

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) monthly Board of Directors (BOD) meeting, held via Zoom due to pandemic protocols. All times noted refer to Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time. Items in **bold** indicate decisions made or actions required.

Officers and Directors present via Zoom:

Carol McMillan- *President*

Bruce Stern -*Vice President*

Bob Lupo -*Treasurer*

Donna Beumler -*Secretary*

Joy Fisher -*Public Relations Director*

Bryan Furer -*Regional Director, Volcano-area and prospective Events Director*

Other Members present via Zoom:

Duncan Dempster -*Webmaster*

Cecilia Johansen -*Co-editor, Member News* (present for a portion of the meeting)

Without objection, **Webmaster Duncan Dempster activated Zoom's "record" function.**

Call to order: President Carol McMillan **called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.**

Recent resignation of board member and discussion of §501 (c)(3) status:

Carol began by engaging the Board in a dialogue concerning the recent e-mailed resignation of Johnson Kahili as events director. She noted that he was invited to join the meeting this date in order to provide further information as he might feel appropriate; however, there was no response to the e-mailed invitation. The Board agreed that Johnson brought enthusiasm, talent, and diversity to the Guild and in particular to the BOD, and his resignation was unfortunate.

To the extent that Johnson cited the Guild's §501(c)(3) non-profit status as one of the reasons for his resignation, the Board more fully explored the continuing issue of whether the §501(c)(3) structure best meets members' needs.

Bruce acknowledged that the non-profit status has resulted in the Guild's inability to sponsor book-selling tables at local events, as had been the practice in the past, but observed that there are only a handful of members for whom this is a priority. Bruce mentioned that many of the current limitations on the Guild's activities are *not* due to its non-profit status, but rather are a result of pandemic-related restrictions first imposed two years ago. He remarked that some planned in-person programs, such as marketing/publishing seminars, were prohibited by pandemic protocols, but added that the Guild's digital presence was designed to help fill that gap¹. Within this context, Bruce then posed the question as to what the Guild would do differently if it was structured as a for-profit organization.

In response, Carol expressed concerns about the non-profit status curtailing what members can and cannot say with respect to the availability of their work for sale. She advised that members have reported to her a fear of "breaking the rules," and that they don't feel free to do what they'd like to do. While acknowledging the hard work which had gone into achieving §501(c)(3) status, Carol questioned whether the Guild is reaping the benefits of having become a non-profit organization. Additionally, Carol raised the issue of whether the non-profit status may adversely impact desired diversity amongst potential members who are looking for a writers group which will actively promote the sales of their books.

Bruce reiterated that the Guild's programs and activities are largely designed to help members hone their craft and better understand the publishing aspect of writing, thereby increasing the chances of success. He also agreed that a more diverse membership would be ideal, and opined that, while changing the non-profit status of the Guild would not be a step in that direction, changing the time of the monthly Board meetings might be.

Donna inquired more fully into how realistic it is that Guild-sponsored tables might significantly contribute to an author's total book sales and income therefrom. Carol responded that the non-profit issue is broader than just sponsoring tables, and argued, for example, that members are not allowed to sell their books at public readings² sponsored by HWG.

Joy pointed out that a very tangible benefit of being a non-profit organization is the tax-exempt status. Bob added that, while it is clear there are strong feelings on both sides of this issue, it was never an original goal of the Guild to help members sell their books directly to the public. Donna and Bruce reminded Carol and the Board that members are not allowed to sell

¹ It should be noted that, immediately after the meeting, member and past-president Diann Wilson contacted Donna Beumler for assistance in spreading the word about a YouTube program she had recently produced for the Guild's "Write On" series, in which she interviews an author regarding that author's (ultimately successful) efforts to find a publisher.

² Although there have been no such "public readings" since early 2020 due to the pandemic and its limitations on in-person gatherings, the BOD is cautiously optimistic that this activity may resume in the near future.

their books at the Guild's public readings *due to the policies of the individual venues*, which is separate and apart from any non-profit limitations.

Carol emphasized it is her position that the Guild's non-profit structure should continue to be addressed in the future, and that this discussion requires Board members to engage respectfully with one another.

Additionally, Carol highlighted the need for civility and mutual respect, especially when debating issues on which there is much disagreement. She emphasized the importance of avoiding alienating members who may have different views. Several members of the BOD acknowledged the value that Carol brings to the Board, and expressed appreciation for the unique viewpoints which each member may, from time to time, offer.

Update re: Oahu middle school request:

Carol provided an update on her response to a query from an educator on Oahu, and was recognized for her efforts in this regard. It was noted that Carol was solely responsible for arranging to appear via Zoom, working with 8th grade students on a writing project, and providing the students with diaries in order to help further their endeavors. The general consensus was expressed that, because outreach to students is a core goal of HWG, it would have been ideal to have other members also offer to assist with this middle-school project. Carol and Bruce both opined that a more inclusive attitude might be helpful in this regard.

