

Minutes
IRE Board of Directors
Dec. 1, 2020
Video Meeting

IRE Board President Cheryl W. Thompson presiding, called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

The following board members were present: Bethany Barnes, Jodie Fleischer, Jennifer Forsyth, Cindy Galli, Marisa Kwiatkowski, Jennifer LaFleur, Steven Rich, Mark Rochester, Brian Rosenthal, Kat Stafford, Cheryl W. Thompson, Jodi Upton and Mark Walker

Staff present: Doug Haddix, Stephanie Klimstra, Chris Vachon, Denise Malan, Sarah Hutchins, Heather Feldmann Henry and Charles Minschew

Thompson turned the meeting over to Haddix and noted the three things on the agenda: Approving rates and dates for NICAR 2021, discussing a possible sponsor for NICAR 2021 and a tour of the new IRE website.

Haddix introduced Vachon who shared that IRE received a McCormick Foundation grant of \$50K for newsroom training serving journalists of color in the Chicago area.

Haddix said that the board needs to vote on the dates and rates for IRE.

NICAR 2021 dates: Malan and Haddix presented the results from a survey of 60 members about scheduling for NICAR. Most people wanted a three-day conference. Wed, Thurs, Fri received the most votes. Staff proposed conference of March 3 through 5, 2021.

NICAR 2021 rates: Haddix said the staff recommended a registration rate of \$125 for early bird and \$175 after that.

Rosenthal asked about adding a new member rate or first-timer rate. He thought it could result in more new members with that rate.

Haddix and Vachon noted that we have about 150 fellowships for NICAR. Stafford asked for a breakdown of fellowships. Vachon shared this breakdown: 75% for journalists of color, 18% for women (early career and college) and 7% for educators

Kwiatkowski asked how many attended NICAR 2020. Haddix and Klimstra said it was about 1,100 in New Orleans. Kwiatkowski asked for more information about what expected attendance is for IRE 2021 and whether we would meet our commitments. Haddix said it could be a few hundred in person with possibly another 2,000 attending virtually. Haddix said he thought that the in-person attendance for a conference in

Indianapolis would likely come from people who are able to drive to the conference. Klimstra noted that we likely will continue to negotiate.

Jodie Fleischer asked whether he had any indication of the appetite for universities to send students again. Haddix said the staff did not yet know, but the conference could be useful to data journalism teachers who will be teaching virtually in the spring. Fleischer also asked whether the campus campaign promotion had been sent to academic members so they could use IRE 2020 in Spring classes. Doug confirmed that it was sent in November.

Rosenthal asked whether there would be a mentoring program for NICAR. Doug said the staff felt like it wasn't a good fit and knowing that a board group is revamping it, the staff was not planning on it for NICAR. The Executive Committee agreed not to connect it to NICAR because the Member Services Committee is revamping the program.

Stafford said that the member services committee is talking about revamping the mentoring program. Fleischer and Barnes are working on that effort. It is on the committee's agenda for its next meeting.

Fleischer noted that the Revenue Committee had talked with two women from Media Mentors about using their platform for mentoring. Thompson suggested it would be better to have more discussion on it at the next board meeting. Stafford noted that another group is working on a mentoring program for Latino and Latina journalists. She said it would be good to have a discussion about all ongoing efforts. Thompson suggested that the Member Services Committee discuss and come back to the board with recommendations.

Motion from Rich, second from Kwiatkowski to approve rates of \$125/ \$175 for NICAR and for dates NICAR conferences dates of March 3-5.

Vote: Unanimously passed

Haddix asked for board input regarding a possible \$25K NICAR21 sponsorship. Staff was approached by IRE member Sean Sposito about his employer's interest in sponsoring the conference. Sean works for The Paranoids, which is the information security organization inside Verizon Media.

IRE accepts donations from media companies and companies/foundations that support journalism. Staff requested guidance from the board on whether The Paranoids/Verizon Media meets that criteria.

Formerly called YahooSecurity, The Paranoids are the information security organization inside Verizon Media charged with protecting the company's various newsroom brands — including HuffPost, TechCrunch and YahooNews, among others. The Paranoids protect consumer, customer and corporate data. They use their place on the Internet to fight for their users and for the targeted, abused and vulnerable. Verizon Media is a division of Verizon Communications that focuses on media and online business.

Forsyth said that she studied the memo several times and looked up the organization. She said she didn't see any reasons why IRE can't take the money. She said it seemed as straightforward as a lot of other organizations we take money from, especially if there are no strings attached.

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Upton said she supported the sponsorship, but that we need to make it clear who The Paranooids are or say Verizon Media. Rich said he supported it as well, but that any speakers that present in a sponsored track should be informed in case they get questions from attendees.

Motion from Forsyth, second from Rochester to accept the 25K sponsorship from The Paranooids.

Vote: Unanimously passed

Haddix and staff did a walk-through of the new IRE website, which will launch Dec. 7.

Rich, Stafford and Fleischer had to leave at 1 p.m.

Before leaving, Fleischer requested via chat a preview link for the board to test drive the website. Haddix said that was not possible and that we would have access when the site launches on Monday.

Thompson noted that this was Haddix's last board meeting. She thanked him for his leadership to IRE over the years, including building membership to over 6,000 and bringing the training to new levels.

Upton asked if we could schedule a meeting for the end of January or early February. (for a Treasurer's report). Thompson said she would schedule one.

Motion from Upton, second from Galli to adjourn.

Vote: Unanimously passed

Meeting adjourned at 1:11