

Hawaii Writers Guild
-MINUTES of the Board of Directors Meeting-
December 28, 2023

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) Board of Directors meeting, held *via Zoom*. All times noted refer to Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time. Action items identified for follow-up are italicized and underlined.

Officers and Directors present via Zoom:

Diane Revell —*President and North Kohala-area Regional Director*
Bruce Stern — *Vice President*
Donna Beumler —*Secretary*
Joy Fisher —*Public Relations Director*
Frank Reilly —*Kauai Regional Director*

Other Members present via Zoom:

Duncan Dempster —*Webmaster*
Gerald Montano —*Maui-based member*

REGULAR SESSION (open to general membership)—

1. PRESIDENT DIANE REVELL CALLED THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MEETING TO ORDER at 6:34 pm.

a.) Liability Insurance generally: In follow up to the Board’s previous discussion concerning whether the Guild should obtain liability insurance for its officers and directors, Diane reported that she has recently made several efforts to connect with the Monarch insurance agent based in Honolulu who had previously provided information in this regard, but —despite repeated efforts— she has not received a response. *Diane will endeavor to identify another insurance company with whom to discuss the issue of liability insurance.*

g.) Annual Meeting Planning: Pursuant to the Guild’s Bylaws, the Board previously set the date of **Saturday, January 20, 2024** for the Guild’s “Annual Meeting.” The meeting will begin at 2:00 pm Hawaii time, and will be held solely *via* Zoom; the meeting i.d. and password will be the same as is used for all Board meetings. Donna previously distributed to Board members *via* e-mail the agenda from the 2023 Annual Meeting in an effort to solicit input regarding the 2024 agenda.

Discussion ensued regarding the opportunity drawing referred to as the “Spinning Game,” and the distribution of nine books authored and donated by members to be used as prizes. It was agreed that there will be three separate games, with three spins each time, in order to award all nine books. Diane reminded the Board that the members must be “present” via Zoom to win, and this goal is achieved by requiring RSVPs to the Annual Meeting invite. *Donna will keep track of RSVPs, confirming that those responding are active members in good standing, and will provide this information to Diane for purposes of the opportunity drawing.* If necessary, Diane can add the names of those who attend, but did not RSVP, during the meeting itself. *Diane will take on the responsibility to e-mail election information, candidate bios, and ballots to the general membership prior to January 10, 2024—which is the date Donna plans to send out the finalized Annual Meeting invitation and agenda.* For purposes of determining the status of membership for the Annual Meeting, it was agreed that all members considered to be “in good standing” (i.e., current in their dues) as of the end of December of 2023 would meet this qualification. Similarly, new members whose applications were accepted late in December but who will not pay the annual membership fee until January are also considered “in good standing” for this purpose.

Diane advised that she will be prepared to provide a “State of the Guild” address, as is required by the Bylaws. *She will be e-mailing soon to Board members a reminder to let her know if there are items they’d like her to cover in this address.* She will also tally the election results, and report them at the Annual Meeting. Bruce will provide a membership update, and he agreed that the two-minutes allotted for this purpose is sufficient.

The Board then discussed the Annual Meeting agenda item referred to as “Call for Members’ Suggestions.” In the past, members were encouraged to use the “Chat” function of the Zoom program for this purpose, and to also send suggestions *via* e-mail. Donna clarified that, at this **early** stage of the Annual Meeting, members were, in the past, encouraged to start thinking about what ideas and suggestions they’d like to offer; then, toward the end of the Annual Meeting, a period of ten minutes has been set aside to engage in a discussion regarding members’ input. It was agreed that Bruce will address the participants during the preliminary “Call for Members’ Suggestions,” encouraging members to provide written input via Chat or e-mail, and that Diane would then lead the discussion toward the end of the meeting.

The Annual Meeting agenda will also include a treasurer’s update from Catherine as well as a secretary’s update from Donna. Diane referenced an e-mail, which she sent out previously, inviting members to consider running for office, and alternatively suggesting that members may

want to “shadow” an officer or director in order to determine future interest in seeking a position on the Board. She noted that she received no responses to this e-mail. She does need updated bios from all candidates for 2024 office. Donna advised that she will send out the approved form of the Annual Meeting invite and agenda on January 10th, and at that time will remind members to vote.

