

**National Association of Hispanic Journalists
Board of Directors Meeting
Balmoral Room of InterContinental Hotel, Miami, Florida
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
9:04 a.m. EST**

Present: Yvette Cabrera, Arelis Hernandez, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mc Nelly Torres, Marilyn Garateix, Blanca Rios Dunia Elvir, Luis Joel Mendez Gonzalez, Adriana Chavira, David Cordero Mercado, Melissa Macaya, Damia Bonmati, Ninette Sosa, Dianna Gutierrez, Johnny Córdoba

Not present: Jamie Stockwell, Cristy Fajardo

Guests: Nora Lopez, Yaneth Guillen, Ivan Briones, Pepe Xicohténcatl, Mariana Flores and Daniel Morales and members of the press

I. Official Board Meeting Opening

President Yvette Cabrera called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Yvette thanked everyone for their work during the transition process. Yvette gifted everyone a Tlahtolli, which is a mexican glyph that symbolizes speech and is a symbol for the board as leader. Yvette said she's proud of everyone and all the work.

II. Roll Call- Secretary Blanca Rios

III. Minutes

- A. Blanca moved to approve the board meeting minutes from June 4, 2023. General at Large Officer Luis Joel seconded. Academic At Large Officer Adriana Chavira abstained. Motion passed by voice vote
- B. Blanca moved to approve the board meeting minutes from July 6. Vice President of Online Mc Nelly Torres seconded. Region 4 Director Damia Bonmati and Region 5 Director Ninette abstained. Motion passed by voice vote

IV. Convention Update

- a. Interim Chief Operating Officer Yaneth Guillen-Diaz thanked everyone for helping out. She said she's looking forward to a successful convention. Yaneth reported that the conference was sold out even before our deadline. She said despite the layoffs and many challenges, the members are still trying to make themselves available for the conference.

- b. Yaneth gave a conference breakdown:
 - There are over 66 member-led workshops and 16 plenaries, 9 of which are sponsored. Of the workshops 18 are in Spanish and 48 are in English. That breaks down to 27% Spanish
 - Over 1,550 registrants. No transfers were allowed given the fire code. We had over 100 people on the waitlist.
 - We have a security team in place working along with the hotel.
 - Our team is doing its best, thanks to the board members.
 - Hotel have been helpful in accommodating us.
 - Yaneth thanked Julio Cesar regarding an overflow hotel that was charging a rate that was more than the Intercontinental rate. Joe with Conference Direct was able to negotiate and everyone booked through the other hotel was given the same rate.
 - Given the circumstances, Yaneth was not able to give us a written report but promised to give us an updated report soon.
 - There's a refund policy. Not more than 10 people were granted a refund before the deadline and some after the deadline because of the circumstances.
 - Marilyn suggested we get a committee together for an after-conference action report.
 - Johnny Cordoba suggested exploring new ways to help people out of jobs.
 - Nora recommended a mentorship program and several board members gave input and ideas.

- c. Yaneth gave a membership breakdown.
 - 3,701 current members
 - 347 members in grace period
 - The layoffs are not permitting some people to return.

V. Budget Overview

- A. Financial Officer Marilyn Garateix said exhibitors reported NBC Universal was our major conference sponsor. Fox is the other big one. The exhibitors have all pretty much paid off. Marilyn said we now have a good list of who's paid and who hasn't.

- B. The budget is a little bit influx because of our transition period. It's not yet clear how much NAHJ will be profiting. Marilyn assured the board that we are in good standing with money coming in. Yvette has gone through and cut some stuff that wasn't necessary. Marilyn thinks it will balance itself out in the end. We should have more concrete numbers as we get through the conference. Trying to be conservative. We are not losing any money. We need to hold and set aside money for grants and keep a delicate balance. Working hard to keep the cost down of the conference.

- C. Yvette said we are looking at creating a process that will help keep us more informed on the grant money when we propose a program. How much will it cost and present it to Marilyn.

VI. Board Policies Guidebook Update/ Addition of Protocol and Etiquette: Rules of engagement.

A. Guidebook

- 1. Yvette said we are in the process of creating a board policy handbook to orientate new board members on the steps they need to take in their respective positions because sometimes they come in not knowing what's expected. NAHJ doesn't have one, so Vice President of Print Arelis Hernandez has been working on one.

