



Board Meeting Minutes

Kansas City, Missouri

April 5, 2016

Please Note action items highlighted in yellow.

Present:

Board of Directors – Elaine Shein, president, Mike Wilson, president-elect; Kurt Lawton, past-president; and directors: Cynthia Clanton, Ryan Ebert, Julie Deering, Jodi Henke, Jennifer Latzke, Pam Molitor, Jim Patrico, Doug Rich

Staff: Den Gardner, Kristy Mach

Other (committee chairs, strategic planning participants): JoAnn Alumbaugh, Kelly Schwalbe

Elaine Shein called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

See agenda for additional details.

APPROVE MINUTES

- Doug Rich moved to accept minutes from the October fall board meeting in Kansas City, Mike Wilson second, motion carried.
- Jim Patrico moved to accept the minutes from the March 17 board conference call meeting, Kurt Lawton second, motion carried. Call votes include:
 1. Mike Wilson moved to approve contracting with Steve Drake for the executive director search and strategic plan, Julie Deering second, motion carried.
 2. Jim Patrico moved to provide search committee power to SRD, Inc. Doug Rich second, motion carried.
Mike Wilson moved to approve partial audit in early July 2016 and whole audit to be completed later in 2016, Jodi Henke second, motion carried.
Doug Rich moved to approve Den Gardner to be staff rep on Cuba trip, Ryan Ebert second, motion carried.

PRESIDENT REPORT (Elaine Shein)

Board has done a lot of different things in the last few months. Great we had new events for members. Big changes also happened in the organization.

- Proud of Cuba trip, National Ag Day event, Fellows program.
- Even though it's great to see new things, think of long term goals of where we want to be in 2020 and do these new initiatives fit into our long term plan?
- Hopeful to move ahead with things discussed in October, with committees or other things. Going to be thinking about how to move ahead, accomplish things that will help retain and attract members and position ourselves in the future where we need to go.
- As chair , Elaine will see if there are ways we can move ahead even though our long term plan isn't written yet.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

- Den Gardner reports AAEA has almost \$113,000 in reserve in AAEA (not PIF). AAEA is in good shape financially and funds are liquid. (although small brokerage fees from mutual funds may apply.)
- Budget update: Very good year in sponsorships, over \$82,000 on a \$70,000 budget. 20% of Den's time is spent on corporate sponsorships. (See addendum Corporate Sponsorship Update.) As you see the sponsors, thank them.
- Membership: We have more than 150 members to renew. We may not get to \$62,000 in membership revenue this year, but we make our push at this time of year during contest up until AMS time.
- AMS Income: This is the first year, ever, that we took some funding in reserve for AMS to provide the same type of payout to AAEA and LPC. The numbers weren't there in Scottsdale, to bring in \$35,500 in budgeted revenue. Cashed in some of the AMS money market so both organizations can meet their budget. No dollars in the four CDs (worth about \$200,000), has been used.
- Contest: It's an area where we gain \$19,000 in gross revenue and there might be possibilities to increase that by looking at higher fees.
- Expenses – Management Fee and Marcomm/Design/Digital Social Media work that staff management does: the board asked that we move the allocation of those dollars into the Management Fee line item. Steve Drake strategic planning wasn't in original budget and may need to take some dollars from savings to pay for this effort.
- 2017 Budget will come prior to July board meeting at AMS, after the new management team is hired and things are worked through during this time frame.
- PIF: Typically AAEA gives PIF \$25,000 a year. At this time, there has been a commitment of \$15,000 and the additional \$10,000 may not come because of fees to Steve Drake.

- AAEA Directory: Ads sold in the directory. Lyle Orwig and Karen McMahon do a lot of great work in securing ads. AAEA gave C/O a free ad in exchange for all the hard work.
- Kurt Lawton asked where fees to Marilyn Cummins/Christine McClintic for managing the contest is listed in the budget. Those fees in the expense lines of the contest.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Mike Wilson moves to approve the financial report as provided, Pam Molitor second, motion carried.
- **2017 Fiscal Year Budget (Aug. 1, 2016 through July 31, 2017)– First draft from staff to be ready for review by July 1, 2016.**

ADVISORY

- Constitution Changes. See Constitution addendum.