In terms of additional aspects of the Annual Meeting agenda, Joy plans to present a 10-minute slideshow celebrating members who’ve published in 2023. Also, there will be brief presentations regarding the on-line writers’ support groups (Open-forum Readings and Responses, by Cheryl Ann; the Non-fiction Focus invitation-only group, by Joy; and a Fiction-focus invitation-only group, by Frank Reilly). A later presentation will highlight the regional-specific groups. Donna will connect with Diann Wilson in an effort to determine her availability to provide a brief review of the YouTube Write On! episodes which she produced during the year.

Also discussed were the proposed agenda items under “Committee Reports.” It was noted that the events director position remains vacant. [Diane mentioned as an aside that she has followed up regarding the Guild’s request to staff an informational table at the upcoming Waimea Cherry Blossom festival. Diane mentioned that she filled out and submitted the form, along with a check, but has been told that the check would only be cashed in the event the Guild’s request to staff a table is accepted. It is Diane’s understanding that there may be fewer tables available this year than in past years.] Bruce agreed to follow up with a Guild member who had been previously approached regarding the events director position.

Joy will update the membership as to her public relations efforts during the year, and Diane encouraged her to use that opportunity to solicit interest in the position of co-editor of *Member News* and also the social media manager position. Bruce suggested that Joy make reference to the public relations efforts she spearheaded at the Kauai Writers Conference, which were quite successful in growing the Guild’s membership. Additionally, Diane will mention these efforts in her “State of the Guild” address. Duncan will be prepared to give a quick update as to web-related activities and will also solicit interest in a web-assistant position at that time. Margaret will then provide an update regarding *Latitudes V*. With respect to the proposed regional director reports, Diane will follow up with Bryan and the Volcano-area group, and she will offer to assist Bryan as he might wish in this regard. Bruce will give an update as to Tutu’s group, and Frank will address the progress of the new Kauai-based writers group.

It was then discussed that someone will need to keep track of which members win which books during the opportunity drawing so that they may appropriately distributed, and Donna agreed to take on this task.

Regarding the request for members to offer their input and suggestions, Diane noted that she will remember to open up “Chat,” and will ask that members put their suggestions in writing to the extent possible. She will remind members that a Special Planning Board meeting (open to

all active members) is scheduled for January 25, 2024 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, at which the Board will discuss more fully the suggestions set forth by members.

2. **MEMBERSHIP REPORT:** Prior to the meeting, Bruce e-mailed to Board members updated Membership Logs and the most recent Opt-in List. Current active, paid HWG members total 77, including one student member. Three people whose applications have been recently accepted are pending payment of dues. Bruce advised that he keeps track of membership applications which are rejected; although historically there have been very few of these, two applicants were turned away more recently. Bruce will also send an e-mail to new members inviting them to join the “Opt-in List” which he maintains as a Google-group and wherein members may share their e-mail addresses with like-minded members for purposes of mentoring and networking. Finally, Bruce advised that members who wish to create and utilize a dedicated e-mail address for purposes of HWG must let him know; he will be happy to delete the old e-mail address and add the new address as may be requested. It was discussed that it would be ideal to avoid the situation where a member will be receiving multiple Guild e-mails to multiple e-mail addresses.

Frank and Donna requested that the Board discuss and clarify the issue of whether or not potential new members should be required to articulate a connection to Hawaii. Discussion ensued, and reference was made to the fact the the Board voted this past year to add a question to the new membership application inquiring as to the applicant’s interest in joining a writers group based in Hawaii. It was agreed that many factors are considered by Board members in reviewing applications, and there is no requirement of Hawaii residency in order to join HWG. It was agreed that the Board will continue to review applicants’ answers to the recently-added question in order to discern an articulation of a broad connection to or interest in Hawaii, its people, its land, its history, or its culture.

3. **TREASURER’S REPORT:** Catherine was not available to provide a report at this time. Catherine did previously distribute *via* e-mail to all Board members a draft of a proposed “invoice” for the annual payment of members’ dues. It was emphasized that the treasurer who receives dues’ payments must convey this information to Bruce so he may maintain accurate membership logs.

