

# Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Spring 2019 Board Meeting - Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 PM by President Jan Chronister.

**Attending:** Michael Belongie, Lewis Bosworth, Jan Chronister, Naomi Cochran, Cathryn Cofell, Dennis Collier, Colleen Frentzel, Tori Welhouse Grant, Carol Pemrich Hauser, Judy Kolosso, Michael Kriesel, Fred Kreutz, Sandra Lindow, James Roberts,

**Approval of Minutes of Fall 2018 Board Meeting:** Motion by Lewis, seconded by Tori that the minutes be approved. Motion carried.

**Additions to Agenda:** None

## Old Business

1. The board voted via email in December 2018 to raise the budget for vice presidents to \$300
2. Zoo project: Fred Kreutz contacted six Wisconsin zoos about displaying poetry after seeing Poetry in a Public Place in New York. Milwaukee County Zoo officials are very interested in a permanent display in a new section of the zoo that will open in the summer of 2020, rather than a traveling or temporary show. Fred and zoo officials discussed a display of 20 poems, 10 from WFOP members and 10 from students who visit the zoo courtesy of the Kohl Scholarship. Seventh graders from select schools visited the school in spring 2019, and Fred will visit these schools in the fall to encourage these students to enter the contest. Lewis asked about a potential conflict with the WFOP Calendar contest for students, but that should be limited since only seventh graders from a limited number of schools will be eligible for the zoo contest. Fred has three judges to evaluate student poems and one for adult entries, so he is seeking 2 more; Michael K and Cathryn volunteered. The adult contest will be limited to WFOP members to promote our organization. Permanent copies of the 20 winners will be displayed in a new section of the zoo; there will also be a temporary display of student entries in spring 2020. The cost of the project will be minimal, limited to promotional materials. Fred has also talked to zoo officials in Madison and Green Bay with limited progress so far, but is still pursuing programs there. He did not hear back from the Chippewa Falls, Marshfield and Racine zoos. Board members thanked Fred for his work on this outstanding great project.
3. Ed Werstein is new Poet Laureate Commission rep for WFOP
4. 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in 2025 and having only one conference per year: Michael B encouraged the board to promote the fact that the organization will be 70 years old in 2020, for example, by noting this on letterheads and other correspondence by board officers and regional vice presidents. He also encouraged the board to start planning for its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025, with input from members on what kinds of celebration they wanted, and to update the history of the WFOP, which was last updated for the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He offered to be the initial contact for persons interested in these efforts. Lewis warned against rewriting that history via committee, and Sandra pointed out that the updated history should nonetheless be reviewed by multiple persons to make sure it is accurate. She volunteered to review the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary history to correct mistakes it contained. Surveying members about both the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference, including the location, and holding one instead of two conferences was discussed. Jan noted that having just one conference may permit the WFOP to bring in a bigger-name poet as headliner for the conference, though Cathryn noted that having one conference per year limits opportunities for "Fellowship," which our name suggests is an important part of our organization's work. Motion by Sandra, seconded by Michael B to create a survey of membership on future conferences, including the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference. Motion carried. Jan and Michael B will bring this topic up at the annual membership meeting. Tori offered to conduct the survey, and Cathryn will explore avenues for an electronic survey.

## New Business

1. Treasurer's report: Colleen gave her report and said we have no financial concerns. Questions were raised about the amount reported for chapbook entries, but the apparent discrepancy was due to the fact that Colleen had not received all the checks. The president accepted the treasurer's report.

2. Membership chair report: Naomi reported that membership was down, probably because some persons did not receive reminders. Efforts will be made to review that. The president accepted the Membership chair's report.

3. Webmaster report and Fall conference report: Tori noted our fall conference speaker, TC Tolbert, was awarded a \$100,000 grant for outreach and also made the selections for the "poem-a-day" on the Academy of American Poets website in January. She said she was open to suggestions on the website and tried to post news items when she saw them. Michael K suggested posting one of conference speaker Heid E. Erdrich's motion poems if Heid was OK with it. The 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary history can be found under the "mission" tab on the website. The president accepted the Webmaster and Fall Conference reports.

Tori noted that technology is available that permits autorenewal of membership and automatic payment of annual dues on the website. This could mean less work for Colleen and Museletter editor Jeanne Bergmann, but Naomi said staggered membership dates rather than the single first-of-the-year date caused a lot of complications. Sandra suggested that new memberships after April poetry month get a free membership the next year. Motion by Michael K, seconded by Lewis that Tori, Naomi and Colleen work as a subcommittee to explore these issues and make a recommendation to the board. Motion carried.

4. *Bramble* Report: Christina Kubasta was unable to attend the conference. Jan reported that the board in an online vote clarified the policy that publication in *Bramble* was legitimate publication for news in Museletter. Tori said she and Christina, wanted to reduce *Bramble* publications from four to three a year because of the demands on their time. The board saw no problem with that. The president accepted the *Bramble* report.

5. Poet Laureate Commission Report: Ed Werstein was unable to attend the conference. Peggy Rozga is busy with her work as new poet laureate. The president accepted the Poet Laureate Commission report.

5. Calendar Business Report: Carol corrected the beginning checking balance as \$721.59 instead of \$1003.60 as shown in the written report. She shared samples of the 2020 calendar, available in both spiral and perfect binding; the price to produce each is about the same. Jan noted that perfect binding may work better for store display and mailing. Four hundred of each were printed, and there was concern that there would not be enough to meet demand. Carol said no more could be printed because she did not have sufficient funds. Colleen said the WFOP general account could front the money needed for calendar printing, and Carol said she had not been made aware of that. She also said that additional copies could be printed if demand requires it. The president accepted the Calendar Business report.

7. 2020 Calendar Editors' report: Erna Kelly and Karen Loeb were unable to attend the conference. Sandra said Erna and Karen had reviewed previous calendars and determined that approximately 200 poems was an optimal number, so they went with that amount. The president accepted the 2020 Calendar Editors' report.

8. Archivist report and Student Contest report: Colleen will start sending Treasurer's Reports for the archives. The president accepted the Archivist and Student Contest reports.

9. Green Bay Packer Foundation grant: Jan reported that we received a \$4,000 grant to support the calendar experimentation with both spiral and perfect binding and underwrite calendar mailing costs, and to support regional calendar release events.

10. 2019 Fall Conference report: James said he hopes the conference will be workshop-heavy, with featured speaker Cynthia Marie Hoffman leading a Friday afternoon workshop in addition to a Saturday reading; a Friday night show by local Stevens Point magician Robbie Johnson prior to the Open Mic; and a spoken word performance and workshop on podcasting on Saturday morning by Quann Logan. James is also interested in a reading by Stevens Point area creative writing students or a table exercise of erasure poems on Saturday afternoon. The president accepted the 2019 Fall Conference report.

Responsibilities for the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 conference have been switched, since Joan Johannes wanted to lead the conference in Stevens Point. The 2020 Spring Conference will be the first weekend of May, without snow, in Sheboygan.

11. Special grant requests: Grants will be provided for Juneau Park Poetry and to Sandra Lindow for a Poet Laureate's visit to the West Central region for a visit in October.

The board expressed gratitude to Sandra Lindow for her 31 years—starting in 1988—as West Central regional vice president and for organizing this spring's conference. Sandra said it was the seventh she has organized, and it will be her last.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Michael B, seconded by James to adjourn the meeting at 5:39 PM. Motion carried.