

Romance Writers of America
Board Meeting Agenda
February 22, 2024
7:00 p.m. CST
Virtual Meeting

Thursday, February 22, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – President Clair Brett called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. Central Time on Thursday, February 22, 2024.

ROLL CALL/CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM: Secretary Jacki Renée called the roll. Ten members were present: Officers Clair Brett, Jacki Renée, and Brooke Wills; Directors-at-Large Anita Learned, Ursula Renee, Alexis-Morgan Roark, Laina Turner; Advisors Antonia Cyn, Robin Hillyer-Miles, and Danica Winters. Director-at-Large Mary Karlik was excused from the meeting. Director-at-Large Marian H. Griffin was absent. RWA team staff member Laura Caputo was present. With a majority of the Board members needed to establish a quorum, there were 7 voting members present, the Chair declared a quorum.

The following RWA member guests were in attendance: Casey Cline, Elizabeth Hamister, Alice Hodapp, Toni Jackson, Nancy Leonard, Lynne Martin, Terri Patrick, Dayna Reidenouer, C.G. Williams.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT - C. BRETT

During Quarter 2 RWA board continued doing the business of the organization. We have been working very hard to continue to give RWA a firm grounding and foundation for years to come. The board of directors has voted to accept new members in many of our committees including leadership, P2P, and membership.

As president I nominated Danica Winters as our new PAN advisor and by a majority vote welcome her to our board. I am very proud to say that the 2023 RWA board is as full as a board has been since 2021.

The board of directors approved a new Task Force to investigate how regional chapters work and if they would bring added value to members along with our traditional chapter structure. Megan Crane agreed and was approved by the directors-at-large to chair this task force populated with board members. We also brainstormed possible membership drive ideas for the membership committee.

The organization successfully held our 2nd annual Indie Author Weekend, that more than doubled the attendees from last year, having over 250 attended with over 40 presenters. Which would not have been such a success if not for our Conference committee.

Also, in January I kicked off a new townhall series for our chapter leaders. First was for all chapter Presidents. We went over the new affiliation agreement approved by the last board and clarified questions about new items and went over deadlines for chapter affiliation paperwork. I announced that the voting board of directors voted to move RWA from our long time IMIS platform/network to Member Clicks, which is more up-to-date, user friendly on both the front

end and back end and will give our RWA team more control over manipulating our data to give our membership more value with every click. This is not only a move toward a better online experience for our chapters and members, but it will be a substantial cost savings to the organization each year.

The next townhall will be for the chapter treasurers and will be hosted by the national treasurer Brooke Wills; and then in March Jacki Renée, the national secretary, will hold a townhall for chapter secretaries. We hope this will become a yearly event to not only welcome our new chapter leaders, but to give them support in their positions and answer questions.

The EC continued working closely with our RWA team to continue the transition into our organization and completing all that entails. We also are still working with our business consultant during this transition. We meet weekly to discuss progress and any needs of the team.

We are excited that we have gotten inquiries about new chapters forming, which is always a benefit to our members and will continue to support those working on getting them off the ground.

We voted to approve the new Diamond Heart published author contest and to bring back the Golden Heart, our unpublished author contest. Opening dates to follow.

Currently, the board members are all working with their committees to bring to the membership the most up-to-date programming and resources as we work toward our goals.

Advocacy: The PAC committee has been watching the AI debates carefully and recently proposed to the board to sign onto an Amicus brief with other prominent writer organizations to be read in Washington in the defense of intellectual property. They continue to keep the board apprised of any other policy that may impact our industry.

I am so thankful for all the board members for stepping up and taking on whatever topic we are faced with, with passion and curiosity. Without this board to support myself and the rest of the Executive Committee we would not be where we are today.

Coming up, we will begin thinking about elections, if you have ever considered leadership in RWA this is the year to do it! We will have a good mix of those who know the ropes, with new space for new ideas and industry interested writers who know how important RWA is in this industry. You will be in a great group positioned to do great things for the members! Keep watching for more information.