MEMBERSHIP

- Staff reports there were some challenges in rolling out the new online renewal software for membership. Everything is running smoothly now.
- Blogger membership –Discussion with AgChat Foundation has not gone anywhere. Could we extend a special rate to AMS to the AgChat members? Not likely because AMS is a separate organization from AAEA. Could extend the PIF AMS-stipend to AgChat members.
- PIF sponsored a program on National Ag Day in Washington, D.C. in cooperation with Jenny Pickett and NAMA. Secured a morning event at the National Press Club, 60-70 in attendance, great speaker on policy issues and Kelly Schwalbe reports that it was a great success. AAEA members were there, Farm Credit folks and DC media members. Kenna Rathai helped pull it together and promote it within 45 days. Kelly feels that it helped show who AAEA is. Potential affiliate members come out of DC in the association communications. *Does AAEA have a flyer or postcard to hand out on membership?* Page on the website targeted to potential new member and the business card has the website listed on it.
- We had discussed Elaine/Kenna working on AAEA article for Agri Marketing. *The original timing was mid-2016. Have not done the article, and we do need to do something. Make people aware of AAEA, encourage membership, Elaine will talk to Den about moving this forward.*

LEGACY (KRISTY, LEGACY IS ALSO IN THE MINUTES LATER. PLEASE LOOK AT REDUNDANCIES AND COMBINE. THX)

- Fellows program update (Discuss promotional roll-out of program through Legacy Committee) – *Committee has developed first Fellows list. First year has more Fellows that subsequent years will have to give it a good first push. How are we going to use these people? Committee will work with the board on establishing a program beneficial to members. Elaine reports that the news release is ready to go,*

will get to Den to send out by May 1. Also use the Byline to promote the program.. Send individual releases to all local papers. Would a recognition letter to the management of those companies be beneficial? Lynn Henderson could do an article (write for him) in Agri Marketing.

- Lifetime Achievement Award winners will be Harlen Persinger and Jack Odle.
- There is no Distinguished Service Award winner for 2016.

ETHICS

- Greg Horstmeier is still without a committee co-chair. (IS THIS WHERE YOU WANT THIS OR WHERE IT'S MENTIONED LATER ON A SUBSEQUENT PAGE?)

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Remaining Committee Reports (Various reports to be reviewed prior to or during the meeting, based on information provided by committee chairs.)

ADVISORY

Mike Wilson reports a lot of items were done at the March teleconference.

- Steve Drake business as it relates to the strategic plan and the search committee selection process.
- Elaine called an advisory committee board meeting to discuss Den's retirement.
- NAMA reception at Commodity Classic was well attended.
- National Ag Day (first-time event for AAEA) was a success with a good turnout.
- Partial audit through June 30 and at the end of the year when the AMS financials are in. Transition talks.
- With the changeover in AAEA management, advisory committee is coming to New Prague on Tuesday, June 14.
- Training the committee: Jenni Latzke suggests training happen at AMS. Use our committee structure better and recruit members to those committees. Cynthia endorses this. Mike Wilson is happy to head up initiative to make calls and get people on committees.
- Board discussed restructuring committees per Cumulative Committee Reports (attached below). **It was determined a task force be formed with Mike Wilson leading, Jenni Latzke and Julie Deering volunteered to be members.** Suggested that professional tracks be created in Digital Social Media, Photo, Marcomm, Writing, Design, etc. Those "tracks or committees" would have subcommittees working on awards, AMS professional development sessions, ByLine articles, PIF requests, etc.

ETHICS

1. Elaine/Greg H working to determine co-chair.
2. Greg H to continue work on creating standards with regards to language about digital and native advertising.

