

## **SPJ Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** March 14, 2026

**Time:** 11:02 a.m.

**Location:** via Zoom

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

**Also Present:** Jackson Peters, Jennifer McKee, Patty Rasmussen

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

### **I. Approve March 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 Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

### **II. Approve February 2026 minutes**

- A. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the February 2026 minutes. No changes were brought up.
- B. Vice President Williams 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 February 1st was \$11,984.46 plus \$40 in PayPal. The starting balance on March 1st was \$12,754.68 plus \$40 in PayPal.
- B. Expenses totaling \$511.86 included the Mailchimp fee of \$26.50; the Zoom fee of \$16.99; \$105.29 for DoorDash for Mark; \$213.08 for SPJ swag; \$150 for Savannah State scholarship. Income totaling \$1,282.08 included \$1,282.08 from the SPJ Member dues. 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 Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch called for a vote. The motion passed.
- D. The review of the proposed 2026 budget will be moved to the April 2026 Board meeting.

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

##### **A. SPJ Skills Fest**

President Ridderbusch and Treasurer Capelouto will host a session about media literacy at SPJ Skills Fest.

##### **B. Elections for Board Student Representative**

Nominations and elections for a student representative will occur in March and April. Candidates must be SPJ Georgia members in good standing. Vice President Williams met with Jatika Hudson (Immediate Past Vice President) and learned how elections were handled last year. She adapted ballots and put together a timeline for elections. Nominations will begin in the week of March 16. SPJ Georgia member Constance Heery will assist Vice President Williams during the the nomination and elections. SurveyMonkey will likely be used for the application form.

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

- A. Recap: Savannah Media Mixer:** Vice President Williams shared that 6 people attended the mixer. She hopes that SPJ Georgia's presence in Savannah is growing.
- B. Recap: Augusta University Event on March 10 + upcoming mixer:** Member Jennifer McKee represented SPJ Georgia at Augusta University for the Future of the First Amendment event. She also took the opportunity to talk about SPJ Georgia's media literacy campaign. In April, AU will host Communicon, and SPJ will have a table there. SPJ Georgia will also host a social mixer for professional journalists in Augusta on April 23.
- C. Recap: Digital Security Webinar:** President Ridderbusch said that 30 people signed up for the webinar, and 19 people came. Most members were SPJ members and journalists.
- D. Recap: Treasurer Capelouto's visit to Beacon Hill Middle School:** Treasurer Capelouto spoke to journalism students at Beacon Hill Middle School about interviewing skills.
- E. Update on Georgia Knows Media Campaign:** The curriculum for the campaign is almost complete. Stell Simonton, Helen Cauley, and Sonya Barnes joined the campaign committee. The committee received the logo designs from chosen designer Caroline Nichols. The campaign will prospectively be launched late April, and it will probably start in Columbus, Georgia. Sharon Dunton, the founding president of SPJ Georgia, lives in Columbus and will connect the committee with contacts.
- F. Update: FIFA World Cup Online Guide:** SPJ Georgia will create a resource guide template to send out to every SPJ chapter in a World Cup host city. The Houston, Miami, Dallas, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York/New Jersey chapters have already joined the initiative.

**G. Update: 2026 High School Scholarship:** At-Large Member Rice has been tracking eligible schools for the scholarship. The deadline for applications is April 1. One application has been received from a student from Druid Hills High School. Board members will serve as the election jury in April. The scholarship appeared in the March edition of the Georgia Trend magazine.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

- A. **Membership:** At-Large Member Woolsey is now the chair of the membership committee.
- B. **Freelance:** Patty Rasmussen is the new Freelance Chair.
- 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. 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 on April 18 or May 2.
- B. **Sip & Share fundraiser in late July:** Vice President Williams shared that the annual fundraising event will take place in late July.

President Ridderbusch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. At-Large Member Leff moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice President Williams. President Ridderbusch brought forth a vote. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Rachel Spooner, secretary.