

**Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Fall Conference Board Meeting  
October 21, 2022**

**The meeting was called to order** by Ronnie Hess at 4:03 PM. In attendance were directors and advisors Nancy Austin, Cathryn Cofell, Anneliese Finke, Colleen Frentzel, Mike Gadzik, Ronnie Hess, Sandra Lindow, James Roberts, Kathleen Serley, Tori Grant Welhouse, Ed Werstein, Kathrine Yets and via Zoom, Naomi Cochran and Christina Kubasta, and WFOP member Mark Zastrow

**Old Business**

1. Approval of Consent Agenda – Motion by Tori Grant Welhouse, seconded by Mike Gadzik to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried.
  - a) August 17, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes and September 10, 2022 Woodland Pattern Marathon Sponsorship
  - b) Treasurer’s Report
  - c) Membership Report
  - d) Social Media Report
  - e) Webmaster Report
  - f) Bramble Report
  - g) 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference Report
  - h) Contest Reports – Chapbook, Muse, Triad, Student
  - i) Regional VP Reports

The Poet Laureate Commission Report was pulled from the Consent Agenda so Ed Werstein could announce that he was stepping down as the WFOP’s representative on that body. He solicited several volunteers to replace him and recommended Lucy Tyrell, poet laureate of Bayfield, because she would provide a northern voice on a commission whose members are mostly from southern part of state. Motion by Kathrine Yets, seconded by James Roberts, to appoint Lucy to the commission, but to keep under consideration the others who offered to serve: Stephen Kalmar III, former poet laureate of Racine, Esteban Colon, former poet laureate of Kenosha, and Amanda Reavey. Motion carried.

2. 2023 Calendar Business Manager Report: Ronnie Hess reported that interim calendar business manager Jan Chronister is stepping down November 1 and Steve Tomasko will take over briefly. She also thanked Sandra Lindow for helping with distribution of the 2023 from the printer, Documation, and the regional vice presidents who delivered calendars to contributors. If a business manager is not found, the calendar may not be published after 2024.

Suggestions for filling the position included dividing it into two or more parts, though the 100-hour commitment is not especially onerous; paying more for for the work (currently 10% of profits, or \$100-\$200 annually); and hiring an intern to do this work, or hiring a staff person who could also handle logistics for the semi-annual conferences.

Colleen Frentzel reported that member Richard Swanson plans to donate to the WFOP \$4,000 a year for next 4 years, a total of \$16,000, targeted toward younger and emerging poets. He wants a committee to work with him on uses for this gift. Colleen said the calendar might be one use for the funds.

3. Open Positions: Ronnie Hess reported that the co-presidents continue to look for a replacement or assistant for Sandra Lindow as West Central regional vice president, as well as candidates for other volunteer positions. Sandra said conference planning had become quite burdensome, and Kathleen Serley, Mid Central regional vice president who planned this fall conference, agreed. It was not the programming, both said, but the hotel, food and other logistics that were difficult. Discussion focused on whether the WFOP should continue to have two conferences a year, when only 65-75 members attend; holding

regional “days” rather than conferences; partnering with groups holding similar events, for instance the Chippewa Valley Book Festival on the same weekend as this year’s Fall Conference; re-thinking the WFOP’s regional structure, specifically whether more are needed; and hiring a conference coordinator.

4. 2022 Lifetime Members to be Recommended to Membership: Ronnie Hess reported that Jan Chronister and Peter Sherill would be recommended as lifetime meetings at the Fall General Meeting.

5. Job Description Review: Cathryn Cofell asked officers, directors and other volunteers to review their job descriptions and submit comments to her.

6. Approval of New Chapbook Contest: Christina Kubasta presented the proposal to co-sponsor a one-time chapbook contest with Brain Mill Press. Motion by Nancy Austin, seconded by Sandra Lindow, to approve the contest. Motion carried.

7. Additional Old Business: None

### **New Business**

1. Grant Guidelines Task Force: Cathryn Cofell said the board needs a finance policy so that WFOP grants to arts and literary events are consistent. One possibility is raising funds allotted to regional vice presidents in addition to the \$300 they are currently receive each year. South Central regional vice president James Roberts suggested seeking grants from other groups, noting a Dane County Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission grant allowed him to locate the Winter Festival of Poetry at the Arts and Literature Laboratory in Madison. He and Colleen Frentzel will review grant guidelines and advise the board.

2. Discussion on Future Scholarship Fund: Ronnie Hess reported that several persons are willing to contribute financially to the WFOP, sometimes for general, other times for specific purposes. She said the fellowship needs a policy for dealing with these offers. Colleen Frentzel offered to work with Ronnie on this, and others are invited to send Ronnie their ideas. Sandra Lindow suggested putting the guidelines into a pamphlet for distribution to potential donors, and Cathryn Cofell said a fundraising drive might be a good way to initiate a scholarship fund to increase participation in the WFOP.

3. Timing of Board Meetings at Conferences, and Next Board Meeting (via Zoom): Cathryn Cofell said a board meeting would be held, probably in January, via Zoom. She also said the late Friday afternoon time slot for meetings at conferences was not ideal for board members who work. Ronnie Hess suggested meeting during the breakfast period Saturday, and Sandra Lindow suggested a Thursday evening Zoom meeting to deal with routine business before meeting in person. Ronnie will survey board members and advisors to see what they think of these alternatives.

4. Discussion on Conference Rotation and Location of Fall Conferences: Cathryn Cofell said the board needs to discuss the number of conference it holds each year. She will survey members on the value they place on conferences and why they attend, or do not attend. Besides conferences, Ronnie suggested working with other groups on events, like the Chippewa Valley Book Festival, and having more online events. The board will take up this topic after surveying members, perhaps at the January Zoom meeting though it may be too large a topic, requiring a meeting of its own.

5. Other New Business: Cathryn Cofell hopes to schedule a strategic planning session, preferably before the spring conference. Topics will include finding volunteers, and conference frequency and planning (see discussion on the calendar business manager, open positions, and conference rotation and location).

**Adjournment** – Motion by Ed Werstein, seconded by Ronnie Hess to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.