MEMBER SERVICES

- Poynter online class update. Need to find additional ways outside of Byline to promote the classes. Encourage board to get involved. Also coordinate with other communications organizations.
- (Jenni) What if, as a part of future AMS, we do a special morning/day session (before or after) for first-year professionals at AMS, or mid-career and do three different tracks for Lunch&Learn. You are taking a college-level training. Similar to IFAJ's Young Leaders program.
- (Elaine) Regional Meeting – live streaming for a fee. Special dedicated time for networking, which is the bonus of attending, or stream only one of two speakers offered.

AFFILIATE ADVISORY/MARCOMM AWARDS

In a continuing effort to get bloggers involved in Digital and Social Media awards, the committee did some finessing of categories, small non-profits not competing with large agencies, they need to identify small vs. large and they may award both areas.

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT FOUNDATION

See agenda for more details. (IF WE ARE ASKING THEM TO SEE AGENDA FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE TELL THEM WHAT AGENDA – AAEA OR FOUNDATION – AND ALSO NEED TO INCLUDE THIS IN THE MINUTES.

For 2016-2017, Van Holmes is opting out of a second, three-year term. He suggests Dave Harding or Lyle Orwig from C | O to replace him.

Steve Mercer, Jim Patrico, Pam Molitor (finishing two terms as Steve Goldstein's replacement) and Steve Werblow are all going off the trustees, as all have completed two consecutive three-year terms.

Thus, five new trustees must begin a first, three-year term AND a replacement must be found for co-chair Corey Geiger. The officer terms are open-ended.

MEMBERSHIP

Current number of members is about 275, with about 200 unrenewed. This is a little behind previous years. We will send out reminders April 1 and additional times up until the end of the fiscal year.

Julie Deering chairing subcommittee: Targeting young people.

- Engage a group of enthusiastic people under the age of 35 to discuss the best ways to attract interest in AAEA.

- Start to form committee with Andy Markwart and IFAJ Young Leaders award winners and grow from there.
- Create list, direct to Membership Committee, and move forward. Who pays for what? How do you fund your professional development – you, company, cost share? Jenni Latzke willing to serve. Send ideas, suggestions or time to commit.
- Ryan Ebert (Maggie Seiler), can also help out.

LEGACY (SEE PREVIOUS LISTING FOR LEGACY COMMITTEE. PLEASE COMBINE INTO ONE REPORT IN THE MINUTES.)

See agenda for further details.

- *Legacy videos will be up on AAEA100 YouTube channel.*
- *Den to talk to Larry about roll out of Honorary Members.*

AG MEDIA SUMMIT

- Work continues on program and other activities leading up to meeting in St. Louis.

AMS InfoExpo Committee – Jessie Scott

- Booths are half way there from what we had last year. April 30 is early bird deadline.
- Re-dedicating efforts to meet goals for total booths

AMS Sponsorship Committee – Kenna/Den/Diane

- Sponsors are slowly coming in. Don't expect to meet the budgeted number due to a number of companies cutting budgets.
- Zoetis and NASS are two new sponsors this year.

AAEA Sponsorship Committee – Karen McMahon, Lyle Orwig

- Kudos to Lyle Orwig for soliciting ads for membership directory. . Board approved free ad for C | O.

The ByLine Committee – Kacey Birchmier

- Kristy/Den to do Byline through AMS meeting.

Financial Oversight Committee – Mike Wilson

- Like previous committee chairs, Mike Wilson now has online access to the Wells Fargo accounts.

Future Ag Communicators Committee – Laurie Bedord

- **See attached report for detailed information.**
- Elaine commends committee for the criteria that they use to choose interns and scholarship candidates. This committee has very high standards.

- Only two applied for the editorial internship, we have room for improvement in editorial. People noted most interns are not interested in editorial internships, but marketing internships are a higher priority.
1. Continued with two internships. Two interns have been named and contacted: Marketing Communications (Dow AgroSciences) – Tessa Chambers, University of Missouri; Editorial (Hoard’s Dairymen – Sydney Sleep, South Dakota State University).
 2. Continue four scholarships; Received 19 applications.