Items still in the works:

We continue to work with the Marriott on the long-term contract situations. We also continue to work on news and updates about conference. And we continue to populate committees and bring programming and value to our members.

Clair Brett

SECRETARY'S REPORT — J. RENÉE

Motion to Accept 2023 Election Results

Brett moved that the Board certify the election results prepared by Survey and Ballot Systems

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on November 30, 2023, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve November 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Brett moved to approve the minutes of the November 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on November 30, 2023, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve Committee Members

Brett moved to approve the following committee members:

Diversity Advisory Committee

Nikki Prince

David-Matthew Barnes

Jayashree Gopal

Membership Outreach Committee

Geneva Keinath

Sadye Storey

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on November 30, 2023, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve Committee Chair and Committee Members

Brett moved to approve the following committee members:

Pen to Paper Committee

Sally Murphy – Committee Chair

Leah Miles – Committee Member

Leadership Development Committee

Claudia Severin

Sadye Storey

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on December 13, 2023, with 9 votes in the affirmative.

Motion to Approve Formation of an Ad Hoc Committee

Brett moved to create an Ad Hoc committee, Regional Chapters, to research how regional chapters could work for the organization and the potential impact it could have on members looking for local connections to RWA

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on December 13, 2023, with 9 votes in the affirmative.

Motion to Approve Transfer of Funds

Wills moves to transfer \$14,500 from the operating checking account held at Chase Bank to the savings account also held at Chase Bank.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on December 13, 2023, with 9 votes in the affirmative.

MOTION to Approve \$8,000 to Move to a New Association Membership Software

Brett moved to approve \$8,000 to move from the IMIS Membership Software to MemberClicks Membership Software.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on January 8, 2024 with 8 votes in the affirmative and 1 abstention.

Motion to Approve Regional Chapters Ad Hoc Committee Members

Brett moved to approve the following people to serve on the Regional Chapters Ad Hoc Committee:

Megan Crane – Chairperson
Antonia Cyn
Marian H. Griffin
Robin Hillyer-Miles
Mary Karlik
Anita Learned

TREASURER'S REPORT — B. WILLS

Romance Writers of America, Inc. Treasurer's Report Executive Summary September 2023 – February 2024

CASH POSITION

Total cash as of December 31st, 2023 is \$411K, down \$88K from September 1st, 2023. Unrestricted cash (funds used for operating expenses) is \$111K, and restricted funds (funds held for specific purposes) is \$300K.

YEAR-END FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2023 are currently being audited and prepared by our auditors, Blasek & Vetterling. They should be completed the end of February or early March.

OTHER UPDATES

Annual Audit: In accordance with our Bylaws, the annual audit is currently being performed by Blasek & Vetterling. The audit began January 22, 2024 and should be completed in the next few weeks.

ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA
DETAIL FOR BOARD MEETING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT
BOARD MEETING: FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Cash Position:

	<u>At 12/31</u>	<u>At 8/31</u>
Chase 1731	30,168.26	134,219.36
Chase 1887	33,017.45	18,010.54
Chase Savings 7295	<u>47,850.37</u>	<u>47,847.26</u>
Total Unrestricted	111,036.08	200,077.16
Frost	210,115.40	208,951.67
Wells Fargo	<u>89,993.33</u>	<u>89,948.22</u>
Total Restricted	300,108.73	298,899.89
Total Cash:	411,144.81	498,977.05
Difference:	(87,832.24)	

OFFICE REPORT – L. CAPUTO

Presented at the table by Laura Caputo, Executive Director

Good evening RWA members and leaders.

I'm thrilled to share with you some exciting updates in my Office Report. Let's get into it.

First, the membership update:

As of today, February 22, 2024, our membership stands at a total of 2,018 members. Among them, we have 1030 PAN members, 485 PRO members, with the remainder spread across Associate members and other categories.

