

**Minutes**  
**Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Spring General Meeting**  
**April 29, 2023**

**The meeting was called to order** by Cathy Cofell at 10:23am.

**Old Business**

1. Approval of Fall General Meeting Minutes: Motion by Kimberley Blanchette seconded by Jocelyn Boor to approve the minutes. Motion carried.
2. Informational Reports included in the conference packet:
  - a) Fiscal Fourth Quarter Financial Report
  - b) Membership Report
  - c) Archives Report
  - d) 2023 Calendar Business Manager Report
  - e) 2024 Calendar Editors' Report
  - f) 2024 Calendar Business Managers' Report
  - g) Contest Reports - Chapbook, Muse, Triad
  - h) Webmaster Report
  - i) Bramble Report
  - j) Social Media Report
  - k) Regional VP Reports
  - l) Mother Tongue Partnership
3. Poet Laureate Commission Report: Cathryn Cofell filled in for WFOP's representative Ed Werstein, who could not be at the conference. Cofell reported on Nick Gulig's election as WI poet laureate. WFOP is a partner organization of the PL Commission. Cofell stated WFOP finds great value in the work they're doing. Ed will be stepping down at the end of July to be succeeded by Lucy Tyrell, former poet laureate of Bayfield. Tyrell was in the audience and acknowledged.
4. 75th Anniversary Conference Update: Christina Kubasta reported the conference will be from June 12-15, 2025. Keynoter will be Ross Gay. (Murmurs of approval in the audience.) See report for some summary information.
5. Treasurer's Report – Fiscal Year End: Cofell mentioned that she noted when she became co-President that WFOP did not have a prospective budget or one looking forward from year to year with estimated/projected expenses and revenues. Fiscal year is from April to March. Cofell added WFOP is in the black and stable. Member Nancy Jesse observed that we raise more money than we spend, asking why we aren't spending the monies? Cofell responded it's good for there to be a reserve and that this includes the Literary Fund which pays for our contests. Frentzel noted we had not had conferences during COVID, and that's where we've typically spent more. Question from Lucy Tyrell about pro-rating membership dues. – if our fiscal year is April to March, but membership is calendar year. Frentzel responded the fiscal year was more an issue for taxation purposes and did not affect the schedule for membership dues.
6. Other Old Business? None.

**New Business**

1. Finance Policy and 2024 Budget: Cathryn Cofell said she had presented the finance policy document to the Board on Thursday, and it was approved. Frentzel is working on the budget, which will be approved by the board, and in future years it will be reviewed and approved before the new fiscal year begins.
- Brainstorming on Member Connections: Christina Kubasta reported that she was following up on an earlier poll to membership about ways to further fellowship. She said the feedback fell into three general areas. **Orientation and support for new members**, welcome packet, other ideas; **Ride sharing** – how would membership suggest we go about this? **Access to critique groups**. Members were asked to please

reach out to VPs, the co-Presidents or Kubasta with ideas; member input is integral to what we do. Colleen Frentzel suggested people at the conference add suggestions to conference survey. Reminders were made that Co-Presidents and VP Kubasta's emails are on the WFOP webpage contact page and are [ccofell@gmail.com](mailto:ccofell@gmail.com) [wfoppres@gmail.com](mailto:wfoppres@gmail.com) [wfopvpres@gmail.com](mailto:wfopvpres@gmail.com)

2. Update from Communications Task Force: Christina Kubasta informed meeting of efforts to improve communication with members. Task force has been looking at our platforms including the weekly events email. She said the board approved moving toward a Google calendar where anyone can post an event. Webmaster Tori Grant Welhouse will be the gatekeeper. The calendar does not require an additional step of going through WFOP VPs. Further, the aim to use our webpage more, and to add to events, highlighting them as a way of communicating with members.

3. Scholarship Fund Discussion: Ronnie Hess reported that we have been receiving donations and are very grateful. WFOP is looking to increase ways in which we can encourage donations (through WFOP's web page) and to establish a segregated fund, such as "Scholarships" beyond general funds. Hess asked members for ideas as the Board continues to discuss how to move forward.

4. 2024 Conference: Cathryn Cofell, filling in for Ed Werstein, reported that we are having one conference a year but will be working with VPs to increase or look to more regional gatherings. A few notes were made on costs of hotel and ways to make our conferences affordable for members. The 2024 conference will be in Sheboygan and the proposed hotel the Blue Harbor Inn, where suites accommodating several people, for example, would be an option.

5. Other New Business? None.

6. Honoring Deceased Members: Ronnie Hess read a poem by Rosemary Zurlo Cuva., a Madison-based member who died in 2023. Cofell acknowledged the death of John Patrick Redell of Door County who died in 2021 but whose death had not previously been acknowledged.

From *The Beauty of This World* (Parallel Press, 2014):

### We Have Always Known Grief

There were always the fireflies, rising  
out of the grass at dusk, the call of crickets  
at summer's end when the fat milk pods begged  
to be split and their seeds to float like  
questions on the wind

and the endlessly churning lake, impervious  
to the cries of seagulls, changing color with each  
passing cloud, smoothing bits of shattered  
bottle glass and spitting them back  
as jewels to be treasured and forgotten  
in a small girl's pocket

the roar of the city bus after depositing  
the cleaning ladies on our unimproved  
suburban lanes as if aliens from  
another planet, the immigrant grandmother  
enthroned on a lime-green plastic  
lawn chair, tugging her black sweater close  
on the hottest summer afternoon.

Adjournment: Motion by Sheryl Slocum and seconded by Kimberley Blanchette. **Meeting adjourned at 11 am.**

Members attending their first conference: Lynn Aprill of Seymour, Kathi Ashmore of Waunakee, Rose Bingham of Reedsburg, Thomas Cannon of Oshkosh, DG Clearing of Menasha, Ron Houssaye of Two Rivers, Heidi Hallett of Oconomowoc, Carol Lee S. Hughes of Mountain, Barbara Kaufmann of Appleton, Kate McCoy of Madison, Linda Nett-Duesterhoeft of Appleton, James Nitz of Waukesha, Roman Ryan of Madison, Laura Selenka of Oshkosh, Jessica Slavin of Fond du Lac, Rebecca Spurlock, Karen Utech of Jackson, Angela Trudell Vasquez of Madison, and Lorisa Wiedenheft of Wauwatosa.

Respectfully submitted by Ronnie Hess, co-President, for Dennis Collier, Secretary.