Defining benefits of membership:

Duncan then initiated a discussion concerning how to educate prospective members **before** they join HWG as to exactly what the Guild, as a non-profit organization, can and cannot do for them. Although it should be made clear to members that the Guild cannot directly assist in book sales, membership in the Guild nevertheless carries with it many benefits designed to help writers enjoy success. For example, the Guild's website not only contains links to many helpful resources, but members also have the ability to create an "author's page," which can include information regarding published works, links to personal author websites, etc. The Guild also offers (or has in the past offered, pre-pandemic) in-person readings at which members can endeavor to interest the public in their work. In addition, currently the Guild maintains a digital presence where members can tune-in to hear speakers on a number of writing-related topics, as well as on-line reading forums at which members can solicit feedback on their works in progress. Moving forward, and subject to possible pandemic restrictions, Duncan proposed adding more lectures or presentations designed to educate members about the marketing and publishing aspects of a writing career.

It was agreed that there may be a misunderstanding which needs clarification concerning what new— and even existing— members can expect of the Guild *vis a vis* actual book sales. In this regard, it was observed that some authors may have unrealistic expectations when it comes

to the profitability of a writing career for as-of-yet unpublished writers. At the same time, authors may underestimate the difficult but very real role that rejections play in becoming an established writer. The Board overall agreed that future HWG presentations should strive to include the topic that is the bane of every writer: those dreaded rejections.

Change of date/time of Board meeting:

Bruce then revisited the continuing subject of moving the date and/or time of the monthly Board meetings. The suggestion has been made in the past that holding meetings in the middle of a weekday necessarily eliminates the possibility of attending for some members who may wish to participate, but are working or otherwise engaged during the day. **The Board agreed to hold the next meeting in the evening, on a trial basis, in the hope that more members will be interested in attending meetings and having their voices heard.** It was noted as well that the Guild's future activities are largely dependent upon members volunteering to take on leadership roles, and moving the time of the meetings may be a means to that end. Duncan and Bryan discussed the possibility of inviting the membership to meetings other than the Board business meetings. For example, Bryan mentioned the possibility of including a guest speaker on a relevant topic in conjunction with Board meetings. It has been his experience with another group that perhaps making food available and having speakers could result in greater attendance.

Without objection, it was agreed that the May BOD meeting is scheduled for **THURSDAY, MAY 26th AT 7:00 PM** via Zoom, and all active members are encouraged to participate. Bruce would like to include a brief presentation—on publishing and rejections, for example— that might be of interest to the general membership. **Donna agreed to send the message out to the membership regarding the upcoming date and time of the meeting.**

Soliciting interest in the events director position:

It was generally observed that the “events director” position is of great importance in organizing activities and furthering many of the objectives of the Guild. Bryan, who is very active with the Volcano-area writers and their projects, generously offered to fill-in as events director on a provisional basis and on the condition that he would need someone to serve with him as “co-director.” Bryan indicated a willingness to reach out to several members who might be interested in assisting him. The Board agreed that Bryan has a proven track record of organizing and developing successful projects, and all members expressed their gratitude to Bryan for his willingness to serve in this capacity. **With a motion by Carol, a second by Bruce, and enthusiastic unanimous approval of all voting members present, Bryan was appointed to serve as events director, provisionally and within the parameters as noted above.**

Offer of grant funds for *Latitudes*:

The issue was then raised regarding the recent e-mail from *Authors Publish* purporting to award \$150 to the Guild's on-line literary review, *Latitudes*. Bob advised that he had been in

touch with the organization, and that HWG is not in fact eligible to receive the funds, because *Latitudes* only accepts submissions from members and not from the general public.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE: Vice President Bruce Stern provided a membership update both orally and in the form of membership documents which he had compiled and previously e-mailed to Board members. There are currently 81 active members of HWG (including two members delinquent in their dues). Bruce expressed his appreciation to Bob and Duncan for their continuing efforts to keep him apprised of the status of dues' payments. He added that it would be helpful if the date of those payments was also included. Bruce commented that he feels it's crucial to the success of the Guild to not only grow its membership, but also to encourage more members to actively participate, and that engaging in this continued dialogue is important.

Bruce then made reference to the "opt-in list" for those members who wish to share their e-mail addresses with other members. The opt-in list is not to be used for commercial purposes, but rather for interpersonal communication. 46 members currently have asked to be included on the list. Bruce has recently distributed an e-mail to the membership offering members who'd not previously opted-in that opportunity; conversely, members who had requested to be included on the list can ask at this time to be removed. Bruce will update the opt-in list accordingly in the next few weeks.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Bob Lupo previously submitted via e-mail a "Final Treasurer's Log as of March 31, 2022," and an "Interim Treasurer's Log as of April 25, 2022." The April log shows an operating balance as of that date of \$7,550.08 (please see Attachments "A" and "B"). Bob noted that a total of 50 members have either initiated (six) or reinstated (forty-four) their memberships so far this year.