Staff Activities and Achievements:

Our dedicated staff consisting of me, Greg Foreman on IT, Rebekah Arnits on customer service, Bailey Nolting on virtual events, and Rachel Sheffer on marketing communications, have been tirelessly working to advance the mission and vision of RWA. In the past quarter, we focused our energies on several key initiatives, driving momentum and engagement within the RWA community:

1. Specifically, Indie Author Weekend (IAW):

The team's efforts to build excitement around Indie Author Weekend yielded remarkable results. We witnessed a staggering 330% increase in registration compared to the previous IAW. This surge in interest culminated in 256 enthusiastic attendees, marking a significant leap from the 77 attendees from the event's last iteration. This success underscores the growing enthusiasm and support for independent authors within the RWA community.

2. Transition to MemberClicks Database:

We understand the challenges our members and chapters have faced with invoicing under our current database system. That's why we are so excited about the upcoming transition to the new MemberClicks database in the months ahead. MC, as the team calls it, heralds a new era of streamlined operations and improved member experiences. Stay tuned as we roll out more updates and enhancements to benefit all our members.

3. Traditional Author Weekend and Operational Focus:

Looking ahead, we are eagerly preparing for Traditional Author Weekend scheduled for April 6-7. We will do our very best to knock it out of the park to meet or exceed the success of IAW. Regarding RWA operations, we are increasing our understanding of RWA's operational requirements on an ongoing basis, including chapter service needs, tax practices, and more. By aligning our operations with best practices, we ensure a solid foundation for the growth and sustainability of RWA.

In conclusion, I believe the future of RWA is filled with promise and opportunity. Thank you for your support and dedication to RWA's mission. Here's to a bright and prosperous 2024.

AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – B. WILLS

Committee Charge: The Audit & Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall be responsible for selecting an independent CPA firm to conduct the annual audit, for reviewing the annual audited financial statements and any associated management letter detailing deficiencies, and for reviewing the related tax returns before all materials are presented to the Board, and shall assist the Treasurer as requested on financial and budgetary matters.

Committee Report: Normally, during the second quarter the Audit/Finance committee would review the annual audit which, in the past, has taken place in November of each year. The 2022-2023 audit, however, did not begin until the end of January (2024) and is still on-going. The committee will convene to review the draft report in the next quarter.

Successes/Action items Completed: N/A

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: In Quarter 3, the committee will be reviewing the audit and completed tax return.

Current Challenges: The committee would like to have 1-2 additional members.

Recognition: As treasurer, I very much appreciate how responsive the committee always is.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Brooke Wills, Treasurer

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

What type of Board action is required?: N/A

Committee report discussion included posting a call for volunteers for the Audit and Finance Committee in the weekly eNotes and on the organization's Facebook page; the committee chair utilize the volunteer spreadsheet for volunteers; post a call for volunteers everywhere including the monthly RWR.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Conference Workshop Committee shall coordinate, plan, and oversee the selection and scheduling for workshops for the RWA Annual Conference, Indie Author Weekend (2-day virtual mini conference), and Traditional Author Weekend (2-day virtual mini conference). The Conference Workshop Committee shall ensure that the conferences' programs reflect RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the speakers chosen, and the topics covered in the workshops.

Committee Report: Over the last quarter we have finalized the speakers and presenters for the Indie Author Weekend, scheduled the event and brought it to fruition. The weekend was a huge success with only a few minor snags, one being that one speaker did not show due to miscommunication. Otherwise, the feedback has been very positive from attendees and presenters. We are taking what we learned from those “snags” and using to make future events run smoother. Industry professionals were in attendance.

The committee has already started the planning stages for the next event, Traditional Author Weekend. The event description for the website has been updated. Topics and presenters are being brainstormed. The next committee meeting has been set for 2/7/24 at 8pm EST.

Successes/Action items Completed: Indie Author Weekend – completed and a success

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Planning Trad Author Weekend, Review of RWA Annual Conference workshop proposal form.

Current Challenges: Waiting on board to give permission as to when we can start accepting workshop proposals for the RWA annual conference so that the committee has ample time to review, select, and notify speakers in time for event.

