

**2015 IRE Board Retreat  
St. Louis, MO  
Sept 19, 2016**

**In Attendance:** Ziva Branstetter, Sarah Cohen, Andrew Donohue, Ellen Gabler, Matt Goldberg, Josh Meyer, T. Christian Miller, Steven Rich, Jill Riepenhoff, Cheryl W. Thompson, Nicole Vap, Phil Williams, Chrys Wu

**Staff in Attendance:** Mark Horvit, Amy Johnston, Anthony DeBarros, Ted Han

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Cohen

**Previous minutes**

Branstetter makes motion to approve June Minutes, seconded by Miller. Unanimous approval.

Wu makes motion to approve August minutes, seconded by Miller. Unanimous approval

**Executive Director Report - Horvit**

Membership – Horvit said membership continues to be at some of IRE’s highest levels in the organization’s history, averaging around 5,300 at the end of each month. Horvit explained how the membership system works and that membership numbers drop at the beginning of each month, as those whose memberships expire are removed from the list.

Web - We launched a new tool that shows different tools for journalist and what the tools do. Some of the companies helped with this.

All audio is now searchable online. We are still having to add some tags but most everything is already done. Sarah Hutchins and Jessica Park, our Google Fellow, were the ones that put this together.

Williams asked if, as we offer new features on the website, we are looking at ways to make them easier to find. Horvit replied that we have places on the side and top of the website that are interchangeable and can be used to highlight items, but agreed that it can be hard to find some things on the site.

Gabler asked if we are promoting those as they come out. Horvit said that we are.

We continue to add to our podcast, IRE Radio. We have graduate students who work on this each semester.

The IRE training map is live but we aren’t currently promoting it. There is an online form that as members fill that out and submit information about their work, it automatically populates the map.

Contest - The Philip Meyer awards will open Oct. 5. Cohen noted that all the judges felt like it needed to be clearer on what the award is specifically designed to honor. Horvit replied that it’s an issue every year, because of the focus on social research methods. Cohen then offered to write a description.

The IRE Contest will open late November, the week of Thanksgiving. The deadline for entries will be Jan. 15, which is later this year because of when the judging will be held. Dates for judging had to be moved due to Easter. Riepenhoff asked where the judging will be held. Horvit replied that it would be held in Columbia, Mo., as always.

Course Packs – This is the second year that we have offered these; we did not see a large increase in usage. We have had about 20 classes from around the country use these. We need to think about how to better market them. Cohen suggested reaching out to AEJMC. She also suggested offering one on public records.

Data Library: Income is about on par with this time last year. Sweeps is coming up and we usually pick up some work from our broadcast members during that time. Horvit talked about the big data set that we are getting and will be slicing up. Williams said newsrooms will want something exclusive, and Goldberg noted that there is a group that promotes lists of story ideas every couple of weeks for broadcasters.

Development - Overall conference fundraising is good, however we have not had much local support for the Denver conference. Fundraising in Louisiana has been much better. Horvit said that two couples have pledged to give money to IRE in their estates, totaling about \$500,000.

Budget- We are only two months into the fiscal year, and while it's too early to know how the year will go, we are on target for where we need to be now. We received a \$75,000 grant from Ford for general operating but have not added that into the budget yet.

Horvit asked if there were any budget questions. Cohen asked Horvit and Donohue if there was anything in the budget that concerned them. Both replied that there wasn't.

The Endowment is down a bit, but we are fine. We have enough cash on hand, and instances like this show the importance of keeping some cash available that is not included in the budget or the reserve fund. Our investment advisor and the Endowment Committee are not concerned. Williams noted that the committee has reviewed a letter from the advisors.

Dow Jones has contacted us about doing a data program similar to the program they have that places students with other internships. There would be about 12 students/newsrooms and would involve doing a boot camp to train the students next year. If this works, it could become an annual program.

Cohen asked if they had to have data training beforehand. Horvit said that it's one of the things we are looking at and they would have to attend the boot camp before going to the newsroom.

Gabler asked if Dow Jones still wanted the newsroom to pay for the training. Horvit replied that it would be set up like their other program, which isn't free for newsrooms. The costs are mostly underwritten by Dow.

