

**Society of Environmental Journalists Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, January 29, 2011
Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, Santa Barbara, California.**

Board members present (all):

Carolyn Whetzel, President	Christy George
Peter Fairley, Vice President for Programs	Tom Henry
Rob Davis, Vice President for Membership	Heather King
Don Hopey, Treasurer	Robert McClure
Peter Thomson, Secretary	Sharon Oosthoek
Ashley Ahearn	Tom Yulsman
Jeff Burnside	Jennifer Weeks
Douglas Fisher	Jim Detjen (Founding President, non-voting)

Also present: SEJ member Christine Heinrichs, Gordon Heinrichs

President Whetzel calls the meeting to order at 8:45 am and welcomes new board members Ahearn, Henry Yulsman & Weeks.

Agenda Item 1: Consent calendar—Carolyn Whetzel

Whetzel offers the following items for approval with a single vote:

1. Working committee appointments:

Audit Committee

Jennifer Weeks (Chair)
Rebecca Daugherty
Roger Witherspoon

Rob Davis
Tom Henry
David Jones
Ryan L. Nave
Jennifer Oladipo
Jodi Rave
Diane Walsh

Lisa Palmer
Karen Schaefer
Judith Stock
Dawn Stover
Christine Woodside

Awards Committee

Beth Daley (Co-Chair)
Douglas Fischer (Co-Chair)
Amelia Askari
Perry Beeman
Jeff Burnside
Saul Chernos
Jennifer Weeks

Elections Committee

Chris Rigel (Elections Supervisor)
Christine Heinrichs
Chuck Quirnbach

International Outreach Committee

Peter Fairley
Christy George
Sharon Oosthoek
Tom Yulsman

Diversity Task Force

Ayana Meade (Co-Chair)
Roger Witherspoon (Co-Chair)
Ada M. Alvarez
Adrienne Appell
Cassandra Brooks
Merritt Clifton

Freelance Task Force

Sharon Oosthoek (Chair)
Murray Carpenter
Peter Fairley
Peter Gorrie
Sharon Guynup
Isabelle Groc
Kim McDonald

Succession Planning Task Force

Christy George (Chair)
Dan Fagin
Mark Schleifstein
Bill Kovarik
Jim Detjen
Emilia Askari
Tim Wheeler

2. Minutes of July and October, 2010 board meetings, as corrected

Thomson offers motion to accept Consent Calendar

2nd by Hopey

No further discussion

Passes unanimously

Agenda Item 2: Executive Committee Report—Carolyn Whetzel

Whetzel submits detailed written report on three actions taken by the Executive Committee since the last full board meeting in October (**attached**). These included:

- delaying the board-approved member dues increase from November 1, 2010 to Jan. 1, 2011 to allow for longer notice to members;
- restructuring the dues increase for Canadian members to bring them in line with all other North American SEJ members;
- authorizing the Executive Director to retain a CPA to prepare the FY 2010 audit and IRS form 990.

Agenda Item 3: Executive Director's Report—Beth Parke

Parke submits detailed written report (**attached**), offers highlights for discussion:

- Staff being restructured with the movement of former Director of Programs and Operations Chris Rigel to contract status outside of Philadelphia and loss of part-time office assistant Candy Kurtz.
—Looking to replace CZ at somewhat higher level but can't afford someone at the level I'd really like.
—CR now responsible for awards, elections, marketing, tech support for office & member systems. No longer responsible for SEJournal. All other responsibilities shifted back to Parke. Keeping aware of IRS requirements for contract employees.

Thomson expresses concern about Parke regaining responsibility for things that she shifted off to DPO position two years ago in part because of overload on her position.

Parke says she's aware of trying to make sure she's not taking on too much. Wants to reassure board that she's "got a handle on the situation."

- Actual 2010 budget came in at \$894,750--\$103,550 under board-approved budget, largely due to lower-than-anticipated annual conference costs and greater-than-anticipated generosity from conference host University of Montana. However income from grants & gifts was also \$76,010 less than anticipated.

Proposed 2011 operating budget is \$918,500, with an income target of \$873,000.

Our 2011 income numbers are looking better than expected but still not good, although that's the usual January refrain. We're starting the year with roughly \$440,000 in operating accounts, we're not in debt, have a good business plan. One-third of budget is now unrestricted earned income, which puts us in greater control. As always, working to keep panic point at least a year away. Also, with staff changes I now have more time management & budget options.

2011 budget is based on reasonable expectation of what we can raise. I always tend to over-project expenses and under-project income.

The biggest challenge in our fundraising universe is the overall shift from general support to project support. I still believe general support is the right thing for SEJ, that we shouldn't cave to pressure to accept only project-based funding.

