

MEETING MINUTES

Virginia Writers Club, Inc.
Board of Governors Meeting
March 20, 2013 – Charlottesville, Virginia

Attendees: **Gary Kessler** (Blue Ridge), **Linda Johnston** (Write by the Rails), **June Forte** (Northern VA/Write by the Rails), **Claudia Ware** (Appalachian Authors Guild), **Jim Gaines** (Riverside), **Sara Robinson** (Blue Ridge), **Lynn Young** (Blue Ridge), **Dianne Hennessy King** (Northern VA), **Jim Morrison** (Valley Writers), **Dick Raymond** (Valley Writers), **Becky Mushko** (Lake Writers), **Betsy Ashton** (Valley & Lake Writers), **Linda Layne** (Richmond).

1. 10:30 AM Meeting called to order with welcome and comments by new president, Betsy Ashton.
2. Betsy reported on the Executive Committee meeting she called in December to discuss what the club needed to do, referring to past president June Forte's wish list. A summary of the meeting notes was distributed via e-mail in advance of today's meeting. Key points from the meeting to serve as discussion points for today's meeting.
3. Minutes from the September meeting were approved.
4. A financial report was distributed by Linda Layne. Discussed a Paypal swipe card to accept credit cards at the symposium and other events. Jim Morrison raised point about annual meeting in red. Discussed having meeting at an alternate location, like a university. Linda already in talks with the VWC scholarship winner who attends the University of Richmond and will try to see if they have facilities available for us to use on Nov. 2. Another location if the Univ. of Rich. doesn't work, is VCU. June Forte has contact person there. Sara will use current financials to revise budget and send to Board in a couple of days. Report approved as distributed. (Note: Treasurer, Christopher Evans, has a new job in Richmond and will be more available for future meetings.)
5. By-laws update: Discussed draft update of the bylaws (previously distributed to Board via e-mail). Of note, Section VI, #6 – proxy voting not permitted - added back into draft; Subsection C – discussed appropriate time to call a meeting for the members to vote on the bylaws. Decided to stay with our tradition of sending bylaws in advance of annual meeting for a vote at the annual meeting.
6. Review and discussion of priorities for VWC for 2013 – 2014 (see copy of agenda): Betsy emphasized a need for more Board members to serve on committees. We may need chapter members to step in and help. A call for committee volunteers was distributed by e-mail to the Board in advance of the meeting. Betsy has already started to hear from volunteers and will distribute a revised committee list to the Board by e-mail.

One of our biggest priorities is retaining members. Betsy did a member analysis going back to 2004 and the issues appear to be the same. Many members ask what about the benefits of membership. The formation of the Membership Committee is vital to review what the needs of the members are and to use this opportunity to “rebrand” our club, especially with the spike of membership we gained last year.

Now that we’re experiencing a growth spurt, we need the Communications Committee to help us hold the momentum, and the Symposium Committee to build on the needs of members.

The Finance Committee has been in need of more action and involvement to develop a budget and work on grant research.

The committees should communicate their plans and needs for help to get more people involved. Discussed making committee leaders administrators on the VWC Facebook page and the VWC web site’s announcement page.

A Website Optimization Committee is needed to consistently review the site for update needs. Betsy wants the home page to have information about our 2013 committees with links to the contact page and committee leaders. Also mentioned as a need for a page for members to post what their activities are in calendar format or blog style.

Chapter Relations Committee: Discussed how it would be nice for Chapter leaders to have a brainstorming session together with the Board paying for their gas expense and meal. After a Board meeting? Separate? The committee will formulate a plan and report to the Board.

On a related note was Chapter financial support: Betsy requested we consider earmarking funds to designate for supporting each chapter. Due to club income and increasing requests from the chapters, we need to establish ‘mini-grant’ guidelines to use starting in 2014.

LUNCH BREAK

7. 2013 Symposium Update: Sara and Gary distributed a handout of seminar ideas the committee outlined after their first meeting. At the meeting, Elaine Ruggieri and Jean Lancaster volunteered to take on all the marketing and promotions. The committee would like to make the start time a little earlier and have the event run a little later, changing the keynote address to before lunch. Sara approached U.S. Poet Laureate, Natasha Treathaway, as a possible keynote speaker but her fee is \$7,500 - \$15,000. An alternate contact will be Barbara Kingsolver. Sara will send her a letter. Since the big name authors arrange their schedules way in advance, the Board asked Sara to contact Baldacci to see if he’d serve as the keynote speaker for the 2014 Symposium. Other changes the committee would like to see are an alternate room to PVCC’s black box theatre which is too dark, and each room needs AV access. Linda will contact PVCC to discuss the schedule and facilities changes. Speaker fees: \$85 for big name authors, plus free symposium registration – also, if not a member, give a one-year complimentary membership; \$50 for panelists or local folks. The committee’s next meeting will be in April.

8. Annual meeting: Linda to ask Sofia Starnes if she can be keynote speaker.
9. Affiliate Memberships: Discussion explored offering organizations an affiliate membership for trade, where the organization joins for all their members and we, in turn, join for all our members. Linda mentioned the Virginia Library Association might be a good fit for this arrangement.

10. Golden Nib Contest updates: The Teen (YVWC) Golden Nib deadline has already passed (March 1) with winners to be announced by May 1. For the adult contest, it was decided to up the line limit for poetry to 50 lines, and up the word count limit on prose to 3,500 words. Decided to stick with the rules of individuals needing to submit entries to the chapter closest to where they live.

11. Short Shorts Contest: Formerly the Spring Shorts Contest, Gary Kessler suggested having a Summer Shorts Contest and volunteered to serve as the coordinator.

12. Other business:
 - (a) Approved allocations of \$300 each for the Appalachian Authors Guild co-sponsorship of the Appalachian Heritage Writers Symposium and Write by the Rails co-sponsorship of the Fall for the Book Festival.
 - (b) Approved a 2014 stipend of \$250 for Sofia Starnes, Virginia Poet Laureate (to be presented at the annual meeting).
 - (c) Approved future VWC Board meeting dates: June 1, September 7 and November 2.

MEETING ADJOURNED.