

**Minutes of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Board of Directors Meeting
April 24, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM by Co-president Cathryn Cofell.

Attending: Nancy Austin, Cathryn Cofell, Dennis Collier, Anneliese Finke, Colleen Frentzel, Mike Gadzik, Ronnie Hess, Joan Johannes, Christine Kubasta, Sandra Lindow, Kathleen Serley, Angela Voras-Hills, Tori Grant Welhouse, Ed Werstein

Angela Voras-Hills was introduced as the new chair of the Kay Saunders Emerging Poet Contest, and those attending introduced themselves to her.

Old Business

1. Approval of Consent Agenda — Cathryn Cofell *
 - a. February 1, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes
 - b. Treasurer's Report
 - c. Calendar Managers' Report
 - d. Membership Report
 - e. Archives Report
 - f. Muse Contest Report
 - g. Chapbook Contest Report
 - h. Triad Contest Report
 - i. Bramble Report
 - j. Webmaster Report
 - k. Communication Report (Social Media, Monthly Email)
 - l. Regional VP Reports

* Indicates here and below that written reports are available

Motion by Tori Grant Welhouse seconded by Mike Gadzik to approve the consent agenda.
Motion carried.

2. Student Contest Report and Discussion on Future of General Contest — Jeff Anderson *
Motion by Nancy Austin, seconded by Dennis Collier, to discontinue the student contest and make the ekphrastic contest with the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau an annual event.

Cathy Cofell indicated that Jeff wants to step down as Student Contest chair because of the time commitment required, with students from only a limited number of schools and classes participating. He is willing to continue, for the time being, as ekphrastic contest chair.

Ronnie Hess supported eliminating the contest except for the contest for ekphrastic poems, perhaps involving other museums. In addition, the WFOP could support or partner with groups providing similar programs for students, or shift the money to other activities for younger poets that we are doing well. Kathleen Serley agreed, and pointed out that only three ekphrastic contest winners appeared at the Woodson to read their winning poems, with museum staff reading the others.

Christina Kubasta added that eliminating the contest makes sense given the amount of work required, and the need to focus on other programs we are sponsoring. Sandra Lindow, who was involved with the contest in the past, said it worked well for a long time, but that the quality of entries has declined. Mike Gadzik said we could gauge interest in the contest by feedback received as result of discontinuing it.

Motion carried

3. Open Positions / Fall Election — Christina Kubasta reported that the terms for current officers are up at the end of the year. The by-laws provide that she, as vice president, become a candidate for president. She is looking for a co-president to work with her since sharing the duties worked so well for Cathy Cofell and Ronnie Hess. She is also talking to potential candidates for vice president. Colleen Frentzel will run for treasurer again, and William Gillard has offered to run for secretary.

In addition, Naomi Cochran wants to step down as membership chair. Naomi and Jeannie Bergmann use a spreadsheet to keep track of membership, and thus wanted to have all renewals occur with the calendar year. Tori Grant Welhouse will see if the website can allow persons to join at any time and renew on their anniversary date and can update the membership list as persons join and renew. Ronnie Hess pointed out that the by-laws provide for calendar year membership, so would have to be revised. The website could also automatically welcome new members, with the membership chair or regional vice presidents following up with a personal welcome. Tori will report back at the next board meeting.

4. Swanson Fellowship Update — Christina Kubasta reported that the Shake Rag Alley board of directors still needs to approve participation and funding for the Richard Swanson Fellowship, but the response has been positive.

5. Swanson Donation: Update on Usage for Additional Funds — Ronnie Hess noted that Richard Swanson's gift provides \$4,000 a year for four years. Amounts not spent on the Swanson Fellowship could be used for scholarship and grants to the WFOP or other conference or workshops, to purchase books, or to fund workshops or tutorials geared toward emerging poets. We could also explore a partnership with other programs encouraging emerging poets, for example, with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater's annual conference for young writers, perhaps with a prize named after Richard.

Christina Kubasta noted that the WFOP's 75th Anniversary Conference in 2025 will include programming geared toward emerging poets that could be funded in part by the Swanson donation. She also said she will see if Shake Rag Alley needs additional funds for its partnership in the Swanson Fellowship.

Colleen Frentzel noted that Richard did not stipulate how quickly the funds had to be expended, so that not all needs to be spent within four years. In addition, the gift has been earning interest that will extend the amount available.

This item will be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

New Business

1. 2024-25 Budget Review and Approval — Colleen Frentzel * Motion by Cathy Cofell, seconded by Ed Werstein, to approve the 2024-25 budget. Tori Grant Welhouse indicated that she would like more than the current \$1,000 for online workshops because of costs for speakers. Cathy Cofell suggested we approve the \$1,000 at this time and Tori request additional funds when needed.

Motion carried.

Adjournment: Motion by Ronnie Hess, seconded by Tori Grant Welhouse to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.