



**American Association for Public Opinion Research  
Executive Council Teleconference Minutes  
November 10, 2011**

**ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER.**

Scott Keeter	President	Present
Paul J. Lavrakas	Vice President	Present
Frank Newport	Past President	Present
Joseph Lenski	Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Rachel Caspar	Associate Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Timothy Johnson	Standards Chair	Present
David Cantor	Associate Standards Chair	Present
Dan Merkle	Conference Chair	Present
Paul Beatty	Associate Conference Chair	Absent
Joe Murphy	Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Liz Hamel	Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Rich Morin	Communications Chair	Present
Marjorie Connelly	Associate Communications Chair	Present
Linda Piekarski	Councilor-at-Large	Present
Patricia Moy	Councilor-at-Large	Present

**Staff**

John Waxman	Managing Partner	Present
Susan Tibbitts	Executive Director	Present
Donna Tieberg	Administrative Director	Present
Lindsay Arends	Marketing Communications Manager	Present
Andrew Massengill	Accountant	Present
Jacky Schweinzger	Conference Director	Present

**Guests**

Chuck Shuttles	Co-Chair, Education Committee	Present
Debbie Rexrode	Chair, Conference Support Sub-committee	Present

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Scott Keeter called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. EST. Member guests were asked to be prepared to leave the call at the time that the budget discussion commenced. Scott Keeter thanked committee chairs for keeping reports brief to allow for the budget

discussion and invited committee chairs to add additional documents to SharePoint or to communicate via e-mail.

## **II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 15, 2011 Executive Council meeting were reviewed.

**Frank Newport moved, seconded by Joe Lenski, that the minutes for the September 15, 2011 Executive Council meeting be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.**

The Minutes of the October 13, 2011 Executive Council meeting were reviewed. Conference Chair Dan Merkle proposed that the minutes of the October meeting be amended on page 5, under B. Conference Committee, with the wording of “Conference Committee Chair, Dan Merkle, and Sub-committee Chair, Debbie Rexrode, believe that the name change would better reflect the duties of the subcommittee members and encourage greater volunteer participation.”

**Rich Morin moved, seconded by Patricia Moy, that the minutes of the October 13, 2011 council meeting be approved as amended. The motion was unanimously approved.**

## **III. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT**

### **A. Current Financial Status**

Secretary-Treasurer Joe Lenski observed that there was minimal activity during the month of September. We are projecting a surplus of \$116K for 2011 compared to the \$190K surplus for 2010.

### **B. Investment Status**

There was no investment update at this time. Joe Lenski has contacted Investment Committee Chair Janet Streicher and plans to give an investment update at the December Council meeting.

### **C. 2012 Annual Conference Sponsorship and Exhibits**

Rachel Caspar, Associate Secretary-Treasurer asked council members to consider having their companies sponsor or exhibit at the upcoming annual conference.

### **D. Endowment Committee**

The final edits have been made by staff and committee members to the draft end of year

fundraising appeal. Council has previously approved the letter. The three initiatives to be funded include stipends for graduate students to attend the annual conference, the Transparency Initiative, and preservation of AAPOR's heritage and legacy. The target date to email the letter is prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.

**1. Annual Conference Student Travel Award**

Support is requested by the Endowment Committee for eight council-directed award stipends at \$500 each to permit graduate students to attend the annual conference. This amount is not currently reflected in the 2012 budget proposal. The committee hopes the fundraising appeal will raise the \$4,000 needed to fund the awards in 2012.

**There was a motion by Joe Murphy, seconded by Rich Morin, to approve \$4,000 to be used from council-directed funds for the Annual Conference Student Travel Awards. The motion passed unanimously.**

**2. Future Intent for the Heritage Fund**

The temporarily restricted Heritage Fund currently has \$7,356 remaining. The Endowment Committee has proposed that remaining funds be spent in 2012 and the fund closed permanently. The amount currently available is expected to cover most of the 2012 budget request for Heritage Interviews proposed by Heritage and Archive Committee Chair Mike Mokrzycki. Any additional funding approved subsequently would come from council-directed funds. There was discussion that this had originally been the intent of Council when the fund was created.

