

National Press Club
General Membership Meeting
Oct. 15, 2021

President Lisa Matthews opened the general membership meeting at noon.

Motion to approve minutes: Secretary Gillian Rich instructed members that the minutes from the May general membership meeting had been emailed to them and could be found at a link below the live video. She asked for corrections and votes to be emailed to her.

NPCJI President Report: Institute President Angela Greiling Keane reminded Club members about the Fourth Estate dinner honoring NBC's Lester Holt.

She said that the Institute expects to reach 3,000 people by the end of the year with its programming. So far, the Institute has served 10 times the number of people it did in 2019, when all events were in person. She said there is a loyal and growing audience for its newsletter that comes out five days a week.

The Institute also has a virtual writers group open to members and non-members.

Greiling Keane outlined the Institute's giving goal of \$40,000 for the year, of which \$17,807 had been raised.

Matthews said she just gave online to the Institute and reiterated that it's never too late to donate.

Membership Report: In a prerecorded message, Membership Secretary Emily Wilkins said Taco Friday is back, the gym is open and the Club is open for lunch every week day.

But the full roster of activities hadn't yet returned, which has impacted membership numbers. As of Aug. 2021, there were 2,660 Club members, a decrease of 182 members from the May general membership meeting and a drop of 121 members from 2020.

Wilkins said that as of Aug. 2021, there were 1,380 journalist members and 1,070 communicator members.

But the figures include 296 young members, an increase from 239 a year ago.

The Club has added members from the AP, ABC and NPR.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Eileen O'Reilly outlined the Club's financials as it continues to operate under Covid-19 restrictions. The Club had an operating loss of \$3.3 million in 2020. The Club estimated a \$2.4 million loss in 2021 but O'Reilly said the Club's losses are on track to be less than that.

The Club has \$3.4 million cash and reserves, \$15.3 million in the Rockwell reserves, and debt of \$2 million. The bank has agreed to loan the Club an additional \$1 million through a line of credit when needed.

O'Reilly said since the last general membership meeting the Club recorded lower-than-expected revenue in May and June. But the second half of the year has seen steady improvements with a small profit in July and August. She said September was the best month so far in 2021 revenue-wise and that October is likely to exceed September and post a profit.

Looking ahead to 2022, O'Reilly said that the Club expects to break even or post a small loss. The Club will start paying down its debt in 2022 and will have a \$60,000 in loan repayments per month next year.

The Club expects Q1 2022 to be slow with significant losses and hope for improved business conditions for the rest of the year. No government programs like the PPP loans are expected next year, but O'Reilly said the Club is expected to receive some payments from tax credits later this year.

President's Report: Matthews thanked the leaders on the Board of Governors, all the volunteers that give their personal time to the Club and the staff that works so hard to keep the Club running during these difficult times.

She outlined some key programs and special events at the Club. She sent out a special thank you to the Headliners Team leadership. The Headliners Team scheduled events with Rob Costa, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Archbishop Wilton Gregory. In December, Dr. Anthony Fauci will speak to the Club about the latest with the coronavirus pandemic.

Matthews said that each of the in-person guests at the Fourth Estate will receive onsite Covid-19 testing as a gift from Visby to ensure there are no breakthrough cases in an effort to keep everyone safe.

The annual Press Club Journalism awards will be held virtually on Dec. 8. The Vivian Awards will be held on Dec. 15 in person at the Club.

The Club is working with Gales to make special shoes for nurses at Howard University Hospital as the capstone effort for the Club's Help The Heroes project.

Matthews said that the Club received Edward R. Murrow's microphone and other artifacts on loan from his family thanks to the efforts of former Club president Mike Freedman.

Matthews reminded members that the Reliable Source is now open five days a week for lunch and every Friday for Taco Night.

The Fourth Estate is not open yet, but Matthews said there are plans to open it next year.

Matthew said that NPC Elections are coming up in a couple of weeks. Members interested in taking a leadership role at the Club need to file a petition of their intent to run. More information on how to run will be in the Wire soon. Matthews called on women and reporters of color to consider running for a leadership position.

The Club is holding a virtual 5k run for Austin Tice. Matthews also encouraged all Club members to sign the “Free Austin Tice” petition at Change.org. The Washington Post ran full page ads on Tice for six straight days.

Matthew said there was a champagne toast for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize winners, both journalists, at the Reliable Source.

Matthews gave special recognition to John Donnelly, the leader of the Press Freedom Team in appreciation for all his hard work this year.

In her last meeting as president, Matthews said that it was an honor to serve as the Club’s president.

Tally of votes on May minutes: Rich announced that with a tally of 10 years, the May minutes were approved.

Q&A: Matthews opened the floor to questions from Club members.

Q: When will the library be open on-site?

A: Greiling Keane said that she is working with Matthews on when the library could be reopened with some level of staffing.

Q: How much did the PPP reduce the Club’s losses?

A: McCarren said that the first PPP was for about \$1.5 million and the second was a little over \$1.1 million, for a total of a little over \$2.6 million. They were loans at first that were then converted into grants. McCarren said the amount was significant. He said he was grateful to the team that helped with the applications.

O’Reilly thanked the staff that helped apply for the PPPs.

Q: Is the Club open for breakfast?

A: McCarren said the Club isn’t open for breakfast currently, but members can come to the Club in the morning and order coffee. McCarren said that when the breakfast option was offered earlier in the pandemic, not many members showed up. There are no plans to restore that in the next couple of months, but McCarren said that the Club will keep an eye on it to see if it’s part of the Club’s plans in 2022.

Matthews said that the Club isn’t making a lot of money from the regular lunches. She said that not many people are coming into the Club during the workday because many people are

working from home. But she said that in 2022 more people will likely be coming back into the office.

Q: When will we start seeing more in-person events?

A: Matthews said that in-person events are happening now from Headliners to member events put on by the Events Team including a tequila tasting night and a scavenger hunt.

She said that if members want to see more events at the Club, they can get involved with the Events Team.

Q: A member asked to open Newsmaker events livestream to Club members.

A: Matthews said that Newsmakers and Headliners are always open to members and to reach out if members need help accessing livestreamed events.

Matthews ended the meeting at 12:35 p.m.