Offers two choices:

- adopt this budget now and reassess/possibly revise in spring; or
- make cuts now—possible options include SEJournal printing & mailing, awards, board meetings

Hopey offers motion to adopt 2011 budget as proposed 2nd by George

Discussion

Whetzel offers amendment to direct the treasurer and ED to review the budget numbers monthly and recommend revisions if necessary.

No immediate 2nd.

McClure inquires about \$10,000 set-aside from operations to 21st Century Fund, which board has authorized annually for several years but is not included in this budget.

George offers amendment to motion on the table to add \$10,000 21st Century Fund set-aside, to be made at a time of the Executive Director's choosing.

2nd by McClure

No discussion

Amendment passes unanimously

No further discussion on motion as amended

Vote called

Motion to approve budget as amended passes unanimously

Agenda Item 4: Scientists-Journalists Climate Initiative, Award for Science Communicators—Beth Parke

Parke reports on opportunity to join the Knight Science Journalism Center at Michigan State University in a \$250,000 proposal to the National Science Foundation for a new climate change education partnership program. Project would bring journalists & climate scientists together at NSF-funded regional labs and centers. SEJ would help develop a pilot regional program and accept funding as an NSF subcontractor. No board action required, just wanted to inform board as this would be the first time we've accepted such funding since last year's changes to our financial policies allowed us to do so.

Also updates board on the idea raised after the death of climate scientist Steven Schneider to create an award to honor great science communicators—it's gaining some traction among members, but discussion is early and there's no consensus emerging on just what it would be or how it would work.

Brief discussion, board generally in support of the idea.

Whetzel assigns Hot Sheet (**HS**) item to programs committee to draw up a proposal.

Break—10:10

Reconvene—10:30

Agenda Item 5: Miami Conference Report—Jeff Burnside

Conference co-chair Burnside reports on preparations and plans for 2011 annual conference in Miami.

Discussion focuses largely on plan to move awards ceremony to Saturday night from the usual Wednesday. Burnside says there's a chance to pair awards with an "earth-friendly" fashion show, at no cost to SEJ. Award ceremony would be on their stage, before their show—would save us the \$6,000 it would otherwise cost us to put on the event and we might even make money—we'd split receipts after expenses. How that comes to us, how we manage that transaction, remains to be determined.

Lengthy discussion follows. Highlights:

Yulsman wonders about appropriateness of pairing an event honoring reporting on nasty environmental problems with an event like a fashion show. Burnside says that can be handled by having a significant break between the two events—possibly a meal? We're already planning on having "earth-friendly" chefs provide "sustainable" appetizers.

McClure asks if it's too late to raise more money for this conference.

Burnside: Well, now's a good time to talk about how we raise money. Wherever possible we're planning to have events pay for themselves—exhibitor tables will be more expensive, we're selling more exhibitor signs, seeking fellowships to bring foreign journo's. Beyond that I know Beth wants to talk about new options. But I want us to make some kind of decision today—it'll be too late if we wait till next meeting. We've been tossing this around since before most of us were even on the board.

Thomson: A decision on what? What specifically is on the table? For me the big question is—all of these people and orgs that you're saying will be providing us with services, venues, etc., are getting us into new territory and I want to make sure it jibes with our financial policies. If it doesn't, do we need to change them? Do we want to do that under the pressure of this event, or make that decision on its own timeline?

Burnside: "On its own timeline" is the reason we've never changed the policies. I think maybe the timeline we're facing here is a good thing. Let's have that discussion.

Lots more discussion, and explanation of "status quo" re: financial policies for new board members.

Parke reminds board about current distinction between gifts and grants—on which we've placed strict limits on whom we'll take money from—and earned income, on which we allow ourselves much more leeway. This situation raises the question—at the end of that fashion show, if we've made money, who's going to write that check? And can we cash it?

Fairley: Isn't that earned income?

Thomson: I'm not sure this really fits that bill.

Parke: Yeah, we wouldn't be contracting for space and leasing it out to hosp event hosts—don't think the comparison flies.

Fairley: Bottom line is that the \$6,000 on the table is part of the cost of our awards program, so whoever covers that would essentially be paying for part of our awards program. Question is, are we OK with that?

Whetzel: Makes me somewhat uncomfortable.

Parke: If that's the big sticking point, we could just move awards back to Weds, separate the events. The awards will be short this year, we only have six.

Burnside: Part of the reason we only have six awards this year is that we don't have the money! I've been trying over the years to elevate the awards ceremony to where I think it rightly should be, and wed's night is not it. I think it should be the highlight of our conference, it's why we do what we do, which is why we should have it on Sat. night. Also, it will draw more people to stay through the weekend. The issue is how to make a clean separation between it and the fashion show.

