

SPJ Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 14, 2025

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: via Zoom

Present: Katja Ridderbusch (President), Genelle Williams (Vice President), Rachel Spooner (Secretary), Susanna Capelouto (Treasurer), Sabriya Rice (At-Large Member), Benjamin Grady (At-Large Member), Mark Woolsey (At-Large Member), Mitch Leff (At-Large Member), Laura Downey (Immediate Past President).

Also Present: Jatika Hudson (Immediate Past Vice President), Fynn Grindle (Advocacy Chair)

I. Approve June 2025 Agenda

- A. Vice President Williams shared the agenda prior to the meeting. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes. No changes were brought up, she asked if the Board would like to approve the agenda.
- B. At-Large Member Rice moved to approve, seconded by Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

II. Approve May 2025 minutes

- A. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the May 2025 minutes. No changes were brought up.
- B. Vice President Williams moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Immediate Past President Downey. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

III. Treasury Report

- A. Treasurer Capelouto shared that the starting balance on May 1st was \$6,275.56. The starting balance on June 1st was \$6,106.62.
- B. Expenses totaling \$186.74 included SPJ GA pens for \$126.26, the Mailchimp fee for \$26.50, and a double charged Zoom fee totaling \$31.98—\$15.99 will be reimbursed. Income included \$17.80 from the Bridge Boutique event. The full report is available upon request.
- C. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the treasury report. No changes were brought up. Vice President Williams moved to approve, seconded by Immediate Past President Downey. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.

IV. New Business

A. Introduce At-Large Member, Mitch Leff

Mitch Leff joined the Society of Professional Journalists Georgia Chapter board.

President Ridderbusch called for a motion to approve At-Large Member Leff. Treasurer Capelouto motioned to approve, seconded by Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.

B. 3rd Annual Sip & Share, SPJ GA Fundraiser in Savannah

Vice President Williams shared that the event will take place August 30th, 2025, from 7-9 p.m. at the Emma James at Savannah Harbor. Immediate Past President Downey secured the venue free of charge. Kathryn Wagner, Editor-in-Chief of Savannah Magazine will be the emcee for the evening. Savannah State University's Journalism Scholarship Program will be the beneficiary for the event, earning 10% of the proceeds. Tickets will be sold for \$50.

C. Approve Ordering New Swag:

Vice President Williams provided options for potential new SPJ GA swag, including stress balls, coasters, t-shirts, and tote bags. After some discussion, the board agreed to postpone the decision and cast a vote via email.

V. Old Business

- A. Approve Updated Bylaws:** President Ridderbusch and At-Large Member Rice worked in committee to update the SPJ GA Bylaws which were shared via email. President Ridderbusch called for a motion to approve the bylaws. Vice President Williams motioned to approve, seconded by Secretary Spooner. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.
- B. Vote on High School Scholarship Application:** Kanders Dukes was the sole applicant for the high school scholarship for \$500, which is already allowed for in the budget. At-Large Member Grady approved of the submission. President Ridderbusch called for a vote to approve awarding Dukes with the scholarship. The vote passed.
- C. Recap: Tech Tools for Journalists Panel:** Vice President Williams recounted the panel. J.D. Capelouto, Lead Writer at Semafor, and Karin Assmann, PhD, Asst. Professor of Journalism at UGA spoke on a panel for AI usage in journalism. Good feedback was given, and there was a great turnout. A Tech Tools tip sheet was created, which can be found on the website.
- D. Green Eyeshade Awards / Judging Updates:** Vice President Williams shared that President Ridderbusch judged eight entries in the Best Medical Science Healthcare Reporting category for Ohio's SPJ Journalism Award.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. Membership:** There is no Membership Committee at this time.
- B. Freelance:** At-Large Member Woolsey wants to host a Freelance Job Fair with Atlanta Press Club in February/March 2026.
- C. Advocacy:** Fynn Grindle was introduced as the new Advocacy Chair. Grindle shared that SPJ GA made a post celebrating Pride in journalism. NLGJA conference is held in September in Atlanta.
- D. Student Affairs:** Vice President Williams wants to help start a Society of

Professional Journalists Student Chapter at Savannah State University. Oglethorpe University alum At-Large Member Grady and current Oglethorpe student Secretary Spooner want to start a Society of Professional Journalists Student Chapter at Oglethorpe.

VII. Events

- A. **Team Building Seminar for Board Members:** Before the board meeting on August 9, the board members will participate in a free team building and leadership seminar.
- B. **Google News Initiative Training:** Google News Initiative reached out to SPJ GA to host a Google AI News training. They would give the board \$500 to host the event. The board must find at least 10 people to participate as well as a venue with Wi-Fi connection.

President Ridderbusch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. At-Large Member Woolsey moved to adjourn, seconded by Treasurer Capelouto. President Ridderbusch brought forth a vote. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Rachel Spooner, secretary.