International Committee – Karen Simon

- See Cumulative Committee Report

Nominating Committee – Elaine Shein

- Committee members are Kurt Lawton, Laurie Bedord and Elaine Shein. Julie Deering, Doug Rich and Kurt Lawton are going off board. Committee looking at different ideas for board members.
- Nominations to be determined between end of April and early July.

Awards (In General)

See Committee Report (Marilyn update on online program at end of this document – Addendum A.)

- **Design – Matt Strelecki**
 1. No major changes from previous year. Matt going off as chair.
- **Photography – Ryan Ebert (David Ekstrom, Co-Chair)**
 1. *Dropped photo-based graphic illustration – moved to Design.*
 2. *Clarified types of entries we’re looking for – editorial work, not sponsored agency-type work.*
 3. *Changed rules to eliminate HDR photos.*
 4. *PIF will discuss allowing to go to six judges. Get some more constructive feedback for the members.*
 5. *Discuss the fee, but divided on increasing the fees.*
 6. *It was suggested we need an audio/video category.*
- **Writing Awards – Jamie Cole (Mike Wilson, Co-Chair)**
 1. Had record 414 entries in 2015, up from 383 in 2014.
- **Digital & Social Media – Josh Flint**
 1. Had record 99 entries in 2015, up from 84 in 2014.

Pam Molitor moves to adjourn, Kurt Lawton second, meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Cumulative Committee Reports

International Committee

Chair: Karen Simon

Co-Chair: Kurt Lawton

Committee members: JoAnn Alumbaugh, Carey Brown, Warren Clark, Chris Clayton, Gregg Hillyer, Melissa Kessler, Greg Lamp, Steve Mercer, Harlen Persinger, Kenna Rathai, Amy Roady, Owen Roberts, Elaine Shein, Steve Werblow

IFAJ Congress: The next IFAJ Congress will be held in Bonn, Germany, July 13-17.

For more information, visit <http://ifaj2016.de/en/>

IFAJ Stipends: We received nine applications for nine \$1,500 stipends for the upcoming IFAJ Congress in Bonn. One person later had to withdraw because of financial considerations, so the committee decided to award the final stipend to AAEEA's nominee to the IFAJ Young Leader program. The stipend recipients are: Warren Clark, Phyllis Coulter, Julie Fritsch, Katie Micik, Brent Olson, Harlen Persinger, Steve Werblow and Mike Wilson.

Young Leader Program: The IFAJ-Alltech Young Leaders in Agricultural Journalism Award recognizes the leadership potential of young members from countries belonging to the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ). Members of AAEEA who are 35 and younger are eligible to apply. Each guild nominates one candidate, and from that pool of applicants, 10 travel scholarships will be made available to the 2016 IFAJ Congress. The international committee received three excellent applications, and Sarah Hill was nominated for the award. AND SHE WAS SELECTED!

IFAJ 2019: AAEEA won its bid to host the 2019 IFAJ Congress. The location is yet to be determined, but one location under consideration is Minneapolis. The congress will be held in conjunction with Ag Media Summit. A planning meeting will be held during this year's Ag Media Summit.

Member Services Committee

Chair: JoAnn Alumbaugh

Co-chair: Cynthia Clanton

Committee Members: Karen McMahon, Julie Deering, Kurt Lawton, Sarah Hill

I'm sorry to report that our committee has not been as active as it should have been since our last report. When Vance was purchased by Farm Journal in December, the transition took time and as a result, AAEEA committee responsibilities took a back seat. We plan to remedy the situation.

Our committee was asked to take a "straw poll" of members regarding the Poynter classes that members can take at a reduced rate, which we did. As a result of the poll:

- Members can now choose from multiple sets of selected courses and get the discounted price on any of the programs they choose.

- Certificates for completion of preselected courses will be offered, and will be emailed as a pdf to participants.
- The “new member incentive” was approved by PIF at the summer meeting, whereby first-time members can choose one course at no charge (the membership committee supported this recommendation).
- Recognition will be provided at the awards luncheon to participants (i.e. we will briefly tell about the program and ask participants to stand)

We have more we want to do, and plan to meet additional goals before the Ag Media Summit this year:

- Identify coordinators within the participating organizations (AAEA, LPC, TOCA, CFWA) to develop a plan to more effectively promote the classes
- Contact participants for testimonials as part of the promotional plan
- Acquire buy-in and support from companies and employers to jump-start the enhanced program

Other suggestions to enhance member services are highly encouraged and appreciated. We also welcome additional involvement on the committee, and look forward to your input.

