



2019 Board of Directors Call March 22, 2019

In Attendance: Cheryl W. Thompson, Lee Zurik, T. Christian Miller, Jill Riepenhoff, Nicole Vap, Matt Goldberg, Matt Apuzzo, Ziva Branstetter, Matt Dempsey, Jennifer LaFleur, Steven Rich, Norberto Santana Jr. and Jodi Upton

Staff in attendance: Doug Haddix and Amy Johnston

Thompson called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Previous Minutes from January Call:

Thompson asked if there are any corrections or changes

Motion: To approve the minutes from the January call.

Motion made by Apuzzo and seconded by Miller. Unanimously approved.

IRE Service Medals and Founders Award – Thompson

If you would like to nominate a current board member for a service medal, please email me by the end of the day so that we can vote by email on that. If anyone else has other suggestions for the medal, please let me know.

Thompson asked for certificate nominations and noted that the deadline for nominations is May 1.

Branstetter nominated Phil Williams. Miller seconded that; the nomination was unanimously approved.

Goldberg nominated Wayne Dolcefino. He noted that Wayne is a longtime investigative reporter in Houston. He is also a longtime IRE member and mentor. Goldberg said that to him, Dolcefino is the definition of what an IRE member is and how to give back to the community. LaFleur seconded the nomination and it was unanimously approved.

There were no further nominations.

Founders Award

The person that we have awarded the Founders Award cannot attend the conference but has nominated someone to accept on her behalf. Board members discussed whether a video could be produced with the recipient, and Nicole Vap agreed to tackle that project.

Conference Update – Vap

The showcase panel at the conference is “Investigating Trumpworld.” Several speakers have been invited, with other ideas for speakers being offered. Vap noted that conference planning is going well per Haddix and that Zurik is working on the broadcast panels.

Contest Judging

Thompson asked if there were any questions regarding the contest judging proposal from Haddix.

For context, Haddix provided some background. About four years ago the board decided to make changes to the election process for the contest judges based on a suggestion by Nancy Amons. This began because Amons thought that electing contest judges at the end of the annual membership meeting on the Saturday night of the June IRE conference felt like an afterthought. The board four years ago decided that a good alternative was to have two contest judges elected by members. Haddix said it had been a worthwhile experiment but noted several potential risks to the organization. Several people have run uncontested for several years. People have been elected as contest judges who've never even screened the IRE Awards in the past. No woman has run to be a contest judge.

Haddix suggested replacing the two elected contest judges with an open-call system seeking members willing to serve as contest judges. The board or executive committee would go through the list of people who've expressed interest and make the appointments. This would help balance out what we need each year. For example, if there wasn't a broadcaster, then we could add a broadcaster. This proposal will allow us to fill areas of need as needed. Diversity also could be enhanced, he said, noting that it's likely more people would volunteer to serve as contest judge rather than face an election and the prospect of losing. No other organizations have elected contest judges. Nancy Amons supports the open-call idea.

Discussion ensued. Issues discussed included the optics of eliminating elected positions and replacing them with appointed positions, possibly electing contest judges in August so the election isn't overshadowed by the election of board members, and board members doing a better job of encouraging members to run for contest judge elections.

Haddix withdrew the proposal, noting the lack of board support for the idea.

Motion: Refer this proposal to the contest committee for discussion with the strong sense of the board that it wants to keep elected judges but with the charge to the committee that they review some of the points raised in Haddix's proposal.

Motion by Miller and seconded by Branstetter. Roll call vote, unanimously approved.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 2:46 p.m. CST.

Motion by Apuzzo and seconded by Miller. Unanimously approved.