



Minutes for January 12, 2016  
Planning Retreat  
Green Ridge Recreation Center, 7415 Wood Haven RD Roanoke, VA

#### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Betsy Parkins, President, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the half-day retreat.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### APR

Chuck Lionberger presented the accreditation committee report. He said one person is enrolled in the APR Boot Camp and recommended actively promoting the value of having the APR designation as a way to increase the number of members seeking accreditation. Betsy Parkins suggested setting up an APR webinar and offering a study question and answer at the start of each luncheon as more ways to spark interest in APR.

##### AWARDS

Josh Meyer presented the awards committee report. He said that three of the categories under the Call for Entries, do not include budgets, so they can't be considered for the Best in Show category. Last year the Awards Gala moved to Thursday night. There were 90 attendees, which was up from 67 the previous year. There were also a record number of 88 entries. He said the PRSA chapter netted about \$1,000 from the entry fees and gala. Josh recommended moving toward online submissions in the future.

##### ETHICS

Betsy Parkins presented the ethics committee report on behalf of Doug Cannon. Doug requested the board make a decision on how to approach ethics education in 2016. There was support voiced for increasing dialogue via the chapter's social media channels. There was also a suggestion that the chapter reach out to Washington and Lee University, which sponsors twice-yearly ethics forums.

##### NEWSLETTER

Allison Lindy presented the newsletter committee report and provided a 2016 publication schedule. She said the February newsletter was nearly complete and that information on the APR Boot Camp was included. She suggested that the article seeking committee members be included in the newsletter earlier in the year.

##### Present:

**Betsy Parkins, APR** (*President*)  
**Jen K. Ward** (*President-Elect/Programs*)  
**Scott Ramsburg** (*Treasurer/Website*)  
**Teresa Hamilton Hall** (*Secretary*)  
**Chuck Lionberger, APR** (*Past President/Accreditation/Awards/Mid-Atlantic Rep./Nominating Chair*)  
**Alison Hammond** (*Director '15/ Prof. Dev.*)  
**Catherine Fox** (*Director '16/Hospitality*)  
**Josh Meyer** (*Director '16*)  
**Adedayo Abah** (*Director '16*)  
**Taylor Ricotta** (*Membership*)  
**Heidi Ketler, APR** (*Public Service*)  
**Lori Greiner** (*Social Media/ VT PRSSA Professional Advisor*)  
**Allison Lindy** (*Newsletter*)

##### Absent:

**Douglas Cannon, APR+M** (*Assembly Delegate/Ethics Chair/VT PRSSA Acad. Advisor*)  
**Laura Neff-Henderson, APR** (*NRV/Accreditation*)  
**Shelly Whitaker, APR** (*Radford PRSSA Prof. Advisor*)  
**Tiffany Bradbury** (*Public Service*)  
**Amy Whittaker** (*Liberty PRSSA Prof. Advisor*)  
**Dr. Frank Kalupa** (*JMU PRSSA Acad. Advisor*)  
**Amy Bonebright** (*Liberty PRSSA Acad. Advisor*)  
**Dr. Jeremy Langett** (*Lynchburg PRSSA Acad. Advisor*)  
**Vince Hazelton, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA** (*Radford PRSSA Acad. Advisor*)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Lori Greiner presented the social media report, which included a handout that detailed the number of Linked-In, Twitter, and Facebook followers. She said it would be beneficial to have a social strategy for 2016. The current strategy has been to promote Blue Ridge PRSA events. Several suggestions were offered including sharing current events and issues as a means to spark discussion, live tweets during PRSA events, and offering various giveaways as a means to get people to view and participate in the chapter's social media channels.

## WEBSITE

Scott Ramsburg presented the website report. He said he would like to post information about upcoming events more than two-to-three weeks in advance. He also asked for more material to post to the site and said the group needed to begin thinking about switching to a new web hosting platform. He said he was inclined to move away from Wild Apricot because of increasing rates and the ability to do more with other companies.

## HOSPITALITY

Catherine Fox presented the hospitality report. She said the February luncheon date had been secured with the Hotel Roanoke and that dates and locations were being looked at for the remainder of the year's luncheons.

## MEMBERSHIP

Taylor Ricotta presented the membership report. She said membership currently stands at 118 members up from 115 the previous year. She recommended focusing on ways to new ways to engage current members in the coming year and outlined some of her ideas to include a separate event that would be just for members. Currently, there are 60-to-80 members who regularly attend PRSA luncheon meetings.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Allison Hammond presented the professional development report. She said the July 2015 media speed dating event was very successful. The speed mentoring program in September only had one participant. She said the committee's goal for 2016 is to hold two media speed dating events and one mentoring event. There are 5 members on her committee.

## PUBLIC SERVICE

Heidi Ketler presented the public service report. Heidi said that the public service project involving Family Services will conclude in June. Heidi suggested moving away from focusing the chapter's public service on one organization to a more mentoring-type program. Scott and others voiced support for Heidi's suggestion.

## CHAPTER FINANCES

Jen Ward presented the end of year treasurer's report. She said there is still one outstanding check. She recommended that board members with bank cards contact Scott prior to using the card to avoid

confusion and make it easier to reconcile the chapter's bank account at the end of the month. Jen also recommended that the incoming board members be included with the December minutes to make it easier to transition the bank account to the incoming officers. The minutes showing the new officers are apparently a bank requirement.

Betsy continued the chapter finance discussion by presenting a draft 2016 budget. She said the chapter's finances are thin in terms of income. She suggested changing the responsibility for luncheon sponsorships from the program chair to another person or the board. The draft budget included one professional development event, which will now increase to three events. The board did not adopt the budget. Betsy tabled the discussion to the February meeting.

*Teresa Hamilton Hall had to leave for another meeting, and Scott Ramsburg took the remaining minutes.*

#### RE-ENERGIZING THE CHAPTER

Small group discussions were held followed by a broader group discussion. Ideas from the breakout discussions included the following:

- More engagement with New River Valley - socials or more workshops
- Gala - suggestion that we try something not quite as fancy
- Seek out cross promotions and partnerships with other organizations
- Try the "how to write awards" workshop as a PD event or webinar
- Create a "road show" to take to universities
- Attempt more informal brown bag networking luncheons or meetups
- Eliminate prepay in favor of an early bird rate

#### SUMMIT AWARDS DISCUSSION

Chuck presented five options for the awards to take care of the problem in the judging category for best in show:

- Eliminate all budget divisions
- Add divisions to all categories
- Eliminate budget divisions just for best in show
- Eliminate best in show
- Restructure the whole thing

Discussion was had, but it was tabled in favor of a small group bringing forth a proposal. Josh, Scott, Chuck and Adedayo Abah will work on this offline.

#### PRSSA

There was discussion about better communication with chapters through advisors. There was no resolution.

## LUNCHEONS

The February speaker is Allen Zhang on Feb 18. His talk will center on "How to sell your value as a PR professional."

Committee chairs were asked to create a summary of their plans for the upcoming year to include in the newsletter.

Betsy asked Scott to proceed with earlybird rates of \$30 for members until 2 weeks before event, raised to \$35. There seemed to be general agreement for this, although no official vote was taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Hamilton Hall, Secretary 2016