Recognition: My thanks to Toni Jackson, Dawn Reed-Staten, Terri Stone, Jenn Black and Jacki Renee for their hard work and stepping up to help find speakers and volunteering to moderate as well as the other board members.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Gail Chianese, Chair

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

What type of Board action is required?: Input

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action: Confirmation of annual conference dates. Reviewing workshop proposals and notifying presenters takes time.

Committee report discussion included the following statement from the President: We thank the Conference Workshop Committee for their hard work. Rest assured that as soon as RWA has information to announce, we will do so as quickly as possible.

CONTEST COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Contest Committee shall assist the Executive Director with the establishment and overall planning and operation of all RWA national contests; and under the direction of the Executive Director, shall handle any contest result challenges pursuant to the Contest Policy outlined in Section 17. Each Contest's period, the Contest Committee shall establish actionable goals that measure the progress of RWA national contests in accordance with the intended benefit of the Contest. A Board liaison shall be assigned to this committee.

Committee Report: The Contest Committee meets bi-weekly to discuss the items we are working on in support of the organization having a contest this year.

[Update to the report presented at the table] *The committee received confirmation on the opening date for the contest. The committee's Board liaison introduce the chair to a judge from THE VIVIAN award whose professional background includes DEIA. Upon completion, the committee chair will submit to the Board the updated timeline, policy, rules, and judge training for review and vote.*

Successes/Action items Completed: • Consulted with a computer software designer on the construction of the contest website • Used the material obtained to draft the diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice training for judges; and submitted it to the Diversity Advisory Committee for review and input.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: • Trademarking the new Diamond Heart Award • New logos for the Golden Heart and Diamond Heart Awards • Response from the Diversity Advisory Committee on the diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice training for judges. • The new timeline for the contest. • Board approval of the updates to the Contest Administration Policy • Promotion of the contests • Judge recruitment • Opening the website for submissions.

Current Challenges: Our number one challenge right now is waiting for updates to our timeline. We're also waiting for broader input and revising of the diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice training for judges. We hope to get this finished soon so we can have this ready to go before we recruit judges.

We're also discussing and exploring ways of recruiting a broader range of romance authors and judges. When we start the push for recruitment, we'll need any help possible to get this information out to a diverse array of people.

Recognition: I just want to thank my entire committee for their continued commitment to the process. We've had a few delays and everyone has just been very understanding.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Jason Wrench, Chair

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

Committee report discussion included utilizing the list of over 300 past contest judges for recruitment; posting in eNotes, in the RWR, and on Facebook; host a 30-minute judge information session for potential judges; hold a volunteer fair.

DIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – C. BRETT

Committee Charge: The Diversity Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information and materials to the Board on diversity, inclusion, and access issues that impact RWA and its members.

Committee Report [corrected report included]:

- The Committee briefly discussed the ongoing issue of bloggers calling out writers for problematic themes and characters in their writing, and the extreme reaction of the writer's fans in response. *While this does not affect RWA directly, it is agreed that the DAC should keep an eye on this situation and others that arise.*
- The Committee reviewed the news report regarding a newly contracted author who created fake BIPOC accounts to negatively impact competitor's books in her genre. While the overall issue regards ethics, the DAC strongly feels that this is something that should be monitored, considering the accounts created under the guise of diverse authors taking these actions. Although these were fake accounts, will diverse authors suffer for this action?
- The Committee reviewed the Equitable Hearts Training and provided feedback.
- Welcomed three new members were added to the Committee: Nikki Prince, Jayasharee Gopal, and David Matthew Barnes.
- The Committee discussed a DAC Complaint that was presented regarding a section of the Pen-to-Paper which instructed the participants to be careful of tokenism, however, made it a point to instruct attendees to create 'diverse' secondary characters.
- The Committee did not meet in January 2023

Successes/Action items Completed: The Committee completed Summary of comments and suggested changes on the Equitable Hearts Training Presentation.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending:

- Continued review of RWA University Training Selections to ensure *diversity and equity among the trainings being presented.*
- Contact Committee regarding Pen-to-Paper training and suggest references to creation of diverse characters be removed from this section; also request DAC reviews all future projects before they are instituted.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Toni Jackson-Goins

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

What type of Board action is required?: Vote

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action: Motion submitted by board liaison

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – MARIAN H. GRIFFIN

Committee Charge: The Leadership Development Committee shall create a process to identify potential future RWA leaders within membership, get those people involved at the chapter level and at the national committee level, and help them to grow in their leadership skills. In addition, the committee shall solicit the general membership for at least two candidates for each open board position, assist the President-Elect in making choices for assistant chairs per section.

