

## **SPJ Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** April 11, 2026

**Time:** 11:01 a.m.

**Location:** via Zoom

**Present:** Katja Ridderbusch (President), Rachel Spooner (Secretary), Susanna Capelouto (Treasurer), Benjamin Grady (At-Large Member), Mitch Leff (At-Large Member), Sabriya Rice (At-Large Member),

**Also Present:** Jackson Lee Peters, Stell Simonton

**Absent:** Genelle Williams (Vice President), Laura Downey (Immediate Past President), Mark Woolsey (At-Large Member)

### **I. Approve April 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. At-Large Member Leff moved to approve, seconded by At-Large Member Rice. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

### **II. Approve March 2026 minutes**

- A. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the February 2026 minutes. No changes were brought up.
- B. Treasurer Capelouto moved to approve the minutes, seconded by At-Large Member Leff. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

### **III. Treasury Report**

- A. The starting balance on March 1st was \$12,754.68 in PayPal. The starting balance on April 1st was \$12,051.51 plus \$200 in PayPal.
- B. Expenses totaling \$703.49 included the Mailchimp fee of \$26.50; the Zoom fee of \$16.99; \$500 for the “Georgia Knows Media” logo design; \$160 for transfer to PayPal. 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. At-Large Member Leff moved to approve, seconded by Secretary Spooner. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.
- D. The projected budget for 2026 is \$7,103.14. Estimated income totals \$11,500: donations \$1,000; events \$3,000; grants \$6,500; membership \$1,000.

Anticipated expenses total \$13,100: events \$8,500; directors' grant \$2,500; supplies \$500; services \$600; discretionary \$1,000.

- E. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the projected budget. No changes were brought up. At-Large Member Rice moved to approve, seconded by At-Large Member Leff. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.

#### **IV. New Business**

No new business

#### **V. Old Business**

##### **A. Elections for Board Student Representative April 20-27**

Lee Peters was the sole nominee for the position. His bio is on the SPJ Georgia website. Elections will be held April 20-27 and open to all SPJ Georgia members.

##### **B. Recap: SkillsFest 2026**

Treasurer Capelouto shared that the media literacy campaign PowerPoint was presented to online participants at SkillsFest 2026. The participants asked for more information on AI, independent journalists and small, rural outlets.

##### **C. Update: “Georgia Knows Media” campaign — launch in May in Columbus**

The campaign will be launched May 5 in Columbus, Georgia. Sharon Dunten, the founding president of SPJ Georgia, lives in Columbus and will connect the committee with contacts. She is helping to organize the launch event.

##### **D. Update: Entries for 2026 SPJ Georgia High School Scholarship**

April 1 was the application deadline. There were four applications total, but none of the applications stood out. At-Large Member Rice and Secretary Spooner shared ideas on how to improve future responses and give feedback to current applicants.

##### **E. Update: FIFA World Cup Online Resource Guide**

The Houston, Miami, Dallas, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York/New Jersey chapters are working on their guides, and SPJ Georgia provided templates. At-Large Member Leff shared that some cities and venues are waiting on permission from FIFA to host watch parties.

#### **VI. Committee Reports**

- A. Membership: President Ridderbusch said At-Large Member Woolsey is contacting previous members and SPJ national-only members who reside in Georgia. The goal is to encourage them to join or rejoin the Georgia chapter.
- B. Freelance: “Freelance Friday” coffee meetups will launch on April 24 in Decatur at the Reading Room from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. There will be a webinar on Substack newsletters on May 21.
- C. Advocacy: A new Advocacy Chair is needed.

- D. Student Affairs: At-Large Member Grady is organizing an SPJ GA introductory and networking event for journalism and communication students at Oglethorpe University, probably in the fall. SPJ Georgia has connected with the Kennesaw State University SPJ student chapter for future collaboration.

## VII. Events

- A. **Physical Security Training for Journalists:** President Ridderbusch is organizing a two-part workshop on safety and security for journalists in the spring. The second part, physical security, will take place in person May 2, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Immediate Past President Downey will pick up breakfast items and At-Large Member Grady will take photos. Sign-ups are slow, so the RSVP will open to all metro Atlanta journalists rather than just SPJ members.
- B. **AU Journalism event and SPJ GA media mixer in Augusta on April 23:** Member Jennifer McKee is organizing events to recruit new members in Augusta.
- C. **Involvement in NABJ Conference in Atlanta, August 12-16:** Immediate Past President Downey is working with AABJ/NABJ Atlanta chapter president Condace Pressley to secure a spot for SPJ Georgia to sponsor the opening night reception.
- D. **Sip & Share fundraiser on July 25 or August 1 in Atlanta:** President Ridderbusch shared that the annual fundraising event will take place in late July or beginning of August. She encouraged Board members to help search for a venue.

President Ridderbusch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Capelouto moved to adjourn, seconded by At-Large Member Rice. President Ridderbusch brought forth a vote. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Rachel Spooner, secretary.