Goldberg asked when it would start. Horvit said it would be a summer internship and start in May.

AAJA Training - We talked about this in June. The Asian American Journalists Association contacted us about doing some training as part of a program that would create small newsrooms in up to 3 states to focus on criminal justice issues. The proposal was finished this week and has been sent out. So far we have already had two people contact us about this. AAJA would oversee this but IRE will be training and consulting, and would arrange for the employees to be hired and receive benefits.

Coding – We will be holding the first Coding Boot Camp at CUNY in November. We plan on holding at least one of these per year. Alex Richards is putting this together.

Other Training – Horvit said he and Director of Training Jaimi Dowdell have had some contact with our Latin American members and we will be launching a web page that offers some resources in Spanish. They would also like for us to do some data training in 2016 in South America.

### **Reserve Fund: Donohue**

Donohue said that after the last board meeting, he was tasked with determining whether to invest the Reserve Fund.

He said he and Horvit have done research and met with advisors. He said the result of the research is that it makes more sense not to invest the fund, but to leave it in a bank account where it is safe and easily accessible.

Miller noted that as the market changes we might want to revisit this but right now it doesn't make sense. Donohue agreed.

Cohen asked if there needed to be a vote. Horvit replied that there was no need.

Cohen asked if we added money this year. Horvit said that yes we had and that the fund is now at \$300,000.

Donohue explained Horvit separately has some money set aside. He also noted that under the policy the board adopted at its previous meeting, 50 percent of any excess funds at year's end go into the reserve.

Cohen noted that IRE is doing so well right now and that we have to plan for the time where that might not be so. Donohue noted that Horvit has done a great job building up IRE's finances.

Williams asked if IRE has all of its policies compiled in one place, beyond the minutes. Horvit said that right now we do not, but that he would look into it.

### **DocumentCloud – Horvit**

Horvit introduced Tony DeBarros and Ted Han of DocumentCloud. Horvit noted that the board was sent material to review in advance and that there are several decisions that the DocumentCloud team needs from board today.

DocumentCloud is currently not generating any revenue and is completely grant funded. The current Knight grant was designed to make DocumentCloud sustainable.

Horvit told the Board there is no mixing of funds with IRE, other than a very small portion of the grant that funds a portion of the time spent by several IRE staff who work on aspects of the project.

DeBarros thanked the Board and Horvit for their support. He discussed the DocumentCloud advisory board, said interviews have been conducted with DocumentCloud users and said a recent doctoral graduate from the University of Missouri will be doing a survey and analyzing the results to look at the best models for beginning to charge for some services. He said the team has been contacted by nonjournalists interested in using the platform, said a key question for the Board is whether to open up DocumentCloud for such users.

Han discussed improvements made to the platform and the user experience.

Horvit then asked the Board to consider whether to open up DocumentCloud to non-journalists, and if so, what limitations would be placed. Questions that had been raised about possible customers in the memo provided to the Board included:

- *City, state or federal governments posting public documents or using the system internally.*
- *Single or group users in the fields of law, research, education, archival research, book publishing.*
- *Personal users.*
- *Corporate users.*

Williams noted that when he goes to Document Cloud and searches for something he knows that it's from a news organization, and asked if we add more types of users, will it be noted? Han replied that it would be clear who posted each document.

Miller asked why it would be OK to accept government agencies as clients, because IRE historically has not taken government money. Cohen noted that it wouldn't be unprecedented, as some government agencies, such as the Census Bureau, have had booths at IRE conferences.

Goldberg asked whether, if a government agency like the City of LA paid for an account to upload documents, would that give the agency influence over the platform? DeBarros said that the organization would have to ensure that did not occur.

Branstetter asked what would occur if a government agency loaded documents that should be public but were kept private?

Donohue questioned whether DocumentCloud could become reliant on government agencies financially. Have we thought through that how that could be used against us? Gabler noted that it's no different than an advertiser for newspapers. Horvit said that he thought that because the organization would have so many different revenue streams, it wouldn't be an issue.

Cohen said at that point she was more concerned about DocumentCloud becoming bigger than IRE and asked at what point do we spin off. Horvit said that is one of the issues that must be discussed, but said the plan is to bring it up later in the grant period.

