

## **SPJ Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** January 10, 2026

**Time:** 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** via Zoom

**Present:** Katja Ridderbusch (President), Genelle Williams (Vice President), Rachel Spooner (Secretary), Susanna Capelouto (Treasurer), Benjamin Grady (At-Large Member), Mark Woolsey (At-Large Member), Mitch Leff (At-Large Member)

**Also Present:** Sonya Barnes, Helen Cauley, Patty Rasmussen, Fynn Grindle

**Absent:** Laura Downey (Immediate Past President), Sabriya Rice (At-Large Member)

### **I. Approve January 2026 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. Treasurer Capelouto moved to approve, seconded by Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

### **II. Approve December 2025 minutes**

- A. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the December 2025 minutes. No changes were brought up.
- B. At-Large Member Woolsey moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Treasurer Capelouto. 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 December 1st was \$7,256.63 plus \$40 in PayPal. The starting balance on January 1st was \$7,000.63 plus \$40 in PayPal.
- B. Expenses totaling \$193.49 included the Mailchimp fee of \$26.50; the Zoom fee of \$16.99; \$150 for the AJC Mental Health program. There was no income. 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 At-Large Member Leff. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.

### **IV. New Business**

#### **A. Social Mixer in Savannah**

Vice President Williams shared that there will be a Social Mixer in Savannah on February 19 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Promotion will begin after the Freelance Pitch Panel on January 28.

### **B. Annual Treasury Audit**

The annual treasury audit will occur on Wednesday, January 14, via Zoom. SPJ Georgia members Constance Heery and Marsha Walton volunteered to perform the audit, overseen by Treasurer Capelouto. A report on the audit will be given at the next Board meeting.

## **V. Old Business**

- A. **Briefing on upcoming Freelance Pitch Webinar:** At-Large Member Woolsey secured five panelists for the webinar. The webinar will occur January 28th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. The panelists will make brief presentations, then take questions and hear pitches. Treasurer Capelouto suggested capping the presentations to two minutes. President Ridderbusch announced that there have been 16 signups as of January 10. She suggested a post-webinar survey to learn more about where attendees heard about the event.
- B. **Briefing on inaugural Media Literacy Committee meeting:** Treasurer Capelouto said that the first meeting will focus on creating a curriculum and write up a project description for a campaign logo. The next step is to request quotes from graphic designers. The first cities of focus will be Columbus and Macon.
- C. **Update on Fifa World Cup Online Guide for Journalists:** President Ridderbusch and At-Large Member Leff contacted SPJ National to suggest that every FIFA host city with an SPJ chapter should create a World Cup resource guide for journalists . SPJ Georgia will collaborate with APC, Global Atlanta, and the World Affairs Council of Atlanta to create a template to send out. The deadline for this project is sometime in February.
- D. **Promotion of 2026 SPJ Georgia High School Scholarship:** The Board members collaborated to gather contacts of Georgia high schools to promote the 2026 high school scholarship.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

- A. Membership: There is no Membership Committee at this time.
- B. Freelance: Ana Gascón is looking for editors for the “Pitch Perfect” column in the SPJ GA newsletter.
- C. Advocacy: Advocacy Chair Grindle shared that there were no updates.
- D. Student Affairs: At-Large Member Grady is organizing an SPJ GA introductory and networking event for journalism and communication students at Oglethorpe University in fall 2026. President Ridderbusch suggested holding elections for a student representative on the Board at the end of March. Vice President Williams will chair the elections committee.

## **VII. Events**

- A. **Webinar on Substack newsletters for Journalists:** Member Patty Rasmussen

has contacted several journalists active on Substack who could potentially serve as panelists. The goal for the panel is to inform journalists about the benefits of starting a Substack newsletter.

- B. **Event planning around ACES and NABJ:** ACES will host the National Editors' Conference in April, and NABJ will host their Annual Conference in August. Both events will take place in Atlanta.
- C. **Two-part safety and security training for journalists:** President Ridderbusch is working on digital and physical safety workshops for journalists in the spring.

President Ridderbusch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Capelouto moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch brought forth a vote. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Rachel Spooner, secretary.