

IRE Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Oct. 16-17, 2010

Present:

Board: Alison Young (president), Manny Garcia (vice president), Phil Williams (secretary), David Cay Johnston (treasurer), Lea Thompson, Cheryl Phillips (chairman), Sarah Cohen, Rob Cribb, Andrew Donohue, Leonard Downie Jr., David Cay Johnston, Lise Olsen, Mc Nelly Torres
Mark Horvit, David Smallman.

10 a.m.: Young called the meeting to order, discussed the agenda for the meeting.

Olsen: Expressed excitement about membership numbers.

10:20: Approval of minutes. Johnston moves to approve, Torres second.

Website presentation:

Horvit presented an overview of the work being done to rebuild IRE's member databases and to design and build a new Web site. He said two grants are being used, from the Philip Graham Fund and the match from the Challenge Fund for Journalism.

Work is being done on internal systems, databases and registration systems by Delta Systems.

The site's back end will be built by Hot Type, represented at the meeting by Matt Waite.

The site is being designed by Upstatement, represented at the meeting by Jared Novak.

The goal is to have this done in late spring.

Novak and Waite discuss how the process will proceed and gathered feedback and ideas.

Noon: Break for lunch

1:50 p.m. Reconvene

Treasurer's Report.

Johnston: IRE is in better shape financially than it was a year ago. We did not have to borrow money from our reserves because of improved cash flow. Johnston said we fundamentally don't need to spend time worrying about finances right now. It is time to ramp up development.

Executive Director's report

Horvit discussed membership numbers and trends, which are increasing. He updated the board on recent training, both in-person and online. He updated the board on the endowment and on the search for a new development officer.

Young: Seek a motion for going into executive session for legal and personnel matters. Johnston moved, seconded by Downie, approved unanimously.

The meeting reconvened in open session.

Membership Committee Report:

Cohen: discussed upcoming plans for membership drive in 2011 and other networking events with students.

Cribb discussed developing caucuses, which would allow groups such as educators and international members to work together and have a voice in some IRE events, such as conference planning.

Discussion ensued, including whether to create a caucus for students.

Young: Is there a motion to support moving forward with the caucus concept for further refinement.

Williams moved, Johnston second.

Discussion ensued.

Young: Restated motion, called for question.

Unanimous in favor of moving ahead.

Cribb introduced the ideas of membership IDs. The Canadian investigation group offers them as an alternative for those who wish to pay \$20, a larger laminated card with a photograph. Directed at students and independent journalists. Had demand for it in Canada, with a growing group of journalists no long affiliated with mainstream media.

Revenue Committee Report

Downie discussed methods for board involvement in fundraising. He discussed the idea of seeking funding for an "engagement editor" who would supply content and conversations for IRE's Web site and social media tools.

The board discussed the concept of forming an advisory board to assist with fundraising. The concept was met with mixed reaction.

Horvit discussed marketing ideas and presented some sample materials created by University of Missouri students who worked on a plan for IRE. Board members supported use of the materials.

Olsen led a discussion of possible changes for the database library and the need for a long-term plan. Among the ideas discussed were adding data visualization tools.

The board discussed creating a working group of board members to assist in this planning. Olsen suggested analyzing sales and repackaging databases in new ways.

Olsen discussed the importance of offering distance learning opportunities. She suggested working with other groups that have experience in this area. One option discussed was starting with a CAR boot camp taught through distance learning tools.

The board then entertained a motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Johnston moved, Downie seconded.

The meeting reconvened in public session and adjourned until the morning.

SUNDAY

The meeting resumed at 9:15 a.m. with a call to order.

Young presented board members with a resolution:

Resolved: That the IRE Board of Directors recognizes the outstanding work over the past year of Executive Director Mark Horvit and the IRE staff to grow membership, identify new sources of revenue and improve the organization's cash flow. The Board thanks staff for its sacrifices and hard work.

Johnston moved to adopt the resolution; Downie second.

Board voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Horvit: The federal Department of Health and Human Services is making more health-related data available and wants to get input from IRE members concerning journalists' needs. Board members said they were comfortable with IRE attending a meeting with HHS and providing such feedback.

Priority Setting

Young said there are three main areas to address, based on discussion during the Saturday meeting:

1. Revamping of the data library.
2. Initiative for distance learning.
3. Engagement editor

Downie stressed that it is important not to ignore staff needs while looking at priorities.

Discussion ensued. Horvit listed several existing staffing needs, including having

someone running database library fulltime and having a full-time Web editor.

Donahue discussed a proposal for one an engagement editor who also could serve as Web editor.

Donahue suggested trying to get a multi-year grant and ask for all of these things: engagement, web and database editor.

Olsen suggested creating a small work group to refine the concepts and priorities discussed.

Motion by Williams, second by Downie, for Horvit to work with small working group to address data library, engagement editor and distance learning, and have flexibility to determine best way to approach this.

The board unanimously supported creating a working group to focus on the priority areas.

Downie asked for report about how the resource center works.

Conference Report

Williams stated that IRE's traditional model of finding a local media host for a conference that can provide at least \$25,000 is no longer realistic in many cases.

Williams recommended providing more guidance to staff by adopting a new sponsorship policy that spells out the kind of organizations from which IRE can accept money.

The board discussed various options and possibilities.

Discussion ensued. The following motion was proposed:

"In deciding funding for conferences, the IRE Board urges that staff view media-related companies broadly and in addition, the board authorizes the staff to accept funding from other entities, subject to the approval of the IRE board. The board will consider limiting the Featured IRE sponsored level to foundations and media-related companies.

"IRE may, if necessary, specify in conference materials that sponsorship 'does not imply endorsement of the contributor's products, services or point of view.'

"IRE will be cognizant of possible conflicts and take appropriate steps to avoid any appearance of impropriety."

Johnson moved for a vote, Torres seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of possible IRE Policy on Conference Sponsorship by Non-Media Entities
Williams shared language used by SPJ for its conference sponsorship policy. Discussion ensued and interest was expressed by several in adopting SPJ's language for an IRE policy. Young suggested that IRE draft its own language using the SPJ policy as a guide and said the executive committee be charged with the task.

Olsen made a motion that the executive committee draft an ethics policy, using the policy adopted by the Society for Professional Journalists as a model. Downie seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

The board discussed possible keynote speakers for the 2011 IRE Conference in Orlando.
No decision was made.

Williams said IRE staff is looking at locations for NICAR 2012 and will report back.

Contest Committee Report:

Co-chairs Phillips and Thompson updated the Board on the Contest Committee's ongoing analysis of IRE's contest categories and how they may be impacted by changes in journalism publishing platforms and partnerships. They shared information about how other journalism contests are organizing their categories and said the committee is discussing how IRE might address emerging issues about how to measure news organization size when the online media landscape is no longer easily captured by circulation or broadcast market size. Phillips discussed the committee's plans to survey IRE members about the contest.

Discussion ensued.

Thompson asked the Board to continue to think about the issues and to send her and Phillips any further thoughts.

Young asked if there was any new business. Seeing none, she asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

Olsen moved. Johnston second.

The board voted unanimously to adjourn.