Miller said that he is uncomfortable with taking money from governments and corporations, and that by being part of IRE we hamstring Document Cloud.

Horvit reminded the Board that they agreed to incorporate DocumentCloud into the organization several years ago, and that discussions about whether to split off the platform would be coming. Right now, he said, we are asking for the opportunity to see where we can go with this over the next year.

Additional discussion ensued about taking money from sources outside of journalism.

Horvit said to DocumentCloud needs to take in at least \$300,000 to \$400,000 a year to operate.

Wu said that if we don't make the decision now to let DocumentCloud experiment with funding options, then we are wasting the opportunity.

Gabler said that, at some point, you have to trust the people overseeing the program. Horvit said it would be important to be transparent about what we choose to do.

Miller asked if DocumentCloud could first approach journalism organizations, then universities, etc. Horvit replied that we don't have the time or staff to do that. The team would like to create a system where, if someone wants to pay for service, we can accept them. DeBarros said that right now the plan is to get the pricing list setup and get going.

Donohue asked if we have a specific policy on what we can and can't take. Cohen said that in 2010 the board wrote a new policy that left taking corporate money up to the Executive Director's discretion. Horvit noted that the decision helped clarify that he could money from companies like Google. Cohen said that it isn't in the bylaws or articles.

Donohue said that he thinks as we start down this road, does it take us away from what the platform's creators intended when they built it?

Cohen noted that when the platform was sent to IRE, it was unfunded. Horvit said that it is IRE's responsibility to determine how to try and sustain the platform. He and Debarros noted that both Aron Pilhofer and Scott Klein are on the advisory board, and said they have expressed reservations about expanding beyond journalism organizations.

Wu said that in her opinion, DocumentCloud became our ward and we are now trying to guide it. It's very clear that people really like this and it has value. We need to be ok with letting this experiment happen, to see if it can continue.

**Motion - The staff has the freedom to pursue various options funding DocumentCloud and will report back to the board quarterly.**

Motion by Vap, seconded by Goldberg.

After more discussion, and a failed motion to exclude government agencies, the board voted 12-1 in favor, with Miller voting no.

The board discussed its support of segregating DocumentCloud funds from IRE Funds, something Horvit said he already is doing.

The board adjourned for lunch at noon and reconvened at 2 p.m.

## **Membership – Gabler**

Gabler presented some proposed wording to give the staff more direction over who has the ability to become an IRE member, by making it clear that those working for advocacy organizations are not eligible for membership. (The proposed addition is underlined):

***The Professional class shall be limited to persons substantially engaged in news gathering, presentation or production, excluding those who work for organizations with a primary focus on advocacy.***

Cohen said that her understanding is that staff already has that power. Gabler said that is true, but that this helps clarify the situation. Cohen noted that this would require changing the Articles of Incorporation, something that would then require a vote by membership. She said this should only be done when absolutely necessary.

Williams asked if this would change anything with groups like the Project Veritas, which sent multiple people to the June conference. Gabler said that it would not apply in that case.

Donohue said he didn't think advocacy is the right word because publications like Mother Jones, which have always been part of IRE, do advocacy journalism. He said no change was necessary.

Riepenhoff noted that advocacy groups like the NRA, PETA, and others are all organizations that journalists sometimes investigate. Gabler said that this proposed change would address such groups.

Horvit said that, after the discussion, it was clear that there is not sufficient support on the board for the proposal, so no vote was taken.

He then presented a second proposed change, also from the Membership Committee, this one in the "associate membership" category:

***"Associate" membership will be available to former Professional or Academic members who are not retired, but not those who now work for organizations or in a role with a primary focus on advocacy or public relations; individuals engaged part-time in reporting or editing, plus individuals recognized by the Board of Directors for their contributions to this corporation to the field of investigative reporting and editing.***

Horvit said that the number of activate members that would be impacted by this would be minimal. This speaks to the people that are now doing PR for government agencies but who had been IRE members as journalists.

Williams noted that people who work at law firms are members, and asked how that was possible. Horvit replied that if they belonged to IRE as journalists, they can still be members, under our rules.