Committee Report: The committee had their first meeting in January 2024 via Zoom and discussed the upcoming Chapter Officer Town Hall. RWA President, Clair Brett had requested recommendations for the meeting. The committee made several recommendations that were sent to Ms. Brett, that included:

For the President town halls, we thought it would be good to cover the chapter governance and how it relates to nationals, how information will be shared, and possibly even touch on Robert's Rules (just so people know how to run a meeting). Affiliation paperwork could also be discussed.

For Secretary: Best Practices for taking minutes to include recording votes and the order of the meeting.

For Treasurer: Along with creating a budget, we felt that discussing taxes—how they're filed, what needs to be done, etc, would be helpful.

For all positions: Discuss the Chapter Leadership Training page on the RWA website. There was a lot of great information already available. To be honest, most of the committee wasn't aware that the page even existed. We also recommend reminding chapter leaders throughout the year about the CLT page. It could be brought up on the forums, as Antonia has done, but also include reminders in enotes. We also thought it would be helpful to walk people through finding the page and go over (briefly) what's listed. We all thought that the Chapter Officer Duties page was great as well as Board Monthly Duties.

The committee also reviewed the Leadership Questionnaire. Each member was charged with looking over the document and making suggestions. Those suggestions will be compiled and shared with Ms. Brett in February.

Successes/Action items Completed: Recommendations were made for Chapter Officer Town Halls

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: The Leadership Questionnaire is being reviewed by members.

Current Challenges: The chairperson would like 1-2 more members for the committee.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Jennifer D. Bokal, LDC co-chairperson

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

Committee report discussion included posting a call for committee volunteers in the Chapter Leadership forum.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – URSULA RENEE

Committee Charge: Membership Outreach Committee. The Membership Outreach Committee shall be tasked with membership outreach and member support by creating initiatives and materials to help retain current membership and to increase membership.

- Plan, bring to the Board for approval, and execute a bi-yearly membership drive.
- Create a yearly membership survey based on current topics and industry norms, to gauge the direction the membership would like to see the organization and what member benefits are most desired.
- Maintain and update the onboarding and off boarding email sequences to make sure they are the most effective in either helping members feel welcome and give them the most important information or to help make members choose to remain members.
- Study and research current membership retention and acquisition practices within the non-profit sector and similar groups to RWA and report back to the Board on any information that may prove helpful.
- Assist with creation of promotional materials/ads/copy/images/Social media posts/ etc. and work with staff and any RWA consultants in charge of marketing to regularly post about becoming a member or RWA points of interest for our current members.
- Assist staff with emails and marketing to go out to all non-member attendees of all events no more than 7 days after any given event to attempt to convert them to membership.
- Work with staff to create an easy path to national conference non-member attendees to register for membership on site at the conference.

Committee Report: Ursula Renee, the Board Liaison for the Membership Outreach Committee, met with Rebekah Arnits from AMC Source on Friday, January 5, 2024, to get advice on recruiting and retaining members. Due to issues with IMIS, much of Rebekah's time is focused on sending invoices to current members since we do not want to lose members because of our failure to offer them a way to renew.

After we switch from IMIS to Memberclick, the invoicing will be automated. This will free up time to work on the onboarding and off boarding emails and study what members want from RWA.

The Membership Outreach Committee met on Wednesday, January 17, 2024. We are going to study how other organization conduct membership drives and begin planning the Fall drive, which we would like to launch in October 2024. Ursula has also reached out to the RWA Board of Directors to discuss their vision for the Membership Drive.

We would also like to create a survey for members to complete in July and August to help the incoming committee members know where to focus their attention.