Writing Committee

Chair: Jamie Cole

I’m new to the writing committee, and Mike Wilson, the current chair, asked me to prepare a brief report.

—As Mike will be taking over as president of the organization at this year’s AMS, I’ll step in at that point to chair the writing committee. I’m doing less and less design work myself (more management) and I look forward to doing something different, and to serving the organization in this capacity.

—Last year the writing committee was Mike, Chris Clayton, Stephanie Pruitt, Marilyn Cummins and Cheryl Tevis. I’ll think of a handful of people to reach out to. I’ll consider some of the past winners of the writing contest, as they may feel more obligation to help with AAEA and contest activities.

—I have reviewed the contest materials for this year in my role as co-chair and don’t anticipate any changes from 2015. However, as we put our new committee together, we’ll review every aspect of the contest and recommend any changes we might see as needed. I think we made some positive changes to the design side in the time I served as chair in that area, and as times and technology change, there may be opportunities to improve on an already terrific program.

—Lastly, Mike wanted me to note that he (in his role as vice president/president elect) has contacted Marilyn and encouraged her to stay the course as our contest coordinator in this critical time, with Den retiring this summer and moving to a new executive director. Thanks very much!

Design Committee

Chair: Matt Strellicki

No news to report. Design Contest will remain the same. Matt likely to move off as committee chair after summer board meeting.

Future Ag Communicators'

April 2016

Committee Members: Laurie Bedord (chair), JoAnn Alumbaugh, Karen Bernick, Karlie Elliott Bowman, Emily Buck, Jennifer Carrico, Virginia Harris, Sarah Hill, Tim Hoskins, Ashley Messing-Kennedy, Taylor Kennedy, Elaine Shein, Karen Simon, Brandon Souza

AAEA Internships. The AAEA 2016 internships are an eight to 10-week hands-on editorial and marketing position with a member company (active or affiliate). The interns receive a \$5,500 stipend (\$4,500 stipend + \$1,000 travel expenses toward attendance at the Agricultural Media Summit, Scottsdale, Arizona, July 25 to 29, 2015).

We had three companies apply to host an intern. One applied for the editorial intern (Hay & Forage Grower); while two (Dow AgroSciences and AgriBank) applied for the marketing intern. Hay & Forage Grower will host the editorial intern. Dow will host the marketing intern.

Last year five companies applied to host the editorial intern; two applied for the marketing intern.

We had eight students apply for an internship this year (2016) – two applied for the editorial internship and seven applied for the marketing internship. **Sydney Sleep**, South Dakota State University was chosen for the editorial internship. **Tessa Chambers**, University of Missouri, was chosen for the marketing internship.

Seventeen students applied for the internships in 2015: seven for the editorial position and 14 for the marketing position. Joshua Booth, a junior at the University of Missouri, was chosen for the editorial internship. Allison Fortner, a junior at the University of Georgia, was chosen for the marketing internship.

AAEA Scholarships. In 2015, we only had three students apply for four scholarships. In order to generate more interest, the following changes were implemented for 2016.

- Scholarship amounts were increased in 2016. The James Evans Scholarship, which is the top scholarship, was raised from \$2,000 to \$3,000. The three others were raised from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
- The deadline was moved to February 22, 2016.

In addition, the committee decided that in order to be considered for the James Evans Scholarship, the finalist must take part in an in-person interview at Ag Media Summit. We had 19 students apply for a scholarship in 2016, which the committee was thrilled with. The majority were excellent candidates.

The schools represented were: University of Arkansas, Auburn University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Kent State University, Missouri State University, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Oklahoma State University

The finalists are:

Madison Hickey, University of Georgia
Cameron Jodlowski, Iowa State University
John David Rosman, Oklahoma State University
Audrey Schmitz, Kansas State University

All four scholarships are made possible through a grant from the AAEA Professional Improvement Foundation.