Rich noted he didn't have any problem with them being non-voting members.

Horvit noted after more discussion that there did not appear to be support on the Board for this change either.

## **Video Archive – Vap**

Vap recapped the previous discussions of this issue, explaining that IRE has a large collection of historic video news stories that is at risk because of its age. Preservation measures would be very expensive. Former Board member Lea Thompson has been working on investigating what it would take to save it, and gave the Board a detailed report in June, including ways to raise the funds for preservation.

Cohen said that the discussion in June determined that preservation was important because of the collection's unique historical value.

Miller asked if taking money for such a project would make the video, now available only to IRE members, available to the public. Goldberg said that is a possibility.

Horvit reminded the Board that it has already agreed that the project is important. Cohen said the Board also agreed that this is not a project that can be done by existing staff. Vap said the goal is to find a way to cover the cost, and Goldberg stressed that any recommendation made by the subcommittee working with Thompson would come back to the Board for a vote at a later date.

Horvit said that there are some decisions the Board must make to give the subcommittee and Thompson direction. One is, are there objections to offering naming rights?

Goldberg asked if there are certain areas that the board would like for them to stay away from. Vap said they just need some direction before they start approaching people. No objections to the concept of naming rights were made.

Horvit said the next issue is giving direction on the types of groups that can be approached for funding. Vap said that the subcommittee wants to make sure they don't encroach on any of the IRE fundraising sources.

Wu suggested that before any specific group is approached, that the subcommittee check with the Executive Committee, and several Board members agreed.

Vap said the next question is whether the Board is comfortable with seeking grants for this work from government agencies, something IRE normally would not do.

Miller asked if the plan is that long-term, IRE would retain control of the tapes. Vap replied that there are a lot of different options that we can look at. We wouldn't go forward with any grant request without coming to the Board.

Williams asked if the cost of the project would encompass just preservation, or also maintenance. Horvit said it covers both, and Vap noted that the vast majority of the cost involves preservation.

Cohen said that she is uncomfortable with asking for government money, noting that federal grants are hard to work with.

Miller asked what is the impact to the staff would be. Vap replied that hopefully it would be minimal.

Gabler asked if the subcommittee felt confident that this won't cut into IRE fundraising.

Donohue asked how taking government money for this would be any different than allowing government agencies to be customers of DocumentCloud.

Horvit said he saw a distinction in that, in the case of DocumentCloud, we would be taking payment from agencies for the service of uploading government documents, and the money would only go toward the platform. In this case, IRE would be accepting financial support from a government agency.

Discussion ensued about accepting money from different organizations.

Williams said he would prefer that the committee pursue non-government sources; several Board members agreed. The consensus of the Board was that this effort make its first attempts to fund the project without going to government agencies.

Horvit noted that the plan could result in making the story library something that is no longer a member-only benefit. Several Board members said that did not concern them.

### **IRE Conference keynote /showcase panels – Goldberg**

Goldberg presented a list of possible keynote speakers that have been suggested by members of the Contest Committee and others, seeking direction from the Board about who to approach.

Among the consensus names were John Oliver and Nikole Hannah Jones. Goldberg said efforts already were underway to see if Oliver could participate in the conference in some way.

Other names recommended to be contacted for high-profile speaking roles included Jorge Ramos, Dean Baquet, David Simon, Ta-Nehisi Coates and Anderson Cooper, among others.

### **National Freedom of Information Coalition – Horvit**

Horvit gave the Board some background about NFOIC, noting that it is an umbrella group that works with FOI organizations in individual states. He also said that he serves on the NFOIC Board, initially as a liaison for IRE, now in a larger role.

He discussed the Knight FOI Fund, which NFOIC administers to support open records lawsuits. The fund covers certain expenses and, if the plaintiffs win and get court costs reimbursed, that money is returned to the fund. The goal is to make it as self-sustaining as possible. It currently has about \$450,000.

Horvit said the NFOIC Board is asking IRE to become the administrator of the fund, working in partnership with NFOIC to issue grants. The fund, which for years has resided in a very low interest account at the University of Missouri, would be moved to an account that generates more return, either by the university or by transferring the funds to IRE's endowment.