Successes/Action items Completed: Though there is only one member on the committee, we met to discuss the charge.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending:

- Study how other organizations conduct membership drives.
- Create a survey learn what members want from RWA.
- Review the onboarding and off boarding emails.

- Reach out to the AMC Marketing team to discuss how we can assist with the creation of promotional materials/ads/copy/images/Social media posts/ etc.

Current Challenges: The Membership Outreach Committee needs more members to help with recruitment and retention.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Ursula Renee, Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Committee report discussion included the strategies previously identified as a resolution to the committee's statement of challenges; in addition, a suggestion to have a town hall with chapters to come together and work together to retain members and bring in new members.

PAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – D. WINTERS

Committee Charge: The PAN Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information to the Board regarding ways to protect the interests of published romance writers, enhance the channels of communication between romance authors and publishing industry professionals, and coordinate activities by and for PAN members.

Committee Report: [Presented at the table by the PAN Advisor]

I am getting my feet under me. I met with Nancy Weeks, and she has given me some direction. I am still trying to figure out who I am working under. Clair has been great but I know she's super busy so we're trying to figure things out as far as moving forward. We're going to keep doing PowerUps. I want to increase the volume and the panache of the people that we are getting to come in to talk to us.

PEN TO PAPER COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – CLAIR BRETT

BOARD LIAISON – MARIAN H. GRIFFIN

Committee Charge: The Pen to Paper Committee shall coordinate, plan, and along with the Executive Director and Board of Directors, oversee the annual program. The Pen to Paper Committee shall ensure that the program reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Committee Report: In Q 2 the Committee successfully onboarded participants in the 2023-2024 P2P Program, hosting three onboarding sessions. It hosted a holiday gathering for participants in both programs. P2P started on January, 8, 2024, and as of February 5th, we have completed the first four lessons of unit one. The PSq Program started on January 14, 2024. We continue to handle any participant questions and concerns with the programs. We have set up critique groups for participants. We hosted workshops.

Successes/Action items Completed: Onboarded 43 people in P2P Program. Onboarded XX people in the Psq'd program. Two participants dropped out of the P2p Program. 4 workshops were hosted. There are 6 critique groups

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: 1 workshop pending. Sprint groups are starting this month. Weekly meetings held for all programs. Program continues to move forward as expected.

Current Challenges: Receiving timely responses from the board and AMC regarding exiting participants, potential workshops, and vimeo files.

Recognition: The committee would like to recognize Jennifer Altheiser, the outgoing Program Manager and Chair for P2P and PSq. She has been integral to this committee, helping create it in its infancy, growing it in the following years, and then creating the PSq'd Program. We will miss her knowledge and true dedication to encouraging the careers of budding writers. Her leaving us is a true loss.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Sally Murphy

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

Committee report discussion included information from the Executive Director regarding the vimeo files and exiting participants.

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – M. KARLIK

Committee Charge: The Policy Advisory Committee shall monitor public policy and legislation as well as public events that have the potential to impact RWA members, the romance writing industry, and writers, in general. The committee shall make recommendations to the Board regarding actions the Board may undertake regarding policy and legislation.

Committee Report: The Committee met on January 16th, and as this was the first meeting for some, we spent the entire time speaking about AI again. This is not going to be the case going forward. The committee will keep the board apprised to all things AI related in terms of ongoing legislation, etc.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Tara Taylor Quinn

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

What type of Board action is required?: Review

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action: The committee suggests that the board publish ongoing AI information in eNotes, to be submitted by the committee chair, with a continued reminder in every mention that the situation is ongoing and fluid.

At this time, such mentions would include ways to use AI to an author's benefit - for cover art and marketing. And a statement letting authors know that they should consider the feasibility of copyrighting all of their works as this is currently the only foreseeable way to be able to receive remuneration for ingestion or theft of their work.

The committee would also like to suggest that the board consider a referral to the education committee. Sara Reyes, owner of Fresh Fiction has agreed to do a workshop on using AI for marketing, free of charge. (The request went out via Donna C and came back positively in the fall.) I have attended that workshop in a private session with Sara and it's meaty.