Parke: The venue seems to make a big difference here—the Botanical Garden vs. a Miami Beach hotel. Botanical Garden is an OK partner. But we're still not dealing with the money issue.

Burnside: We can do whatever we want. We can define structure, separation of events, etc.

Fairley: I like the idea of expanding our audience. It's the sponsorship I'm unsure about.

Yulsman: Would be helpful to put this in a framework before we decide. Seems the problem is more the appearance of a problem than an actual problem. At the end of the day, we have to be able to make a solid ethical argument for whatever we do.

Parke: Think of the fashion show like at any of our regular Sat. night parties. Our awards event is over, now it's party time.

Thomson: But it's different—we're not paying for the band or the venue. It's someone else's program and someone else's agenda, that's a different thing.

Weeks: I think it would be ok if it's clear the venue is being donated. It's like a movie night—we're having this award ceremony, these other folks are doing this other thing afterward and you can go if you like.

Detjen: I'm not sure why we're struggling with this so much. We are in an economic situation where we need to try some experiments. If it doesn't work out, we won't do it again. I see parallels to things we've done before—like auto show at Michigan State. We agonized over taking money from GM, Toyota, etc., but I never heard any complaints at all. I see a number of benefits—it raises the profile of our awards ceremony, we're in a beautiful setting. I think we should go for it.

Henry: Are we just over-analyzing this?

Yulsman: If we don't, who will? It's our job.

McClure: We're still not addressing the big issue—are we're going to take more money from corporations? As a conservative on that issue, I'm ok with the fashion show. We need to address the bigger issue.

Fairley: I think there's a pragmatic argument to be made for the whole thing—we're in tight economic times, and this is an opportunity to present our awards to a bigger audience. But I think the fashion show itself is a red herring—the editorial issues are not important, but the sponsorship is.

George: Can we rent the BG ourselves, and then charge the fashion show for their event? Then it really would be earned income.

Davis: I personally make the decision at hospitality events not to take drinks paid for by exhibitors. We'd have to be very clear about who's paying for what here so others can make similarly informed decisions.

Parke: But of course we're not talking about an open bar. On the other hand, no one's ever willing to pay full freight for these events—do you think anyone would pay \$75 to come to one of our Saturday night parties? No! We can't have it both ways. Some of this is coming up because things are even more expensive in Miami than in years past, and I said there's no way we're having a party, we just can't afford it.

Fairley: So that's the pragmatic, straight up message to our members—we just wouldn't have been able to have a party otherwise.

Whetzel: Let's table the fashion show discussion for the moment and talk about money. Do we want to look at new ways to help fund the Miami conference?

Burnside: And to help fund SEJ in general. Really, the issue is where do we want to take SEJ and its ability to carry out its mission in the future. I see opinion forming behind some new options. Let's look at those:

- 1) status quo...
- 2) taking \$ from distinct corporate foundations...
- 3) partner with community/donor-advised funds that provide firewall for outside money...
- 4) simplify—stop examining fine distinctions and come up with elegant, simple definition that dictates from whom we accept money. Such as: “we accept support on from those who support our mission of more and better EJ.” It's the sniff test—are we comfortable taking money from X?

Parke: Our line is already blurry—many people don't understand the difference between grants/gifts on the one hand and earned income on the other. What I'd like to see us do is say we will take the money of

anyone who supports our vision, up to X thousand dollars, which we know would never buy us. Then you just provide a list of entities who support that vision.

Henry: And it enhances our credibility for the public to know that there are industries that support what we do, and that we don't flatly refuse to take money from them—THAT raises questions about our credibility.

McClure: Agreed. Whatever we do, I don't think we can be picking and choosing whom we take \$ from.

Parke: I think we need to flip this on its head and focus not on who we take money from but what we do with that money.

Thomson: That's our firewall. We've already got that in our policies. But we still have all these caveats about whom we'll take money from.

Yulsman: What has bothered us about accepting \$ from BP, and how does a dollar limit solve that problem?

Burnside: The answer is that they'd be perceived as controlling us, and putting a dollar limit makes it clear that they're not.

George: The same goes for enviro groups and government. We've never made a distinction—don't take money from any of them.

Yulsman: So BP decides it wants to give X... what are they getting?

PT: Nothing other than that their name will be acknowledged...

Yulsman: How?

Whetzel: Our IRS form 990, our website...

Further discussion on transparency... influence of donors, advertisers...

Davis: My outfit takes from anyone but with full transparency. I'd argue for setting a limit, say the money is only for general operations, that donors who attempt to influence our ops will immediately have donations returned, that donations are listed prominently online and other caveats as would suit board's taste.