As part of this arrangement, IRE would be able to appoint two members to the committee that reviews fund requests, and the NFOIC staff member would devote a portion of her



time to assisting IRE, in exchange for the time IRE would spend overseeing the fund. Horvit said the Knight Foundation strongly supports this arrangement. Horvit also noted that NFOIC's mandate is broader than IRE's, as it includes non-journalists who are working on freedom of information issues. The fund supports both journalists and non-journalists.

Vap, who is active in the Colorado FOI organization, said NFOIC and its member organizations have great value.

Horvit asked the Board to consider signing a Memorandum of Understanding with NFOIC. A copy of the MOU was previously distributed to the Board.

Donohue asked if this would put too much additional work on him as executive director, and whether this could hurt our relationship with the Foundation if it did not go well. Horvit said he was not concerned about the additional workload and said that it would be important for the fund and the NFOIC relationship to be managed well. He also noted that the Knight Foundation appreciates IRE's willingness to do this, through conversations with Eric Newton. Horvit also said that maintaining the NFOIC staff position financially would be the responsibility of NFOIC, not IRE.

More discussion ensued.

Miller asked what would happen if NFOIC dissolved in the future. Horvit noted that the way the MOU is worded, either party can end the relationship at any time after the first year, so IRE is not making a long-term commitment if it chooses to change direction in the future.

**Motion – IRE will enter in a memorandum of understanding with NFOIC and will administer the Knight FOI Fund.**

Motion made by Meyer Gabler seconded.

Additional discussion ensued, including questions about the Knight Foundation's expectations. Horvit cautioned that if we take this on and then back out quickly, the Foundation likely would not be happy.

Cohen said the Board has stated previously that supporting FOIA is part of the organization's core mission, and that Board members should think about whether this is a good way to do that. She said the matter could be tabled for further discussion on Sunday if members want more time to consider it.

– We believe that part of supporting FOIA is part of our core mission and are we willing to take a risk on this. We have been talking a lot over the last 3 years about being more active with FOIA issues. We can think about this and vote on this first thing in the morning.

Horvit noted that we can't wait to long because it's been going on for a while and at some point Knight is going to want their money back.

Cohen said that they would wait and vote on this issue first thing in the morning.

Donohue asked Horvit if this is something he felt strongly about doing. Horvit said that he did not feel strongly about it, but did feel that it helped meet the Board's previously stated

desire to do more to support FOI efforts. He said it would be a way to raise IRE's profile in this area.

Meyer noted that doing so would be a good fit with the Golden Padlock Award, and Donohue said it fits the mission of IRE's Engagement Committee. Horvit also noted that IRE's action could help ensure that the fund continues to exist.

The topic was tabled for further discussion.

### **Support for Freelance Journalists – Horvit**

IRE member Laird Townsend, who runs an organization called Project Word, is looking to work with us on some projects, and he addressed the Board in June. He has a donor that is considering giving him money to do several projects and is hoping IRE will partner with him. IRE is Project Word's fiscal agent. The project is called Freelance Investigative Reporters and Editors (FIRE).

Horvit said IRE's role would be to provide training and research resources as part of the grant-funded program, working with Project Word in the same way IRE partners with other journalism organizations on projects. IRE would receive a portion of the grant funds for this work.

Townsend is asking if we can present IRE as a partner on this project as he supports other funders. Horvit noted he is working with former IRE Executive Director Brant Houston.

Horvit said no vote is needed, but said he would like some direction.

Cohen said wasn't thrilled with the name's similarity to IRE.

Horvit said he wasn't proposing anything more than evaluating Project Word's proposals on a case-by-case basis and helping when it fits our mission and makes sense for us.

Donohue said that was skeptical and had concerns about whether this veers from IRE's mission. Williams said he was concerned about authorize one person to meet with funders using IRE's name. Discussion ensued about collaborating on this project.

Horvit said the IRE could tell Townsend that it is interesting in doing some projects with him, on a case-by-case basis, or we could tell him we do not want to work with him.

Wu said she thought we should limit our involvement to this project at this time.

Horvit said that it sounded like the consensus is that we would tell Townsend that we are open to working with him on his current proposed project, but that we are not committing to work with him on any others at this time. Horvit said he would speak with Townsend about accurately portraying IRE's limited role in both this project and Project Word.