**There was a motion by Joe Lenski, seconded by Frank Newport, to close the current temporarily restricted Heritage Fund permanently once current funds are expended. Future funding to support heritage activities including Heritage Interviews will come from council-directed funds. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ISSUES**

**A. 2012-2013 Nominations Committee**

The Executive Committee previously approved appointments to serve on the 2012-2013 Nominations Committee. They include Frank Newport, Chair, Floyd Ciruli, Allyson Holbrook, Dawn Nelson, Eileen O'Brien, and Scott Keeter serving as ex officio.

**There was a motion by Paul J. Lavrakas, seconded by Joe Lenski, to approve the Executive Committee appointment of the 2012-2013 Nominations Committee. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **B. Membership and Chapter Relations Committee-Update**

Joe Murphy, Membership and Chapter Relations Chair, gave the MCR report. The 2012 membership renewals tracked close to 2011 through October, and have fallen behind since then. He observed that the first of the two hard-copy renewal letters was sent slightly later this fall due to the extra time it took for the membership renewal form to be updated with auto-renewal information. The committee expects to see an increase in renewals following the October 28 mailing. MCR and staff will continue to track membership through the end of the year, and report back to Council at the next meeting. Joe advised that there was no need to change 2012 budget assumptions for membership at this time. There was a recommendation that clicks on the membership renewal buttons contained in renewal e-blasts be tracked. Information will be available later in the year on member reception to the new auto-renew option.

I don't know anything about membership.

MCR is finishing up the report for the 2011 Member Survey and the report will be sent to Council for final review before release to the membership and posting of the de-identified dataset to the website.

Joe reported on membership recruitment efforts and display of the AAPOR booth at chapter meetings this fall. MCR members recently staffed the booth at the American Public Health Association (APHA) conference. A debrief meeting is planned for those volunteers who worked the booth at APHA to evaluate the booth effectiveness as plans are developed for conferences in 2012.

## **C. Conference Committee Report**

### **1. Conference Abstract Report**

Dan Merkle reported that the abstract submission process, which ended November 7, resulted in 612 abstracts submitted this year, compared to 606 the previous year. Although the abstract submission process began several weeks earlier this year, Dan commented that the earlier start had no impact on the number of abstracts received. The deadline for submissions was extended by a few days again this year. Dan noted that the total of 612 abstracts reflects increased participation. This year, a panel submission is counted as a single abstract. Prior to this year, one abstract had previously been counted for each participant in a panel presentation. The Abstract Committee will meet on November 30 to review abstract submissions. Administrative Director Donna Tieberg will provide staff support.

## **2. Consideration of Locations for the 2016 and 2017 Annual Conference**

Jacky Schweinzger, AAPOR Conference Director, reviewed the recommendation memo from Dan Merkle, Debbie Rexrode and herself, concerning the proposed sites for the 2016 and 2017 Annual Conference. As background, she noted that Council had previously approved the Westin Diplomat in Hollywood, Florida for 2015 following the September meeting discussion of site options for 2015 and 2016. Jacky reminded the Council that she had received responses for the 2016 meeting to be held May 12-15, from the Sheraton New Orleans and the Hyatt Regency New Orleans, the Hilton Austin, the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter, and JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country.

Jacky and Debbie visited Austin, San Antonio and New Orleans to determine the best fit for the 2016 conference. Based upon the site visit, the Hilton Austin property was the best overall fit. The location in the heart of the city is excellent, the meeting space will work well for the AAPOR program with room to increase attendance and the hotel has agreed to reduce the room rate by \$10 and make other concessions.

Debbie Rexrode, Chair of the Conference Support Subcommittee added that the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country was too large for AAPOR's conference and AAPOR would not be the only conference in-house. The San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter property location was good, but the hotel is a tight fit, with no room for growth in conference registration. The Sheraton New Orleans was already on a potential list of cities to return to, and the committee felt that it is a good pick due to location and city activities available in the evening.