- 2. Vice President of Print Arelis Hernandez said the policy guidebook is in draft form. At one point everyone will have an opportunity to dive in. Arelis took notes and pulled together "how tos" from every meeting. Arelis said she had homework for everyone. She wants everyone to think about their position and what you would tell the next person on managing that person. Arelis will create a deadline. Those who are new, should reach out to past members in their roles. The goal is to make this a living and breathing document. Arelis said that past president Dino Chiecchi said something like this did exist but it can't be found.

3. Yaneth stressed that regional directors should have alternate directors. Yvette said that will be addressed at the next meeting, after the election.

B. Communications Policy

1. Arelis transitioned to the Communication Policy, which every board member should have already reviewed. Arelis said that in the same spirit that we implemented the anti-harassment policy that we preemptively vote on this policy and implement it in the guidebook.
2. Arelis moved to approve the Protocol and Etiquette: Rules of engagement. Julio Cesar second the vote. Discussion began.
3. Mc Nelly said she considers this document to be censorship and feels there are other ways to address these issues. She said she doesn't believe in facism and believes this policy is fascism.
4. Luis Joel agrees that this document is very dangerous. He said it limits the capacity for board members to ask questions and share ideas. Luis Joel said as a board member you have the right to share and convince other board members. He's concerned that we don't have specific time limits, dates. Luis did his work to somehow fix the document and said his suggestions were rejected. He said it punishes members. He said that if there's an issue with a particular board member we should resolve it directly with that member.
5. Julio Cesar said this document will be made public. He said he heard concerns of it being censorship. But said to be clear, the board policy does not prevent anyone from reaching out to another member. Julio Cesar said some of the suggestions were approved by a majority/minority opinion. He stressed that this is a professional environment. There are rules of engagement in a professional environment. He said this policy does not preclude anyone from contacting anyone. It just says reach out to that person or committee first and take the steps forward.
6. Luis Joel said it gives a bad image of NAHJ. Specifically, where we are now, in the state of Florida.
7. Julio Cesar said we are not journalists at this table. We are representatives of a professional organization.

8. Arelis clarified that it's basically just a "reply all" policy that has evolved into a communication that is not respectful. It kills communication.
9. Mc Nelly said her duty of care is to NAHJ. It's not to an individual nor to the Board.
10. Spanish at Large Officer Dunia Elvir said she feels this document removes the emotion and brings us back to business. As a business mentality. She said she read it over a fourth and fifth time and concluded it just removes our emotions. She thinks it's healthy and not censorship.
11. Region 1 Director David said he's still concerned that Luis Joel added suggestions and they were rejected.
12. Region 7 Director Johnny Cordoba said just because you don't get it your way is the wrong way. That's what the meeting is about. He said I do not work under ultimatums. We are having that conversation now. This document needs to be a positive and professional document.
13. Yaneth said as a staff member, she doesn't see us as journalists. She sees us as leaders and bosses and said we need to put NAHJ first. Staff depends on us to make the right decisions. Apologized for not having read the document - but said make the right choice for your organization.
14. Region 5 Director Ninette Sosa said in some organizations it's not allowed to just tweet, reply all. She said this policy gives this board the importance of sending emails. It's important to have a standard. This is a baby step on initiating this.
15. Marilyn said she feels conflicted. She said it's hard for her to divorce from being a journalist. We've been trained to look for things that are not right. And how you correct them makes a difference.
16. Blanca said this guide eliminates toxicity and prevents members from being silenced and helps make sure we treat members with respect.
17. Yvette said we can always go back and revise this. The next board can revisit.