### **Endowment – Williams**

Williams said he and Horvit have discussed whether it is time to look at raising additional funds for the endowment. He said any such efforts would begin with targeted fundraising rather than a public fundraising drive.

Cohen noted that in the past the board hasn't been great about helping with fundraising and said she was curious about how we plan to do this.

Branstetter suggested pushing planned giving.

Miller said that at ProPublica there is an advisory board. Cohen replied that Horvit had brought the issue of creating an advisory board for IRE several times, and it had never received support.

Wu said she knew someone who advises small nonprofits on fundraising. Horvit discussed his decision to do away with the development position that IRE previously had. He also noted that part of the organization's difficulty with fundraising has been that our board members and long-time members typically do not belong to social networks that include likely major donors.

Donohue noted that he was on the Revenue Committee in the past, and that he tried to recruit board members to ask for donations, and no one wanted to do so.

Cohen said that right now the organization has the financial ability to hire a development consultant if it chooses to, to help us determine what the best path forward would be. Discussion ensued about consultants.

Horvit suggested that board members who know of potential consultants put Horvit in touch with them, to give him and Williams direction. Board members agreed that this was the right direction to take.

### **IRE Conferences – Goldberg**

Goldberg noted that increasingly at the IRE Conference there are more agents who come to recruit broadcast members. Currently they pay the same rate as any other attendees. He proposed looking at ways to generate more money from them, because they benefit financially from coming to the conference.

Miller said that if our members want them there, we don't want to scare them off. He then asked what is the most we could do for them.

Cohen there are other groups that allow others that aren't members to come, but the fee is much higher than the normal conference registration fee.

Horvit said we could also consider asking them to take on sponsorship roles. Discussion ensued.

Cohen said that it sounded like the overall consensus is that everyone is on board with looking into what we could offer. Thompson noted that a lot of other conferences have a place where members can sign up for meetings with recruiters.

Board members agreed that it would be fine to pursue sponsorship or similar funding from agents.

Motion to adjourn at 5:47.

Motion by Gabler and seconded by Williams. Unanimous approval.

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**St. Louis Board Retreat  
Sunday, September 20, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.

The Board resumes discussion of a Memorandum of Understanding with the NFOIC.

Discussion centered on specific wording in the document.

Wu said she had some questions about the contract. Under terms of agreement it doesn't have an end date. Horvit will remove the automatic renewal line. Wu noted that under paragraph 12 this puts Horvit in a position of reporting to two people. Cohen agreed with Wu that it needed to be removed. Horvit said that they could remove that. .

**Motion-** To amend and to approve the MOU between IRE and the NFOIC.

Motion made by Goldberg, seconded by Rich. Unanimous approval.

At 9:12 a.m. the Board went into executive session to discuss personnel issues. At 9:52 a.m. the meeting opened again.

**Moral Courage Award – Williams**

Williams proposed creating a Moral Courage Award, something he has brought up to the Board previously.

Williams spoke about why organization and award means so much to him, and said the thinking behind creating such as award is that we should recognize those that make courageous decisions. It would be given annually, at the discretion of the Board. It would allow IRE to show solidarity with those facing major obstacles. It could be something like the Don Bowles award for Moral Courage or the Don Bowles/Chauncey Bailey Award for Moral Courage, or it could just be the IRE award for moral courage.

Cohen said that her concern is that we have a lot of awards already. She also said if such an award were created, it would be important to give serious consideration to our international members, because many of them face huge risk on a regular basis.

Miller asked if there is another award like this out there. Horvit replied that there are a handful of similarly themed awards. Vap noted that ours could be different because it's for investigative reporting rather than one covering a conflict.

Miller asked Williams how this would work. Williams explained that he thought we could do something like what we do for the Golden Padlock and open it up for nominations, or the Board could recommend people for the award.

Wu said her concern about presenting an award for something of this nature, is that it asks the people judging the award to judge the nuances as to how bad a situation was, and might end up ignoring dangerous situations worldwide. Maybe instead of giving an award we find another way to recognize what they are going through.