The committee also would like to recommend that the board pay close attention to getting as much information as possible linked to the Author's Toolkit in terms of RWA and all that it is doing for authors. It's believed that some new members are using the Toolkit almost exclusively. For instance, a link to contests, conferences, that kind of thing.

Learned moved to adopt the recommendation of the Policy Advisor Committee to keep the Author's Toolkit linked to information relevant to members. The motion was seconded by Director-at-Large Roark. The motion was adopted by general consent.

PRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – R. HILLYER-MILES

Committee Charge: [Updated to state correct charge of the committee] *The PRO Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information to the Board regarding ways to support and promote unpublished writers in the areas between manuscript completion and publication, enhance the channels of communication between those romance writers and publishing industry professionals, and coordinate activities by and for PRO members.*

Committee Report: [Presented at the table] We have a PRO Community on our forums/ioGroups and invite all PRO members to join.

We will begin having monthly meet-ups on the third Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. Eastern. The Zoom link was shared in the PRO Community.

We have three volunteers for our PRO steering committee but welcome more, if interested, please let Robin know. You can message her via the PRO Community forum/group.

The PRO and PAN liaisons hope to meet up soon to plan some fun activities together.

Committee report discussion included other benefits of the PAN and PRO Advisors to come together to assist members with understanding the two communities, and help chapters guide its members to attain PRO and or PAN status.

ROMANCE AUTHOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM (RAMP) COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – L. TURNER

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Romance Author Mentorship Program (RAMP) Committee shall coordinate, plan, and along with the Executive Director and Staff, oversee the annual program. The Romance Author Mentorship (RAMP) Committee shall ensure that the program reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Committee Report: The committee held its second meeting to discuss changes to the program to improve the experience for mentors and mentees. The committee discussed the scope of work related to updating the information on the website and items to be completed before RAMP 2024 opens.

Successes/Action items Completed: The 2023 RAMP mentees attended Indie Author Weekend at no cost as part of their participation in the program.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: The committee copied the information on the RAMP pages of the website and created documents. The committee is reviewing the language and making suggested changes.

Current Challenges: The committee needs more members to assist with oversight of the program.

Recognition: I would like to thank Lara Zielinsky (2023 RAMP Mentor) and Samantha Netzband (2023 RAMP Mentee) for volunteering to serve on the committee.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Jacki Renée, Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

Committee report discussion concluded that the strategies previously identified as a resolution to other committees' volunteer challenges can be used for the RAMP Committee.

RWA UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – A.M. ROARK

Committee Charge: The RWA University Committee provides classes and other online educational resources to members and help to ensure that the RWA University reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the speakers whose work is featured and the topics covered in the educational resources.

Committee Report: I have scheduled a meeting with board secretary, Jacki Renée, to get assistance with the charge of the committee and the execution of my duties as the Board liaison to the RWA University Committee.

[Update to the report presented at the table] I started an audit of everything that we have offered and through the lens of DEIA. I'm putting together a welcome guide for committee members that is basically a road map of things we need to get done. I am asking the other Board liaisons to please ask your committees if they could put together the perfect bundle of workshops and articles that RWA University previously offered that would be for their group. I would also like the committees to give suggestions on workshops we can offer that would be good for their group.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Populating the committee, creating a calendar for classes, and creating a calendar for online educational resources.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Alexis-Morgan Roark, Director-at-Large, Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

RWR CONTENT COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – A. LEARNED

Committee Charge: The *RWR* Content Committee will work with RWA staff to develop content for the *RWR*, solicit authors for article, review articles upon submission and prior to publication, and help to ensure the *RWR* reflects RWA’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the authors whose work is featured and the sources who are quoted within the articles.

Committee Report: The *RWR* Content Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to discuss the acquisition of articles for the magazine. This is an ongoing challenge.

The committee identified monthly themes but has not been able to draw heavily on the topics and themes as articles are still mostly acquired through contractors and external members of the organization. We are finding challenges in securing a regular stream of volunteer writers from the membership to provide articles for the magazine. Non-members have been the greatest source of interest to date.