There was some confusion regarding an invoice for digital services, in the amount of \$156.96, which was sent to Diann Wilson and for which she'd been reimbursed. **Bob and Duncan will further clarify whether that invoice was for Zoom or YouTube, Duncan noting that he maintains a Zoom account for HWG purposes.**

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Donna Beumler made reference to an e-mail from member and past-president Diann Wilson, in which she'd reported that she had previously sought assistance from the BOD in spreading the word about the most recent episode of *Write On*, a YouTube project of the Guild's. As no one present had a recollection of having received the e-mail, **Donna agreed to follow-up with Diann.**

Donna also referred to a suggestion, made during the March 23rd meeting, that a list of Guild assets be compiled. She offered to put together a list, and **requested that Board members**

e-mail her with information pertinent to who has tangible assets, what they are, how many they have, and where they are physically located.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

EVENTS DIRECTOR: Bryan Furer, as provisional events director, sought clarification as to what Guild funds can be expended and under what circumstances. Bruce endeavored to clarify the issue by confirming that Guild funds can be spent on promoting HWG, but not on profiting individual members. In addition, Board members serve as volunteers, and must be aware of any conflicts of interest concerns. Bruce suggested that if someone has a proposal to make for an expenditure of Guild funds, that person should put together a proposal, explaining the overall benefit to the Guild, for advance approval. Possible acceptable expenditures could include, for example, the cost of renting a sound stage for production of the Volcano-area writers “radio theatre” podcast project. In this regard, Bryan indicated that an appropriate venue may have been located. Bruce did confirm that HWG can spend money to set up informational tables to promote Guild activities, but not to sell members’ books.

Additional discussion ensued regarding expenditure of Guild funds to pay a speaker’s fee or honorarium for a lecturer on a topic of interest to members at a monthly event. Topics could include scriptwriting or the art of crafting a short story, for instance. Carol clarified that a Guild member could be paid a speaker’s fee, but a Board member could not. Joy added that, ideally, members would be asked to volunteer their time and expertise as much as possible.

Although Bryan made reference to several locations in the Volcano area where Guild writers can gather and receive much support and assistance, he also noted that Volcano is a remote location from where most of the other Board members reside. Joy suggested that a live, in-person program in Volcano, accompanied by a Zoom option, would be helpful. **Joy offered to travel to Volcano to meet with Bryan and further explore with him the parameters of Guild expenditures under §501(c)(3).** Bryan also referenced possible funding sources of the podcast project, such as local businesses, and grants.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR Joy Fisher advised that there has been no recent PR activity since releasing to the press the announcement of the publications of both *Latitudes*, 3rd ed., and the second issue of the Guild’s newsletter, *Member News*.

With respect to *Member News*, Joy advised that she anticipates the newsletter will be published via the website twice yearly; since the most recent issue was published in March, the next issue can be expected in September.

Joy then confirmed the Guild's affiliation with the Berkeley Branch of the California Writers Club (CWC). It was also clarified that Guild members are able to attend (via Zoom) CWC-Berkeley's speaker series for a reduced price of \$5 per event.

WEBMASTER Duncan Dempster reported that two new members have been working on their personal "author's page" for the website. Additionally, Duncan made reference to his recent e-mail in which he'd solicited feedback from the BOD regarding a request from an Asian-American literary non-profit. Duncan advised that he regularly receives and responds to various e-mail requests and notices; however, he occasionally comes across an e-mail which he thinks should be brought to the attention of the Board, and would like Board members to respond in a timely fashion with their thoughts and suggestions. Carol encouraged Duncan to continue to forward e-mails of this nature to Board members for input, and indicated a willingness to weigh-in as may be appropriate.

LATITUDES, 4th edition UPDATE: Bob Lupo, as managing editor of *Latitudes*, discussed next years' edition and some anticipated modifications to the process. He had previously distributed via e-mail a draft of a proposed timeline which incorporates some of the suggested changes. For instance, Bob believes that a longer submission window will aid in a more efficient collaborative process between writers and editors, while enabling the managing editor to be more proactive. He proposes a submission window between September 1 through November 1, 2022, with review of submissions occurring between November 2 and November 20. This will require preparing guidelines and assembling a selection committee earlier than in the past. Bob feels the proposed schedule will accommodate any unexpected glitches, while allowing for a publication date no later than February 27, 2023.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Bryan, on behalf of the Volcano-area writers, previously updated the Board as noted on page 6.

