

SPJ Board Meeting Minutes

Date: May 9, 2026

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: via Zoom

Present: Katja Ridderbusch (President), Genelle Williams (Vice President), Susanna Capelouto (Treasurer), Benjamin Grady (At-Large Member), Mitch Leff (At-Large Member), Sabriya Rice (At-Large Member), Lee Peters (Student Representative)

Also Present: Stell Simonton, Patty Rasmussen, Joshua Wilson, Jennifer McKee

Absent: Rachel Spooner (Secretary), Laura Downey (Immediate Past President), Mark Woolsey (At-Large Member)

I. Approve May 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 Rice moved to approve. Vice President Williams retroactively seconded. President Ridderbusch asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

II. Approve April 2026 minutes

- A. President Ridderbusch asked if members had any changes to the April 2026 minutes. No changes were brought up.
- B. Vice President Williams 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. The starting balance on March 1st was \$12,051.19 plus \$200 in PayPal. The starting balance on April 1st was \$11,416.92 plus \$200 in PayPal.
- B. Expenses totaling \$634.27 included the Mailchimp fee of \$26.50; the Zoom fee of \$16.99; \$23.55 for SPJ flyers for the Augusta events; \$200 for the GA Knows Media PowerPoint design, \$80 for Columbus event room registration, and \$287.23 for swag. 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.

IV. New Business

A. Board Leadership elections in June/July

President Ridderbusch and Vice President Williams will not run for reelection. Interested parties can contact either to inquire about the commitment and duties of the President and Vice President. Additionally, another At-Large position is open that will be added to the election ballot. As Secretary Spooner is graduating college, it came into question whether she would remain on the Board. Secretary Spooner confirmed with President Ridderbusch that she will keep her position until her two-year term ends in May 2027.

V. Old Business

A. New Board Student Representative

Lee Peters was elected as the new Student Representative and was welcomed to the SPJ GA Board.

B. Recap: Launch of “Georgia Knows Media” campaign in Columbus

The campaign was launched May 5 in Columbus, Georgia. Sharon Dunten, the founding president of SPJ Georgia, lives in Columbus and helped organize the launch event. The attending group was small but gave a good response to the initiative. The next campaign event will take place in Macon. New Member Joshua Wilson, executive editor of the Macon Melody with experience in teaching media literacy, will help organize this event.

C. Recap: Safety Training for Journalists May 2

18 people signed up for the in-person event, and the 14 attendees were engaged. At-Large Member Leff commented that the instructor was excellent, and the workshop was interactive.

D. Recap: First “Freelance Friday” April 24

The first Freelance Friday occurred at the Reading Room in Decatur. This mixer was designed as a drop-in for freelance journalists, which consisted of new and existing SPJ members. The next Freelance Friday is set tentatively for June 26 with a location to be determined; parking was difficult at the Reading Room.

E. Augusta University visit and Media Mixer April 24

On April 23, SPJ GA President Ridderbusch and Member Jennifer McKee attended the second day of Augusta University’s three-day CommuniCon event. There was an SPJ GA table where students could approach and ask questions. President Ridderbusch gave a talk about student protests. Later that day, there was a media mixer with six local journalists attending.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. Membership: There is no current Membership update at this time.
- B. Freelance: There will be a webinar on Substack newsletters on May 21 called “Creator Journalism.”
- C. Advocacy: A new Advocacy Chair is needed.
- D. Student Affairs: There are no Student Affairs updates at this time.

VII. Events

- A. SPJ Involvement in NABJ Conference in Atlanta, August 12-16:** Immediate Past President Downey is working with the AABJ/NABJ Atlanta chapter president Condace Pressley to secure a spot for SPJ Georgia to sponsor the opening night reception.
- B. Sip & Share fundraiser on August 1 in Atlanta:** President Ridderbusch shared that the annual fundraising event will take place on August 1. She encouraged Board members to help search for a venue. Atlanta Magazine Editor-In-Chief Allison Entrekin will emcee the event.

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 11:56 a.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Rachel Spooner, secretary.