Fairley: There is something beautifully transparent about advertising—its' really in your face. I'd say that if we're going to do this, we should really be in your face about it—run an ad in SEJournal about who we got \$\$ from in the last quarter. Then there's the operations limit—we'd have a problem with donations to support a particular conf, say in a particular donor's back yard...

Thomson: In response to Rob, we've really built the foundation for that already—our firewall, which is now at the top of our financial policies, essentially says most of what you want us to say, just with lots of caveats—"having said we have all these principles, we still won't take money from these kinds of people at all..." We've been sort of chipping away at that bottom part while we've been building up the top part and it seems that we're at this threshold where maybe we just want to rely on a strengthened firewall with strengthened transparency and declaration but wouldn't have to change very much to get where you want us to be...

Burnside: What about foundations? Would this limit cover them, or would we have two categories?

Parke: We already do have two categories—and it's not a problem with foundations because it's all on the record—what we propose to do with the money we ask for.

Burnside: But even with a limit, I'd still be uncomfortable taking money from certain sources. I'd rather not have a limit but have discretion allowing for SEJ to take money from someone we're comfortable with, however we want to define that.

Thomson: But how do you evaluate that?

Burnside: Basically, it's our statement to the world of who we are and why we take money from whom.

McClure: Let's get to some specifics. (To Parke) How much do you need for the Miami conf? How much would it help if you could take up to \$10k from new donors, for instance?

Parke: I think there are a lot of people who would give to us. If we could take 5 or 10 thousand from pretty much anyone, it could quickly add up to \$100,000...

Weeks: I think the donor by donor thing is impossible, there'll just be too many arguments over judgments. I support the approach of anyone up to a limit, a percentage, no strings—much more workable.

Hopey: We're talking about taking a big leap. The question is, what do we really want, need? We've talked before about taking \$ from independent corporate foundations—but what's on the table in terms of something we can pilot in Miami to see how it works rather than another big policies rewrite?

Burnside: Perhaps what we should do is propose something with a sunset. If we're not comfortable with it, we let it die.

Whetzel: But what is it about Miami that requires us to do this?

Burnside: OK, specifically, American Airlines has a big presence in Miami—would love to be able to have them give us plane tickets for Latin Amer journos. Cruise lines would be very interested, I imagine. Market America—the owner is ridiculously wealthy, and he's a marine biologist.

Fischer: It comes down to what are we afraid of in taking money from new sources? We promote journalism, we don't do journalism. Our mission is to expand opportunities, and I'm excited that we may have more ways to do this. We just need to be transparent.

Parke: There are members who have hard lines. We might well lose some.

Thomson: Let's bring some resolution to this. We're not going to answer all these questions today but we can come up with something that will move the ball forward considerably, open a lot of options in Miami but also in the longer term, do something simple and straightforward but not situation-specific or time limited that makes it look like we're creating some kind of loophole or something. So the simplest thing to do is to say we will accept \$ from any source, up to \$15,000, no questions asked, no strings attached. Above that, we still retain all of our limitations. I wouldn't sunset it—having a threshold is already kind of piloting. We've been moving for a long while toward a bigger universe of funders. This would be taking it to a new level, we'll see how comfortable we feel with it, maybe we'll raise it, or get rid of it. But Beth, it seems you're saying this could make a very big difference, could open up room to do some of the things we need to do for Miami but is not specific to Miami, and is at a level that we're all comfortable with. I'd like to work toward making that motion soon.

Fairley: Don, I think it is true that we're moving toward a leap—this is a new board, with new perspectives, and some of the rest of us have been moving in this direction for a while. I would support this—somewhere between 5-15K, taking \$ from anyone. What I'm not ready to do today is have \$ targeted to specific programs, and I do hear that coming from conference chair, e.g. airlines providing flights.

Whetzel: OK, we're going to be breaking soon for committee meetings. I'd like Finance comm. to come up with a proposal.

Davis: If we do take this step, we need to do it knowing that once we start, it's not going to stop. We have these discussions about how we're going to cut \$75k, and everyone flips out. So once we start taking this money, we're going to have a hell of a hard time saying let's stop it. It's not going to happen.

Fairley: We could be voted out of office. There's till hope!

Thomson: Rob, I think generally you're right, but it's taken us 10 years to get to this point.

1:30 Whetzel calls recess for lunch & committee meetings

3:05 Resume

Board member Heather King is absent for remainder of meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Committee Reports

Membership—Rob Davis:

Committee is asking all board members to recruit 5 new members each by the next meeting. **(HS)**

Committee plans to tap SEJ faculty members to recruit students **(HS)**, and to find organizers for local events.

Programs—Douglas Fischer:

Awards announcement has gone out—categories again slightly rejiggered, prize amounts altered.

Freelance Directory will be live within a few weeks.

