

**Minutes of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Board of Directors Meeting
October 30, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by President Jan Chronister at 10:00 AM. It was conducted via email because of cancellation of the Fellowship's Fall 2021 Conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the meeting, written reports were circulated among board members for comment. Copies of reports can be obtained from the WFOP president.

Participants: Nancy Austin, Michael Belongie, Jan Chronister, Naomi Cochran, Cathryn Cofell, Dennis Collier, Colleen Frentzel, Christina Kubasta, Sandra Lindow, Nathan Reid, James Roberts, Kathleen Serley, Tori Grant Welhouse, Ed Werstein

Minutes of the Spring 2021 Board meeting were approved.

Additions to Agenda: none

Old Business:

1. Update on board decisions since Spring 2021 board meeting: Dennis Collier; approved
2. Archives update: Dennis Collier; approved
3. Report on possible Fall 2021 virtual event(s) (see agenda item # 13); approved
4. Added to the agenda on the morning was a report on cancellation, due to the pandemic, of the Spring 2021 conference, scheduled to be held in Sheboygan at the Blue Harbor Resort. Ed Werstein reported that WFOP was able to cancel the contract and pay a \$200 fee, which was considerably lower than what the hotel could have charged us based on contractual obligations. The board wishes to thank Ed for dealing with two cancelled conferences and negotiating a successful cancellation with Blue Harbor. Melissa Tuckey, the featured speaker, was paid \$200 as compensation for her time and trouble dealing with two cancellations.

New Business:

1. Treasurer's report: Colleen Frentzel; approved
2. Membership chair report: Naomi Cochran; approved
3. Webmaster report: Tori Grant Welhouse; approved
4. *Bramble* Report: Christina Kubasta; approved
5. Poet Laureate Commission Report: Ed Werstein; approved
6. Calendar Business Report: Jan Chronister; approved
7. 2022 Calendar editors: Jane Osypowski, Suzy Wedeward; approved
8. 75th Anniversary conference committee (Michael Belongie)—Michael reports that a zoom meeting will be set up soon and anyone wishing to be involved should contact him at poetpow@gmail.com; approved
9. Student Contest report: Jeff Anderson; approved
10. Triad Contest: Joan and Jeffrey Johannes; approved
11. Election results: Jan Chronister: Welcome and many thanks to the new incoming Co-presidents Cathy Cofell and Ronnie Hess and Vice-president Christina Kubasta. Colleen Frentzel will continue to serve as treasurer and Dennis Collier as secretary. Since Cathy and Christina have been elected officers, they are being replaced as Central Fox Valley Region co-vice presidents by Thom Singleton and Mike Gadzik.
12. Woodland Pattern Marathon Funding: Ed Werstein moved, seconded by Michael Belongie, that the WFOP continues its annual sponsorship of the Woodland Pattern Poetry Marathon at the \$350 level. Motion approved 12-0.
13. Poetry at Large funding (please see the committee report sent with the agenda): Jan Chronister moved, seconded by Michael Belongie, that WFOP allocate \$1,800 to support Poetry at Large virtual events in 2022. Motion approved 12-0.

Discussion: Christina Kubasta said the motion came from a group looking at offering virtual events due to pandemic-related restrictions. The group decided to build on the existing

Poetry at Large offerings, headed by Tori Grant Welhouse. They would be branded and promoted as WFOP events. Christina saw Poetry at Large as connected to WFOP's mission and a way to reach out to poets statewide, raising its profile and promoting what the fellowship does.

Though not opposed, Kathleen Serley expressed reservations about the need if WFOP members are able to meet in person again next year. She also noted that others, like Write On Door County, are offering similar opportunities. Tori noted that Write On Door County's offerings are primarily in-person workshops and conferences, and their events can be pricey, while Poetry at Large events would be free to WFOP members

Some members expressed fatigue with virtual events and the desire to meet in person, while others welcomed the unexpected accessibility made possible by virtual events, to presenters who otherwise might not have been available and for participants who might not have been able to attend in-person offerings. Christina suggested that in the future the WFOP think about both in-person and virtual events; the latter might permit speakers that the WFOP could not otherwise afford or be able to schedule. Tori noted that virtual events also might present more opportunities for presentations by Wisconsin poets and on specific kinds of craft (sonnets) or themes (grief).

Cathryn Cofell said a compromise would be to approve funding for half rather than a full year. Participation by WFOP members and non-members, and whether any of the latter joined the fellowship, could be monitored, and the board would have a better handle about the extent to which in-person events could be held. The board decided to go with full-year funding. Tori shared the following on registrations for 2021 Poetry at Large events: January, 27; June, 28; August-September (2-part offering), 34; October-November (2-part), 45.

14. Honorary Lifetime Member Award(s): Jan Chronister moved, seconded by Christina Kubasta, that we postpone the traditional presentation of the Honorary Lifetime Membership Award until Fall 2022 when hopefully we can meet in person and adequately recognize the recipients, including Sandra Lindow, who received the award in Fall 2020. Motion approved 8-0.

15. Request for documentation of volunteer hours (by incoming co-presidents and vice-president)

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.

Note on executive board action prior to Fall Board Meeting: The executive officers on October 26-27 approved payment of \$150 to Tori Grant Welhouse to cover expenses incurred by Poetry at Large for the rest of 2021. This item will be added to the update on board decisions since the Spring 2021 Board meeting.