, the ProMax Station Summit, AEJMC-Toronto and the Nebraska Broadcasters Association. Met with a number of visiting international journalists. Most recently participated in a State Department trip to India. He made clear on that trip that he was not representing the U.S. government.

Dan plays a video recording of his appearance on an Indian television show called The Federal Exclusive. He discussed misinformation versus disinformation and other journalism issues.

Dan says Voice of the First Amendment activity recently has been more focused on court cases than issuing of statements. We and several other press freedom groups have signed on to a

PETA lawsuit challenging a North Carolina law that prohibits recording any enterprise involving animals.

Janice moves, Loren seconds, that we move into executive session to discuss a legal matter. Vote to approve is unanimous. Staff remains. Our guests leave.

Jam moves that we leave executive session. Sheryl seconds the motion. Vote to approve is unanimous.

Future convention planning discussion: Dan requests and receives authorization to extend his investigation of possible partnerships for the future. He will report back to the board no later than its December meeting.

Kate says about 1,700 people have registered in advance for this week's conference. Typically, more sign up on site. There are 28 sponsors and 58 exhibitors. She encourages use of the conference mobile app.

Tara says there will be two Knight sessions (innovation and investigative journalism) and a student newsroom funded by Tegna. Knight safety and security grant will get her attention as soon as EIJ19 is over.

She reminds board members who have not yet given this year that we need 100 percent participation by the board. Numbers over all, however, are up, especially in number of donors.

Brandon has a new job producing editorial content for Hearst Newspapers' sales department. He curates editorial projects to create special segments for sales. He doesn't sell ads. He wants to know if the board is comfortable with his serving in light of this new job.

Chip points out that his new job in recruiting is also non-traditional in the context of qualification for board membership.

Dan believes that Brandon and Chip both qualify for board membership under Section 2(a) of our bylaws.

Janice recommends a review of our bylaws with these two positions in mind.

Loren recommends that we defer a decision at least till our post-EIJ meeting, in light of the fact that voting for board seats is already underway.

Janice moves that we affirm that Brandon qualifies as a candidate for Region 2 director. Vince seconds. Motion passes with one dissenting vote.

Janice moves and Loren seconds that the incoming chairman appoint someone to review requirements and qualifications for active RTDNA membership. Motion is unanimously approved.

Janice encourages board members to participate in tomorrow's 11:30 a.m. 2020 budget workshop in Jerry's suite, 2336. She distributes forms for requests/proposals.

Jerry has created a paper chairman's file, which he will pass along to Terence.

Dan's performance review has been rescheduled from this morning to Friday morning. It will occur here at EIJ19 with Jerry, Terence and Dan.

Jerry points out that state coordinators are still listed on our website, but that some of those listed are no longer in the jobs indicated and that state coordinators are generally not utilized at all. Do we still need state coordinators? Sherri says some better connection with states other than her own would be helpful. Tim says his state coordinators do help with judging and one is an evangelist for RTDNA.

Dan urges that we either eliminate the positions or make a concerted effort to ensure that we actually have active coordinators, accurate records on who they are and what they do, and that we utilize them more effectively.

Tara says there may be better short-term volunteer opportunities for those interested in RTDNA participation.

Terence moves that we remove the position of state coordinator as a requirement for regional directors to fill. Jam seconds. Dan says regional directors can still have go-to people who assist. Motion is unanimously approved.

Terence says EIJ19 will be one of the greatest journalism conferences you've ever attended. Terence recommends that his successor start planning next year's conference in October. He thanks all who helped, especially Kate Switchenko for her institutional memory and exceptional efforts.

Loren says new PNC reports will be out tomorrow. Our investments should be in good shape. He has some concerns about certain membership categories that are down, despite our overall membership numbers being up.

George Foreman texted Loren this morning that he is unable to join us here in San Antonio, as Loren had hoped.

Sheryl moves and Kathy seconds that we adjourn as Association and meet as Foundation. Vote is unanimous.

Foundation Chair Scott Libin offered his report. Reminded Board Members to attend the NEFE session on Thursday and the reception for the RTDNF Scholarship winners on Thursday. Foundation Treasurer Kathy Walker said they were waiting on financials for the Foundation. Janice moved we adjourn as the Foundation and reconvene as the Association. Vince seconds. Motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Jam summarizes the Awards Committee's proposal, adding at least one new category: podcast. See his separate communication with the board. Vince proposes limiting entries to three episodes, total time not to exceed 180 minutes. Chip suggests allowing entries of unlimited length, but allowing judges to listen to any 20 minutes minimum. Vince is OK with that.

The committee also wants to divide the documentary category into two categories, broadcast and feature length.

The committee further proposes eliminating the social media category. Ellen says that would be a step in the wrong direction. Tim and Andrea say social media efforts are more about distribution than content. Lauren and Ellen suggest that the social media category be revised, rather than eliminated.

Loren moves that we create a podcast category. Terence seconds. Approval is unanimous. The Awards Committee will work out the details.

The committee also considered eliminating the sports category.

Because of time constraints, we table further awards discussion to the Saturday post-EIJ board meeting.

Also in the interest of time, Tim Scheld moves his Ethics Committee report to Saturday's meeting.

Dan calls board members' attention to a proposed resolution regarding a fallen journalists memorial on the National Mall. He emailed it to the board just before today's meeting. He asks that a vote take place Saturday.

Kathy moves that we adjourn. Andrea seconds the motion, which is unanimously approved. We adjourn at 5:36 p.m.