Freedom of Information Task Force leader McClure proposes to review the FOI program this year—it doesn't behave much like a task force, has been a long time since its activities & focus have been reviewed, so it's time to take our board's temperature on it. Hope to have report by next board meeting.

Fairley and member Emily Gertz are proposing to create a live "EJ Forum" blog for the home page—kind of a live version of the journal, a moderated discussion of craft. Would be first step in the direction of more live content on the website—will have proposal by spring.

SEJ.org working group assessing a range of other issues, including more volunteer help and identification of "cludgiest" components of the site.

Finance—Don Hopey:

The committee has completed or otherwise resolved four pending Hot Sheet items:

- Parke plans to raise question of our obligations for maintaining endowment principle with SEJ auditor and report back to committee before deciding on any next steps.
- Committee has identified potential non-board members for new Development & Fundraising subcommittee; Hopey still needs to prepare report.
- Research into possibility of establishing a separate entity to raise funds for SEJ from a wider array of sources than allowed under current policy is off the table. We may want to establish a "General Support Fund" to house donations from our hopefully expanded donor groups.
- Proposal about to be brought to the table on potential changes in allowable funding sources.

Following this morning's discussion, the committee is proposing that the board adopt the following resolution, written by Thomson:

That the board revise SEJ's Financial Policies to allow for acceptance of unrestricted general support of up to \$15,000 per year from any entity or individual, under the principles of support for SEJ's mission, independence and integrity, as described in section A; that the names of all financial supporters, and the range of their support, be published in the SEJournal at least annually; that the board effectively communicate the rationale for this change to the membership; and that specific language enacting these changes be brought to the Executive Committee for discussion and approval by February 15.

Motion by Thomson
2nd by Hopey

Discussion:

Davis: reporting of donors should be more frequent, and on the web.

Henry offers amendment to raise cap to \$20,000
2nd by Fischer

Discussion:

Hopey: The committee discussion did range up to \$20K—would be better use of Beth's time if we had higher limit.

McClure: So why not \$50,000?

Hopey: 20k is more comfortable for most of us.

Fischer: I'd prefer it to be a percentage of our budget than an amount.

Fairley: We could have two numbers—10k for general support and 20k for the endowment.

Henry: What's at stake?

Parke: Boils down to whether we will be able to pursue certain donors for the Miami conference.

Burnside: We've already had to limit awards money, but our issues over Saturday night party, tours & dinners would go away.

Whetzel: Those issues can be resolved. This should be a bigger question than Miami.

George: In the committee conversation, I was pushing for 10K limit, but to allow Beth to ask for larger amounts over the next 2 years, or to get board approval case by case. Also—do we still want a sniff test?

Thomson: No, we've already got that in our firewall.

Vote called on amendment to raise cap to \$20,000/year
7 yes
7 no
Amendment fails

Return to discussion of original motion:

**Fischer offers amendment to substitute 2% of previous year's annual budget for \$15,000 annual limit
2nd by Ahearn**

Brief discussion.

Straw vote—amendment fails—withdrawn.

Continued discussion on original motion:

Davis asks for Detjen's perspective as founding president.

Detjen: In general I favor this. Times have changed. I do think we might want to include some cautionary language—one might be to have some overall limit in a given year, that these contributions can be no more than say 20% of the overall budget. There'd be a terrible perception if suddenly 40% of our budget came from PR firms and "clean coal" campaigns and things like that. We might also have some language saying that we pride our independence and maybe we're doing this for a 2-yr trial period, to see how it works. We should have some language that makes it very clear that it's based on absolutely no conditions, as with the endowment. And I'd probably throw in some language that the donor list should be updated at least quarterly on the website. So in general, I think you could try this out for couple years, explain to members that this is a trial. We may not get that many contributions, and there may not be any revolt over this, I don't know. But yes, I do think it's time to move on doing something like this.

George: I'd want to include a mention of balanced funding. I also like the idea of a cap, and doing this as a short-term experiment.

Davis: This should be about what's best for SEJ in the long term, not a response to a short-term problem.

Weeks: It's reasonable to limit this as a percentage of the budget but I don't think time limiting is useful.

Thomson: And that would make it look like we're in a crisis.

George: If this isn't in response to a crisis, we should move slowly.

**George offers motion to amend motion on the table by substituting \$10,000 for \$15,000.
2nd by Fairley.**

Discussion:

George: I'm concerned about the clarity of our motivations. If we don't really need the money, let's be cautious.

Thomson: I think both are true—we have an exceptional short term need and a more chronic long term problem.

Parke: I support Jennifer—let's own this. We're a grown-up organization—let's not worry about perceptions. We need new revenue streams, and feel we can handle it. I do like the idea of a cap, though.

