

Willamette Writers Board Meeting Minutes 9/26/2023

Officers on camera: Gail Pasternack - President, Jodie Fish - Treasurer, Maren Anderson - Secretary

Board Members on camera: Curtis Chen, Jay Gilmore, Kathleen Colvin, Roni Stinger

Board Members absent: Kathy Saviers, Bobbie Calhoun

Staff Present: Kate Ristau - Executive Director (arrived late)

Gail called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm. A quorum was present.

07 - 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the 07/25/2023 Meeting were approved.

[Motion: Roni Moved. Kathleen Seconded. Unanimously approved.](#)

New Board Member

- The Board welcomed new secretary Maren Anderson. Maren is an author and assistant professor at Western Oregon University. She has been a Willamette Writers member for years and previously served as co-chair of the Willamette Writers on the River Chapter in Corvallis and as Editor-in-Chief of *the Timberline Review*.

Governance Committee Update

- The Board Book was reviewed with new board members. There is an updated policy section for easy reference.
- The Governance Committee reviewed options for drafting a legally comprehensive Privacy Policy.
- The Committee continues work on an organization-wide AI policy.

Finance Committee Update

- The Finance Committee discussed the Directors and Officers Insurance Policy. Kathleen is working on an in-depth look at the policy with Kate.
- The Conference exceeded revenue expectations.
- We have asked Crowne Plaza for a new contract bid for 2024 (along with other hotel bids).
- The Committee discussed the 990 and is working with the CPA on revisions. The board will approve the final 990 on BaseCamp.
- Jodie and Kate will continue work on Quickbooks so that the categories more closely match the way the 990 presents them.

- August numbers from the bookkeeper are updated. Kate will post with further explanation.

Programs Update

- Big picture: we landed where we want to be on conference and other line items.
- The Programming Year is in full swing. In September alone, we hosted over 30 events.
- A full chapter report is available in the Executive Director Report to the Board, but we are happy to welcome new chapter leaders in Southern Oregon. They are meeting in-person now at the Josephine Community Library in Grants Pass.
- *The Timberline Review* is beginning showcases – Fall and Spring in-person, and Winter and Summer online. Susan Stecker Jones did a great job, and has been working on processes and procedures to make sure details can be passed on in the future. She has worked to make the Volunteer experience as community focused and educational as possible, continuing Maren Anderson’s goals.
- The Willamette Writers Portland Writing Center has begun holding Brown Bag Lunches and Drop in Critiques, as well as office hours. The Speculative Brown Bag Lunch brought in 19 writers. The programming goal at the Writing Center continues to be: community and volunteer led programming that is not leadership intensive.
- We will be hosting several NaNoWriMo events, including a kick-off event with Grant Faulkner, the Executive Director of NaNoWriMo. We will also host write-ins at the Tigard Library and online, as well as post-NaNoWriMo events.

New Position Discussion

- Gail and Kate presented on the possibility of a new position on the Willamette Writers Board, based on their work with George Thorn and the Cultural Leadership Program through the Regional Arts & Culture Council. Currently, the role of the President places a heavy burden on the leader. The suggestion is to split the internal and external pieces of board leadership into two positions, the Board Chair and the Board President. The Board Chair will work externally, while the president works internally, guiding the board through internal leadership. Both positions actively work together with the Executive Director position to lead the vision, mission, and direction of the organization. The Chair position does not require a change in Bylaws.
- Kathleen Colvin has volunteered to step into this role.

Officer and Board Votes

Motion to fill the Chair position: Roni Moved. Jay Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Motion to elect Kathleen Colvin as Board Chair: Jay Moved. Jodie Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Motion to elect Jodie Fish as Board Treasurer: Gail Moved. Roni Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Motion to elect Gail Pasternack as Board President: Kathleen Moved. Roni Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Author Cohort Discussion

- The Author Cohorts are a fee-based program we provide in November, with workshops, check-ins, and write-ins. Kate explained that these workshops, though highly successful for participants, limit access to our programming to a small number of participants, and are not consistent with our strategic goals and mission.
- The Board discussed the cohort programming, including funding, program offerings, and future viability. The Board supported the idea that the Cohort should be offered free and open to the public this year. The Board further discussed the need for marketing and donor support to remain financially stable without additional supporting program fees.

Next Board Meeting and Committee Meetings

Finance Committee Meeting: Monday, October 16 at 12PM.

Governance Committee Meeting: Tuesday, October 24 at 6:30PM.

Board Meeting: Thursday, October 19 at 1PM.

Gail Pasternack adjourned the meeting at: 8:02 pm

Respectfully submitted by Maren Anderson, Secretary