C. The motion passed by roll call vote

Yvette Cabrera - yes
Arelis Hernandez- yes
Julio Cesar Chavez - yes
Mc Nelly Torres- no
Marilyn Garateix- abstained
Dunia Elvir- yes
Luis Joel Mendez Gonzalez - no
Adriana Chavira - yes
David Cordero Mercado - abstained
Melissa Macaya - yes
Damia Bonmati - yes
Ninette Sosa- yes
Dianna Gutierrez - yes
Johnny Cordoba - yes
Blanca Rios - yes

VII. Strategic Plan and board committee updates

- A. Strategic Plan Implementation Committee Chair and Region 5 Director Melissa Macaya said the committee will be giving a broader update at Saturday's membership meeting. She said the five year strategic plan officially began in January of 2023. Part of the plan is a tracking document aimed at highlighting a targeted timeline. Melissa said the hope is we can put those in place once we've secured a new Executive Director.
- B. Melissa reported that there are more than 20 committees, task forces and advisory groups that have already been advancing the goals of our strategic plan.
- C. She then introduced Rita Garza, our new strategic consultant who joined in May of 2023. She will serve as a key liaison between staff, committees and our board. She has a six month contract which was made available by a grant.
- D. Rita said she is conducting key stakeholder interviews. She has completed six and needs to conduct six more between staff and board members while on site. Rita said she has served on 12-plus boards and has 30 years of experience but clarified she is not a career consultant. Rita said NAHJ is a passion project and she is excited to help us.

- E. Melissa asked the board members to take some time to chat with Rita. She will also be attending the chapter president's meeting.
- F. Melissa also said the strategic committee will give more of an update at the membership meeting and announced that she will be stepping down as chair but will remain on the committee.

VIII. Regional Director Updates

- A. Each regional director was to submit a written report but there were some highlights.
- B. Region 3 Director Melissa Macaya said the D.C. Professional Chapter has been super busy with events especially ahead of the elections. Several events were held on the Hill.
- C. Region 4 Director Damia Bonmati said he's been in touch with chapter leaders. Florida has two very active chapters and will work with the next director to reactivate the other chapters in the region, including Atlanta.
- D. Region 1 Director David Cordero Mercado mentioned the professional Puerto Rico chapter is in transition because of elections. He also wants to make sure to get a better picture of our journalists in the U.S. Virgin Islands
- E. Region 6 Director Diana Gutierrez said herself is in a transition phase. She said Wisconsin is working on being a state chapter. Chicago's Professional Chapter is currently offering a \$5,000 student scholarship. She is also exploring a new chapter in Kansas or Indiana.
- F. Region 5 Ninnette Sosa said she conducted a leadership meeting with the Austin Professional Chapter. And wanted to make sure members know as Hall of Fame Committee chair she is working to create a contest for each region and then taking the leader of that region over into the Hall of Fame status.
- G. Region 7 Johnny Cordoba said they had their listening session with chapter leaders. The region is also recruiting for chapters and identified issues like pay equity and recruiting Latino professors.

IX. Student Report

- A. Student Representative Brenda Elizondo shared some highlights from a written report. She said it was a pretty eventful year. Brenda said she got to engage with students across the region, including visiting several campuses. Brenda also volunteered with the LA professional chapter.
- B. There were some concerns including retaining student board members since most tend to consist of seniors. One solution students came up with was to ensure position rotation so that more people get exposure to each role.
- C. Brenda also proposed having a mental coach and has found Leslie Rangel but said she's looking for more funding to make sure she gets compensated and not "low balled" for his services.
- D. There are also some outstanding student elections, where some students did not receive enough signatures.

X. Executive Session

- A. Yvette motioned to go into executive session. Arelis seconded. The motion passed as a voice vote at 11:17 a.m.
- B. The board left executive session at 12:53 p.m.

XI. Public Questions and Comments

- A. There were no public questions or comments.

XII. Presentation on palabra

- A. Managing Editor Valeria Fernandez said over the past 18 months Palabra has had 99 contributors, 85 original stories, 28 bilingual stories - totaling 162 stories published.
- B. Valeria highlighted several big and impactful stories.
- C. She also shared a sample of a Palabra podcast and will make sure to email it to board.
- D. Valeria shared results and comments from surveys with palabra.'s writers/reporters. It helped break down the demographics and they found most readers identify as women and consider themselves a freelancer. She was also happy to report that according to a survey a majority of the writers feel satisfied with getting paid in a timely manner.

XIII. New business

A. Next regular board meeting date: July 16, 2023 9 a.m. EST at Miami Convention in Trade Room

XIV. Closing Remarks and adjournment

A. Meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.