Whetzel: I also really like the cap. I know there'll be members who will quit over this.

Fairley: I think the smaller the cap, the lower the chance of losing people.

Vote called on \$10k amendment:

7 yes

7 no

Amendment fails

**Hopey offers amendment to include a cap at 20% of annual budget
Thomson accepts amendment**

**Davis offers amendment to require online disclosure of donors at least quarterly
2nd by Fischer
No discussion
Amendment accepted unanimously**

Vote called on original motion as amended:

To revise SEJ's Financial Policies to:

- 1) Allow for acceptance of unrestricted general support of up to \$15,000 per year from any entity or individual, under the principles of support for SEJ's mission, independence and integrity, as described in section A. Total support from these sources may not exceed 20% of the organization's approved annual budget in any given year.**
- 2) Require reporting of the names of all financial supporters, and the range of their support, on SEJ.org at least quarterly and in the SEJournal at least annually.**
- 3) Effectively communicate the rationale for these changes to the membership.**

Specific language enacting these changes shall be brought to the Executive Committee for discussion and approval by February 15.

Brief further discussion. Decision made to call the question.

**Yes 12
No 1 (Whetzel)
Abstain 1 (Henry)**

Motion carries.

Whetzel explains that she voted no on the basis of the dollar amount, not the basic principle—favored \$10,000 limit.

Thomson requests that given complexity of discussion and importance of issue, the Executive Committee should be involved in writing up the notice to members.

George points out that this now has created a difference in our policies re: support for operations and endowment and would like to harmonize that now rather than come back and deal with it later.

Thomson reminds board that he's offered to continue to go over financial policies language to offer changes to harmonize and simplify.

Brief discussion. Further changes tabled

Agenda Item 7: Future Board Meetings

Whetzel: Spring meeting tentatively set for April 8-9, location TBD east of the Mississippi. We're considering dropping the summer meeting this year, and possibly adding a full-day board meeting at the Miami conference. This would this save \$4-5,000.

Hopey: Does that money make enough of a difference?

Parke: No

Yulsman suggests trying a virtual meeting.

Parke suggests possibility of an executive committee face-to-face summer meeting, with other board members on the phone.

Discussion of other options, and the value of meetings beyond actual board business.

Agenda Item 8: Hot Sheet Review

Whetzel asks all committee chairs to send lists of completed and new hot sheet items to secretary Thomson.

Agenda Item 9: New business

None offered.

Motion to adjourn: Fischer

2nd by Hopey

No discussion

Motion approved unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 5:30

Minutes by Peter Thomson, SEJ Secretary

Attachment 1: Executive Committee Report October 2010 – January 2011

Between October 16, 2010 and January 28, 2011, SEJ's Executive Committee took action on two items related to the board's July 30, 2010 decision in Louisville, KY to increase member dues and another item related to the annual audit.

ITEM No. 1 – On Oct. 29, 2010 and Nov. 1, 2010, the Executive Committee voted 4-0 to postpone, until Jan. 1, 2011, the dues increase the Board approved for Nov. 1, 2010 at its July 30, 2010 meeting in Louisville, KY. Chris Rigel, SEJ's Director of Programs and Operations, recommended the delay because the membership had not yet been notified of the hike in dues.

Rob Davis, Peter Fairley, Don Hopey, and Carolyn Whetzel participated in the vote by e-mail. Peter Thomson was unavailable.

*Davis suggested the increase be delayed only until Dec. 1, but also said he was OK with the Jan. 1, 2011 date. Since Rigel's plan was to notify the membership of dues increase by Dec. 1, the Executive Committee stuck with the recommendation for the Jan. 1, 2011 effective date.

ITEM No. 2 – On Nov. 24, 2010, the Executive Committee agreed to hike the multi-year dues renewal rates for Canadian members to bring their two-year and three-year renewal discounts in line with all SEJ's renewal rates and ensure consistency with the organization's invoicing system.

Effective Jan. 1, 2011, the \$15 increase brings the two-year renewal rate for Canadian members to \$75 and the three-year rate to \$105.

With this action, all members save \$15 on a two-year membership and \$30 on a three-year membership. Under the new rate structure the Board approved July 30, 2010, first-and one-year memberships increased \$5 across-the-board, except for the Canadian members. Canadian members' dues jumped \$10 (reflecting the increased value of the Canadian dollar).

Attachment 2: Executive Director's Report

Memo of January 24, 2011

TO: SEJ Board of Directors

FROM: Beth Parke, Executive Director CELL (Voice) 215-400-1229

Hello everyone. See below for status reports on current SEJ finance, development outlook, programs, personnel and notes on succession planning for your review we begin 2011.