4. **SECRETARY’S UPDATE:** Donna noted that she previously sent out to Board members the Guild’s “conflict of interest” policy and the form for members to complete and return in this regard. She suggested that, with Joy’s assistance, the Board consider a formal conflict of interest training in 2024, in part because the Board has two new members and no such training was conducted in 2023. There was general consensus that “conflict of interest” training should be included on the agenda of a future Board meeting, ideally sometime in the Spring.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES:

a.) EVENTS COMMITTEE: The events director position remains vacant. As noted previously, *Bruce will reach out to a member who previously expressed a possible future interest in the position.*

b.) PUBLIC RELATIONS: Joy will be providing the Fall issue of *Member News*, the Guild's on-line newsletter, to Duncan this evening for posting to the website. She noted that there has been some delay, or even perhaps reticence, among new members in filling out and returning the e-mailed "new member questionnaire;" therefore, this section of the newsletter will not contain detailed information on all new members. It was suggested that Joy consider indicating in the newsletter that she will endeavor to include additional information concerning these members in future issues of *Member News*. Finally, she will include in the newsletter reference to the date and time of the Special Planning meeting, set for January 25, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

c.) WEBSITE UPDATES: Duncan reports that, while December has been a slow month in terms of web activity, he is gearing up to work on the two large forthcoming projects, *Member News*, and *Latitudes V*.

d.) REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORTS:

—**Volcano-area**: Bryan was not available to report at this time. Diane did note that the Volcano-area writers are working on publishing their third anthology.

—**North Kohala-area**: Diane reported that typically somewhere around five writers "Zoom in" for the North Kohala writers group. She is working on a slightly more formal approach to the meetings, wherein participants would be asked to e-mail the pieces which they intend to read a day in advance. She will send out a reminder two days prior to the meeting; those who wish to read from work which they did not e-mail prior to the meeting will still be able to read and seek feedback, time permitting.

—**Tutu's House**: Joy mentioned that four writers attended the most recent "Zoom" meeting of the Tutu's House writers group, and that both the writing and feedback continue to be strong.

—**Kauai Readings and Responses**: Frank reported that he is very pleased with the attendance at the Kauai-based on-line writers group, with a core group of approximately 10-12 participants. The engagement and quality of writing continue to be strong. Participants favor an in-person element to the meetings, and they have organized writing and reading events at members' homes which include a potluck meal. Frank emphasized the importance of face-to-

face engagement, and plans to include community readings in the future. Diane reminded Frank that Joy, as Public Relations Director, will publicize these community readings.

—**Other reports - Non-fiction Focus Writers Group/ Readings and Responses-Open Forum Writers Group:** Joy reported that the invitation-only “Non-fiction Focus” group continues to meet twice per month, and has recently added a new member. Cheryl Ann was not available this date to report on the Saturday on-line Readings & Responses -Open Forum group, but it was noted that she has distributed a twice-monthly, Saturday daytime schedule for the next four months.

6. OTHER BUSINESS/PARKING LOT:

—**Pending vacancies:** Diane queried as to whether the Board should consider developing a “recruitment poster” to display during the Annual Meeting.

—**Finalizing the Bylaws changes:** Reference was made to the three changes which the Board has voted to make to the Bylaws this year (deleting “book sales” language, amending the schematic to include the Kauai Regional director, and deleting the requirement of two signatures on Guild checks). The consensus was to delay formally amending the Bylaws until after the Special Planning meeting on January 25th.

—**Policies and Procedures:** Bruce continues to work on a draft of the duties connected with maintaining membership logs and the opt-in list. He did emphasize the necessity of continuing a timely dialogue when dues are paid so that the membership logs will be updated accurately and as quickly as possible. Diane noted that, although both she and Catherine have keys to the Guild’s post office box, she has come to an agreement with Catherine that Catherine will be the person to deposit checks into the Guild account.

—**Member input:** Maui-based member Gerald Montano was invited to offer any input he wished. He indicated that he appreciated the detailed discussion which was held pertaining to whether new members should be able to articulate a connection to Hawaii. Diane inquired as to whether the Maui members have been able to meet in-person. Gerald indicated that he has been in touch with Phillip, and that there is a desire to engage in face-to-face meetings in support of local writers and their work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next **Board of Directors meeting/Special Planning meeting** is scheduled for Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 6:00 pm, to follow the Annual Meeting scheduled for January 20, 2024 at 2:00 pm.

All meetings for the foreseeable future will be **held via Zoom ONLY and will be hosted by Duncan.**

Requests for items to be added to the agenda for the next regular Board meeting should be sent via email to President Diane Revell (diane.b.revell@gmail.com) and Secretary Donna Beumler (dmbaumler@gmail.com) at least 10 days prior to the next meeting (no later than January 15, 2024). The final agenda will be emailed to the full membership five days prior to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of January, 2024.

By: *__Donna Beumler__*

Donna Beumler

Secretary, Hawaii Writers Guild