Other. Because the 2016 Ag Media Summit is being held in St. Louis in July, there will not be a Midwest Regional Meeting this spring.

AAEA Advisory committee

Chair: Mike Wilson

Members: Elaine Shein, Kurt Lawton, Laurie Bedord, Holly Spangler

Executive search: As the board is aware, Den Gardner will retire his position as AAEA Executive Director and Gardner & Gardner Communications has resigned the account as of July 31, 2016. Kenna Rathai resigned from her work with G & G at the end of February 2016 but has agreed to moonlight part-time to help with AMS preparation. In March the board passed a motion to have Steve Drake & Associates handle the executive search in alignment with Steve's revamped earlier timeline. He had already laid out an executive search plan that we were expecting to put into play early next year; Steve has prepared a Request for Proposal (RFP) and is engaged in the search process. The approved budget for this is \$9,900.

Steve is working with our search committee: Holly Martin (chair), Kelly Schwalbe, Greg Horstmeier, Elaine Shein, Holly Spangler, Mike Wilson and Kurt Lawton. This committee will report progress to the board over the next four months.

Ag Communicators Learning Mission to Cuba – The board passed a motion to invite Den to be part of the Mission to Cuba. Den did the lion's share of work organizing this event. This is a small token of our appreciation for his service to AAEA. Because we are sending a minimum of 20 participants the fee for Den will be waived; the only cost involved will be travel to/from Miami. The timing of the trip is critical for Den's replacement to work with sponsors, renew members, etc., and that contributed to our decision to have Den continue in his important role in the trip. His insights and feedback into how it goes will be valuable in influencing potential future missions.

AAEA events: The AAEA/NAMA reception at the Commodity Classic was well attended. The same was the case for the AAEA-sponsored breakfast held on Ag Day in Washington, D.C. Kelly Schwalbe represented AAEA and other members, including Greg Horstmeier, Jack Pitzer, Kenna Rathai and Willie Vogt, were in attendance. Kelly reported that the keynote speaker was excellent.

Financial audit: An audit was originally planned for end of year 2016, but since there will be a change in staff we agreed to move it up prior to Den leaving. The board has approved having an accounting firm do a partial audit through June 30, then adjust for full year after the fiscal year is complete and AMS results are also in. Steve Drake agreed to locate accounting firms in the Minneapolis area that could do the job.

Transition talks: We need Den to provide transition information on equipment ownership, contracts, AAEA's stake in things like the online contests, etc. We need details on cost and fee splits between AAEA and TOCA, for example. Den will be asked to prepare the 2016 budget, with some flexibility built in as needed for the new management. We also need to be in touch with Diane Johnson regarding Ag Media Summit contract. Dates have been selected for Elaine, Mike Wilson, Steve Drake and Kurt Lawton to meet Den in his office to see how his business operates and talk about transition, budgets, and other details. The plan is to also do interviews for AAEA's management position at that time.

Strategic plan: Steve Drake has prepared a follow-up on the strategic plan session he chaired in fall 2015. He has supplied a list of 25 strategic elements, which will be discussed at the April 12 strategic planning meeting.

Committee restructure: Kenna Rathai chaired a session last fall on ways we might consolidate AAEA committees to reflect current times and roll some 'functions' into other committees. Fortunately any change here does not require change to AAEA bylaws, it simply requires board approval and then communication with committee chairs on how the new structure will work. The goal is to have new committee chairs in place in advance of AMS16 so that the new AAEA leadership can hit the ground running. Here is the proposed structure:

- AAEA100
- AAEA Sponsorships
- Advisory (include nominating and financial sub-committees)
- Affiliate Advisory
- Ag Media Summit Steering
- Ag Media Summit InfoExpo
- Awards (include sub-committees for each category)
- Ethics
- Future Ag Communicators
- International
- Legacy
- Member Services (include Communications, Professional Development and Programs sub-committees)
- Membership