Finance: I have attached SEJ's Dec. 31, 2010 balance sheet, budgeted-to-actual budget of FY 2010, and proposed operating budget for FY 2011. I call this version the *Total Information* management budget because it conveys 1) exactly how much cash SEJ has available for programs and operations as we start the fiscal year, and, pending your approval at the meeting, 2) what we plan to earn or raise (minimum), 2) what we plan to spend, resulting in 3) cash status for the start of FY 2012 if those projections are accurate. I use a *Fundraising Budget* version, one that does not reflect cash reserves, and does reflect funding received in 2010 allocated to FY 2011, with grant proposals. Finance headlines:

— Despite non-renewal of Hewlett Foundation general support in the spring of 2010, SEJ ended 2010 with a reasonable level of unrestricted funds in the bank. — We began the year with \$446,465 in operating accounts. Zero dollars were pre-paid in pledged sponsorship from the U. of Montana. We begin FY 2011 with approximately \$480,000 in the bank, \$100,000 of which is U of Miami prepaid.

— FY 2010 expense was approximately \$900,000 less than authorized in the budget approved by board last January. Big factors: Montana direct expense was lower than expected on both personnel and nonpersonnel lines. U Montana was very generous and let us "spend" their money on registration fees

that we got to keep. Other costs were conserved (supplies, legal, staff & board travel, phone, postage, consultant lines, other).

— Earned income was higher than we had projected, mainly due to larger exhibit space, low exhibit handler fees, more ad sales. — Grant and gift income was not what we'd hoped, but quite respectable given the economic climate of the year. Gulbenkian, Brainerd, Bullitt, Gannett and increased individual gifts to operating made up for the Hewlett loss to some degree. — We start 2011 with less cash on hand than we had available last year, and tremendous challenges in store for us in securing new gifts, grants and pledges. Multi-year pledges will be especially important to SEJ for 2012 and 2013 outlook.

— I am proposing we start 2011 with the assumption SEJ programs and operations and staffing can move forward this bottom line level. If funding news is chilling, we may have to institute a contingency budget that would be predicated on certain non personnel line items being cut (printing, travel) and salaried/consultant personnel line items being decreased by a factor of perhaps 10% through furlough or lessened hours concept, not pay cuts. The board could also choose to tap some of the board set-aside funds held in "quasi- endowment" status (board restricted, not donor restricted) if we had reason to believe we could pay it back or felt that measure to be essential.

Development: As always, my development docket is a work in progress. Attached is a current rundown. That said, since I put info into the PDF for you. several new leads have been added. For example: Sara Miller McCune (publisher of the magazine) who lives in Santa Barbara & has a foundation. I'll meet on Monday Jan 31 with Ed Begley Jr. to brainstorm potential allies in LA. I'll be in Miami March 7&8 for meetings with Jeff and potential supporters. New hot prospects will continue to come up, and rocket to the top of the action plans list. Otherwise I focus on obligations to current funders (reports), setting us up for renewals (calls, meetings), and sending out new letters of inquiry and proposals based on probabilities for success. Top priority is potential underwriters of "packages of programs and services" that essential function as general support of core activities. Miami sponsorships and conf-related grants are second highest priority, with everything else a close third.

Earned income strategies are also in focus. New revenue streams will include paid ads in *TipSheet* and *FOI WatchDog TipSheet*, sponsored Internet kiosks and banner displays as exhibitor options at the conference hotel. I have been researching and will want to discuss a potential new strategy of working with donor advised funds (examples: Ocean Foundation, FJC Foundation of Philanthropic Funds, community foundations) as a way to stream philanthropic gifts to SEJ that may originate with sources from whom we would not be willing to accept or announce as direct-to-SEJ contributions. The University of Miami could possibly pass through new gifts over and above the \$200,000 they have pledged, but I am not sure how well their own fundraising has gone so far and how willing they'd be to do that. By the way, our Lubbock agreement is in place and I hope they will be as great as Miami has been so far in fulfilling pledge on the advance payment schedule in that document.

Programs:

1) Annual conferences are 2011 – 2013 are well on track for success. Miami team is hard at work will have a remarkable report for you in Santa Barbara. Lubbock is in dormant period but Randy Loftis will soon be developing avolunteer team. Tri-Cities Washington State Univ. is stalled at the agreement stage. Dick Pratt has promised action ASAP, but I can't sign agreements for meeting space or hotels until the University agreement is sealed.

2) Awards Program has revised categories and back end submission systems and judges are being recruited.

3)Regional events in motion so far this year include roundtables and public event in Santa Barbara, and a National Press Club event in the spring, date TBA, on FOI and access issues. SEJ has been consulting with Reynolds Center at U of AZ, EarthEcho STREAM project and others to inform regional events they will be holding.