The committee remains open to feedback from its membership, as well as the members of RWA and the board for a direction on the future of the magazine. We are still pursuing the ability to create a steady influx of articles to support the monthly publication as we feel this provides the greatest support to RWA members.

[Update to the report presented at the table] After I turn in this report I've actually reached out to specific people for articles for specific things and it's been very well received. Hopefully I can continue doing that going forward or hopefully we can get a committee chair to do that.

Successes/Action items Completed: We have added five volunteers to approve content.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: We are working on the best way for committee members to approve content and also to change our meeting day to fall prior to the *RWR* deadline.

Current Challenges: Committee Members feel that groups.io is a bit confusing. So we're trying to find a more user friendly way to work.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Anita Learned, Director-At-Large, *RWR* Committee Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

MOTION #1: TO APPROVE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Karlik moved the approval of AM Grimm as a member of the Policy Advisory Committee.

The motion was adopted by general consent.

MOTION #2: TO APPROVE THE DEIA INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCESS

Brett moved to accept the proposed DEIA incident policy and process. [see attachment]

The motion was adopted by general consent.

MOTION #3: TO APPROVE PEN TO PAPER COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Brett moves to approve Paula Robinson as co-chair to the Pen to Paper Committee

The motion was adopted by general consent.

MOTION #4: TO APPROVE REVOCATION OF THE AFFILIATION OF THE CULTURAL INTERRACIAL, AND MULTICULTURAL SPECIAL INTEREST CHAPTER OF ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA (CIMRWA)

Brett moved to revoke the affiliation of the CIMRWA chapter of RWA.

The motion was adopted by general consent.

MOTION #5: TO APPROVE AMENDMENT TO THE CHAPTER GRANT FUND POLICY

Brett moves to amend the policy for The Chapter Grant Fund to read:

5.20.1. The Chapter Grant Fund shall be established to financially assist chapters who wish to provide additional chapter programs but lack sufficient funding, or new affiliated chapters who need funds for operational costs but lack sufficient funding.

5.20.1.1.4. The ED shall administer the Chapter Grant Fund. The ED shall notify the Board of Directors when awarding chapter grant funds, and include a statement of awardance in the Office Report submitted for quarterly board meetings.

The motion was adopted by general consent.

NEW BUSINESS

REQUEST TO APPROVE CHAPTER GRANT TO MOSAIC SPECIAL INTEREST CHAPTER OF RWA

Renée requested that the Executive Director award Mosaic Special Interest Chapter of Romance Writers of America another chapter grant for operational costs. A little background history, in October 2022, a group of members started inquiring about reviving the Cultural Interracial Multicultural Special Interest Chapter of RWA also known as CIMRWA. The lack of communication from CIMRWA's president of record resulted in those members filing an application to form a new chapter. In January 2023, the RWA Board of Directors approved the application for the formation of Mosaic Special Interest Chapter of Romance Writers of America and was awarded a grant from the chapter grant fund to cover the startup costs associated with filing the necessary documents for affiliation. Mosaic's Board of Directors completed the process for becoming a fully affiliated chapter in February 2023, however, the chapter was not set up in the organization's member management system to accept chapter members. Therefore, Mosaic does not have operational funds. Another grant will give Mosaic some funds for operational costs until the migration to the new member management system is completed and Mosaic can accept chapter members.

The request was adopted by roll call with 7 ayes and 0 nays.

MOTION TO APPROVE CHAPTER FORMATION APPLICATION FOR ROMANCE WRITERS OF OREGON

Renée moved to approve the Chapter Formation Application submitted for Romance Writers of Oregon. It is a special interest chapter for the state of Oregon with satellite branches.

The request was adopted by general consent.

MOTION TO WAIVE ANNUAL CHAPTER AFFILIATION FEE

Wills moved to waive the annual affiliation fee for chapters for the RWA 2023/2024 fiscal year.

The motion was adopted by roll call with 7 ayes and 0 nays.

ADJOURN President Brett adjourned the meeting at 8:13 P.M. Central Time.