

Minutes
IRE Board of Directors
January 14, 2020
Video Call

With IRE Board President Cheryl W. Thompson presiding, the meeting of the IRE board of directors was called to order at 1 p.m.

In addition to Thompson, the following board members were present: Vice President Lee Zurik, Secretary Jill Riepenhoff, Treasurer Jodi Upton, Nicole Vap, Steven Rich, Matt Dempsey, Jennifer LaFleur, Norberto Santana Jr., Jodie Fleischer, Bethany Barnes, Cindy Galli, Brian Rosenthal.

Staff members in attendance: Executive Director Doug Haddix and Director of Partnerships Chris Vachon.

President's Report

The IRE conference luncheon speaker, Ronan Farrow, will be announced in early February.

Thompson has been in talks with NABJ board president Dorothy Tucker regarding IRE training at the 2020 NABJ conference.

Thompson, who is a member of the IRE20 conference regional planning committee, reported that the committee submitted many conference ideas to staff.

Thompson inquired as to the status of a membership demographics report from staff. Executive Director Doug Haddix indicated he would follow up with the board regarding that report.

There is no January executive committee meeting, and the next executive committee meeting will be February 18.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Motion and second by Upton and LaFleur, respectively, the board approved the minutes from the October 2019 board retreat with minor tweaks.

Conference Committee Update: Nicole Vap, chair

The committee is excited to have Ronan Farrow as the luncheon keynote speaker at IRE20. The committee decided on a theme of covering Washington/Trump Administration for the Showcase Panel.

Vap recognized Cindy Galli for her help with the broadcast sessions.

Haddix reported that the call for ideas for IRE20 ended January 12.

The ideas will be reviewed by staff at the end of January/beginning of February.
The opportunity to book hotel rooms for IRE20 will open in January.

Haddix reported that registration for the NICAR conference is running significantly higher than past NICAR conferences.

Contest Committee Update: Jennifer LaFleur, chair

Screening of contest entries began on January 13.
In February, reviewing of the screeners work will begin.

Website Redesign

Haddix reported that the new website is scheduled to launch late June/early July.
The timeline for the redesign is aggressive but realistic.

Governance Committee Update: Lee Zurik, chair

At the October 2019 board retreat, the committee was asked to research the concept of moving from two-year board terms to three-year terms and the issue of term limits.

The committee decided that there is not a strong reason to suggest term limits.

The committee agreed, however, that a change from two-year board terms to three-year terms would benefit IRE. The reason for this consideration is that when turnover on the board occurs, it can leave a void of information within the board. In addition, board members feel it can take a year to grasp their board role, and then a year later they are up for reelection.

The committee shared several possibilities with the board as well as advice from IRE's attorney. The full report can be found [here](#).

Board members discussed the mechanism for converting to three-year terms, with pros and cons of various approaches.

Any change to the length of board terms would require a change in IRE's bylaws as well as the Articles of Incorporation. The board can change the bylaws after a 30-day comment period for members. A change to the Articles requires a vote of the membership.

Board members generally agreed with moving from two-year to three-year terms. They did not agree with how to make the transition. As a result, the group decided to have a discussion with any interested board members rather than only the committee members. It was also suggested that Zurik consult a governance expert.

Motion and second by Rich and Barnes, respectively, to table the discussion of board terms.

New Business

Jodi Upton asked that the contest committee review some items related to the Phil Meyer award. She indicated that the criteria has gotten away from its original intent and as a result, the application form needs to be reworked. In addition, she suggested that the award presentation at the NICAR conference include stronger visuals.

Norberto Santana Jr. reminded the board that the organization should be informed of the status of the labor situation at each conference hotel and suggested it be part of the organization's standard operating procedure. Haddix indicated that Marriott, where a majority of IRE conferences are held, has a strong track record when it comes to labor relations.

Motion and second by Vap and Rich, respectively, the board approved to go into executive session at 1:45 p.m. to discuss personnel.

Motion and second by Upton and Zurik, respectively, the board approved to adjourn.