4) Routine publication of *TipSheet*, *WatchDog TipSheet*, *EJtoday* daily news digest, and *SEJournal* are on track. Mike Mansur will be keeping *SEJournal* to 28 pages to control print costs. Postage will be bulk rate. Most international members now get *SEJournal* electronically or pay extra. We've not instituted the idea of charging North America members extra for print version. Dues just increased and it seems like a bad time to start that up.

5) Freelance directory is almost finished. Sharon and Chris are working out final bugs and writing up messages to announce the service to members and market it to editors we hope will use it.

6) I am working closely with Cindy MacDonald on Web content planning and hope we can step up the pace on how often something new appears on the short list and what we can do to keep it fresh. Routine calls with the Web team (or subset of the team) will start in Feb. to advance plan and schedule new content and new marketing messages, links, leads ideas welcome. Talk to Peter F.

7) Progress is being made toward new WAP site and SEJ content systems to better meet the needs of users of mobile devices, funded by a \$15k project grant. Ashley and Douglas have advised and Joe Davis has been working with Drupal developer Kathy Cashel.

8) Diversity task force has done a lot of work under leadership of Ayana Meade and others. Listserv is active and many great ideas were compiled for Miami agenda. Latin American volunteerism is especially exciting. Web content in Spanish will pick up and if fate allows, we'll have fellows and translation and do it up right in Miami.

9) Carolyn and I, Jay and Peter F. in the loop, have been in conversation with Dave Poulson and Jim Detjen about an NSF opportunity under Phase 1 (pilot project) of NSF's Climate Change Education Partnership. CCEP awarded 15 grants in September. The SEJ board approved the idea of SEJ being a subcontractor to NSF funding at its July 2010 meeting. Proposals are due March 15. More briefing than will fit in this memo will take place at the board meeting, indeed feedback on ideas is part of the UCSB discussions on Friday.

Personnel

At the meeting I'll give a short presentation on staff structure for 2011. You'll see a diagram of the glorious SEJ Universe, with headquarters, annual conference and project "planets" that illustrates the work flows of SEJ, Who works in each project area? What are their roles? I know many of you are curious about how Chris's change of status from salaried employee to contract service provider will be playing out on a workload basis. I'll fill you in.

Here's the strategy I've applied: For each locus of projects and operations, I've written up a corresponding rundown on deliverables and roles. i.e., who in each case is Accountable, Responsible, Supporting, Consulted, Informed. This approach has already streamlined operations in some cost-effective ways.

Results of this approach include a comprehensive list of "deliverables" and piles of index cards defining the tasks involved in each desired outcome (by project or functionality). The work happens when you have specific people allocating time to each deliverable, especially one person equipped and charged to be Responsible for success with it. This is the stuff of job descriptions, and perhaps an approach that would be useful to the **Succession planning** task group headed by Christy, as she looks at personnel replacement issues for SEJ's future.

There are never enough hours in the day for SEJ work, paid and volunteer, so it's more important than ever for us to work efficiently and in terms of true priorities for our shared mission.

Thanks for reviewing these thoughts and reports. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have, here on BaseCamp or when we meet in SB.

Safe travels everyone!

Attachment 3: Membership Report

SEJ Membership Report

Report generated on 1/13/2011

4th quarter 2010 Report prepared for Rob Davis, membership committee chair by Linda Knouse, Office Manager

Total Members as of 1/13/2011: 1439

Breakdown by category:

Active	934
Academic	268
Associate	229
Honorary	8

Breakdown by Employment

Authors	79
Educators	2
Faculty	120
Filmmakers	7
Freelancers	394
Government	2
Magazine	96
News Service	33
Newsletter	24
Newspaper	235
Nonprofit	42
Online Media	90
Photography	19
Publishers	13
Radio	80
Students	140
TV	56
University	4
Other	3

Dues Delinquency Rate Total amount overdue: \$14,045 (For member dues due 02/01/2010-01/01/2011)

Lapsed members (Nov-Jan) (not included in delinquency rate above): 80

New members: 2010

Jan: 18 Feb: 23 Mar: 29 April : 38 May: 29 June: 20
July: 34 August: 20 Sept.: 28 Oct.: 20 Nov.: 11 Dec.: 18

Total Joined/Dropped in 2003: 256/211
Total Joined/Dropped in 2004: 321/ 248
Total Joined/Dropped in 2005: 230/230
Total Joined/Dropped in 2006: 267/460
Total Joined/Dropped in 2007: 304/225
Total Joined/Dropped in 2008: 330/227
Total Joined/Dropped in 2008: 344/225
Total Joined/Dropped in 2009: 157/281
Total Joined/Dropped in 2010: 246/415 & Total re-upped:48