Rich asked what it says about us if we chose not give one out in a given year. Are we sending the message that no one lived up to our standard for the award? Donohue said he thought that we need to be careful about award inflation.

Cohen suggested that this was something for the engagement committee to look at.

Thompson suggested a video to recognize those facing great hardships at the luncheon. Miller said he thought the award could be good, but noted that we need to make sure we aren't duplicating.

Cohen said that the sentiment seems to be that there is support among a number of Board members, but there are some difficulties that need to be examined. She asked that Williams work with the engagement committee on this and that they get an international member involved. She asked that they put together a proposal and get back to the Board at a future meeting.

### **Partnering for Conference – Cohen**

Cohen noted that the idea of partnering for the IRE Conference has been discussed previously, but that it came up under a deadline situation. She said she placed the item on the agenda to have a more open conversation about this in case it should arise again or in case we need to establish partnerships in the future.

She said she believes the Board put Horvit in a difficult position because we have said we wanted to work on diversity but when he brought something to us we shut him down (referring to a potential partnership with the Asian American Journalists Association).

Gabler asked Horvit to talk about some of the other partnerships that we already do. He said he have worked with AAJA to hold daylong workshops at their annual conference for the past few years, and listed a number of other groups that IRE has worked with over the past several years.

Donohue said IRE needs to continue doing all of the things it is doing to partner with others on various programs, but that the annual conference should remain exclusively IRE's event. Goldberg and Meyers agreed.

Horvit noted that there did no appear to be Board support for working on holding a joint conference with other organizations.

Miller asked if it is something that we need to more thoughtfully working toward.

Wu said the conference is a very unique thing but I think we can put more effort into finding more diverse speakers and attendees. Cohen noted that she had looked at some of the other conferences and our speaker line up, and that Horvit and the staff have done a great job of creating greater diversity in the past few years. Wu said the Board needs to help. Donohue noted that when we put our panels together for the conferences, we can make the choice to add diversity.

Thompson noted that she had seen more diversity at the 2015 Conference than any other time in the 20 years she has been a member.

Horvit noted that by diversity we mean gender, ethnicity and other things.

Cohen concluded the conversation by saying she was glad we had the conversation and stressed that Board members need to remember to make sure we help Horvit and the staff work on increasing diversity at the conference.

### **Board Terms – Riepenhoff**

Riepenhoff proposed that the Board consider looking at changing IRE's election system to three-year terms for Board members instead of two-year terms. She said that with the current system. The first year is just a learning year and then by the second year you're up for reelection.

Cohen said she has looked into this with several other organizations and we do have a short term limit compared to most places. This noted that has been discussed several times in the past, and that if a change is recommended, it would require a vote of the membership to change the Articles of Incorporation.

Gabler said she thought that three-year terms might dissuade some people from running or make people less likely to run for a second term.

Williams said he agreed with Gabler. It's easy to make a two-year commitment and then look at it later. Cohen asked if that meant Williams didn't think we needed to do that. Williams said he didn't think so. Several others agreed.

Miller asked Horvit his opinion. Horvit said it's nice to have some people that have been on the board for several years so there is a history. He said he has heard from several new board members that the first year is a learning year so it's hard to be effective in an initial two-year term. He also said that he wasn't sure whether three-year terms would solve the problem because more people might serve only one term.

Meyer noted that there are former board members that served on the board for a number of years and asked Horvit if had talked with any of those people to talk about their service. Horvit said that some of it was that there wasn't as much pressure in the newsrooms as there is now, and in the past some newsrooms gave people time to serve on the board.

Cohen said that it sounded like there wasn't a consensus to do this.

### **New Business**

#### **Meetups- Gabler**

Gabler said IRE now has seven groups that hold meet ups, with about 1,300 people involved, some of whom belong to other groups that meet with ours. She has been thinking about whether we should try and raise grant money or other funds to do more with the groups.

Cohen said that in New York they have heard from people that want more, and a short discussion ensued as to possible options for ways to expand content at the meet-ups.

There was no other new business. Cohen said that she and the board would like to thank Horvit and the staff for their work. She also noted that the organization is running very well.

Motion to adjourn at 11:15 made by Williams, seconded by Miller. Unanimous approval.