Neither Diane nor Eila were available to report re: Kohala-area writers group. Donna did confirm that the group continues to meet every two weeks via Zoom, facilitated by Eila. Typically, there are between five and eight participants, who read their work and then solicit feedback in an enjoyable and supportive environment. Donna advised that attendees of this on-line reading group continue to be grateful to Eila for her efforts to facilitate this meeting.

ANNUAL ETHICS TRAINING FOR NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS:

Joy previously distributed materials via e-mail to Board members on the topic of the ethical obligations of the board of directors of a non-profit organization. These materials consist of:

1. “Hawaii Writers Guild Conflict of Interest Policy”
2. Link to “Avoiding Conflicts of Interest on a Nonprofit’s Board of Directors”
3. Link to “Hawaii Conflict of Interest Law”
4. HWG Articles of Incorporation
5. HWG Bylaws
6. “Annual Conflict of Interest Statement” form
7. “How to Fill Out the HWG Conflict of Interest Form” (7pp)

All Board members agreed that they had received the e-mails and understood their content. Joy afforded each member an opportunity to ask questions pertinent to the Guild’s non-profit status, his/her duties as officers and directors, and how to fill out the conflict of interest form. Joy asked that each Board member complete the “Annual Conflict of Interest Statement” form and forward same to Donna within the next 30 days for archiving. As was the case last year, it was agreed that the secretary will collect and maintain the acknowledgements by each BOD member confirming attendance at this ethics training.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION MATERIALS: In Diane’s absence, Donna advised that Diane had e-mailed a detailed request to the membership soliciting ideas concerning the content of a new member orientation packet. Diane reported that so far three members have responded with valuable suggestions. Diane will report more fully on this project at next month’s meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next **Board of Directors meeting will be held on Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 7:00 pm.** Joy suggested that Board members may wish to reach out personally to individual members in this regard. Donna advised that she will solicit e-mails from members who cannot attend, and will make sure to share their input at the meeting. Due to pandemic restrictions, 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 Carol McMillan (sylvanease@gmail.com) and Secretary Donna Beumler (dmbaumler@gmail.com) at least 10 days prior to the next meeting (no later than May 16, 2022). The final agenda will be emailed to the full membership five days prior to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted this 11th day of May, 2022,

By: Donna Beumler

Donna Beumler
Secretary, Hawaii Writers Guild

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT “A”: Final Treasurer’s Log, March 31, 2022

ATTACHMENT “B”: Interim Treasure’s Log, April 25, 2022

PARKING LOT:

Nothing at this time.

ATTACHMENT “A”

FINAL HWG Treasurer's Log as of March 31, 2022			
	ASB Operating Balance as of February 28, 2022		\$7,147.67
	Final March Inflows		
	Rebekah Moan, Membership Initiation, PayPal		39.56
	Zack Ehrmann, Membership RENEAL		20.00
	Wendy Noritake, Membership Renewal		20.00
	Circe Woessner, Membership Renewal		10.00
	Shanon Sidell, Membership Renewal		10.00
	Tamara Hynd, Membership Renewal		40.00
	Steve Foster, Membership Renewal		40.00
	Sara-Lynne Simpson, Membership Renewal		30.00
	Patty Bigelow, Membership Renewal		30.00
	Carol McMillan, Membership Renewal		40.00
	Carla Orellana, Membership Renewal		20.00
	Jim Gibbons, Membership Renewal		40.00
	Tessa Rice, Membership Renewal		10.00
	AMZN 501-c-3 Rebate		14.18
	Total March Inflows		363.74
	Final March Outflows		
	Duncan Dempster, Website / Net Setup / Email maintenance, check 127		-264.17
	ASB Monthly Service Fee		-5.00
	Total March Outflows		-269.17
	Final ASB Operating Balance as of March 31, 2022		\$7,242.24

ATTACHMENT “B”

Interim HWG Treasurer's Log as of April 25, 2022			
	ASB Operating Balance as of March 31, 2022		\$7,242.24
	Interim April Inflows		
	Cheryl Ann O'Farrell, Membership Renewal		10.00
	Donna Maltz, Membership Renewal		20.00
	Sharon Ludan, Membership Initiation		40.00
	Duncan Dempster, Membership Renewal, PayPal		40.04
	Lucy L. Jones, Membership Initiation, PayPal		39.56
	Bruce Stern, Membership Renewal		39.56
	Miss Pianta, Membership Renewal, PayPal		39.56
	Don Kennedy, Membership Renewal, PayPal		39.56
	Jordan Barnes, Membership Renewal, PayPal		39.56
	Total Interim April Outflows		307.84
	Interim April Outflows		
	Zoom Annual Fee, to be debited		0.00
	ASB Monthly Service Fee, to be debited		0.00
	Total Interim April Outflows		0.00
	Interim ASB Operating Balance as of April 25, 2022		7550.08