Responding to questions, Jacky reported that the room rate in 2012 for the JW Marriott Orlando will be \$209, in Boston for 2013 the rate will be \$249, in 2014 in Anaheim the rate will be \$239, and in 2015 the rate at the Westin Diplomat will be \$205. Most of the rates are lower than the rates in Phoenix in 2011.

Noting that the Council had not yet discussed options for the conference location in 2017, Jacky stated that Starwood Hotels and Resorts, which includes the Sheraton New Orleans and the Westin Diplomat, has proposed a multi-year contract for AAPOR that would apply to the 2015 and 2017 meetings. Starwood has offered AAPOR an additional 4% sleeping room revenue credit to the master account. Commission on sleeping rooms is currently 10% (\$46K in 2011). In addition, Starwood has offered rooms attrition of 25%. Rooms attrition is generally 10%-20%.

Jacky reported that the contracts for the 2015 and 2017 conference sites must be signed at the same time in order to take advantage of the additional concessions. The additional sleeping room revenue credit will increase conference revenue by \$10-\$15,000 in 2015 and 2017. The Committee recommends that the Council accept the multi-year deal and agree to hold the conference in New Orleans in 2017.

**Following discussion, there was a motion by Frank Newport, seconded by Rich Morin, to approve the recommendation to hold the conference at the Hilton Austin in 2016 and at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel in 2017. A roll call vote was requested. The motion was approved with a vote of 12-2.**

#### **D. Transparency Initiative**

Paul Lavrakas reported that a legal review of the Transparency Initiative is currently underway. Scott Keeter, Paul J. Lavrakas and Susan Tibbitts met by teleconference with AAPOR's counsel for a progress report. Paul summarized the issues raised to date in a memo to the Steering Committee that was shared with the Executive Council. The next TI steering committee meeting is scheduled for November 21, and TI Subcommittees are meeting as needed. It is hoped that the TI pilot program will be in place in early 2012. The particulars of the program have not yet been finalized.

Scott Keeter thanked the member guests for their hard work and excused them from the meeting.

#### **V. 2012 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Scott Keeter noted that staff had prepared an updated 2012 budget proposal that includes the proposed management fee. The current proposed budget for 2012 includes a \$61,000 deficit in the net operating budget *excluding* temporarily restricted funds, and a deficit of \$133K *including* temporarily restricted funds, the difference accounted for almost entirely by the POQ expenses released from restriction. The Executive Committee has met to discuss the budget and management fee and has met with and received additional clarification from Susan Tibbitts and Managing Partner, John Waxman. Scott asked that Susan and John speak on the recommended management fee for 2012.

John Waxman stated that the management fee for 2011 is \$290K. In the current 2012 proposed budget the management fee is \$355,700 and includes increases for a cost of living adjustment (3% or \$8,700) and expanded staffing for webinars (16.7 % FTE or \$15,000); and the option of adding 15% FTE or \$18,000 for marketing communications, 20% FTE or \$14,000 for general administrative and member services support, and 5%

FTE or \$10,000 for executive oversight. The focus of additional staff support would be the Transparency Initiative and the archive project. Discussion followed.

In response to questions, John Waxman noted that the 3% cost of living adjustment is a place-holder, and specific economic data will be reviewed before the final percentage is determined e.g. BLS consumer price index for the Chicago area. He added that there was no staff support included for webinars in the current management fee. Sherwood has willingly helped to develop and launch the program with the understanding that staffing support would be added once the program was up and running.

The expansion for member services and administrative support is intended to address the persistent overage in effort by the administrative director. Although some of the overage is a result of the necessary transition from Barb Gunderson to Donna Tieberg, there is still a significant overtime work required to accomplish tasks assigned in the current scope of work. The addition of administrative support for the TI and the archive project are expected to add to the administrator workload. To help reduce the workload overall and increase capacity to support the TI and archive projects, Sherwood has identified certain membership and customer service functions that can be moved to the membership and order processing department. The specific services would be determined when the final increase is decided. Although the administrator will retain oversight for all member and customer service functions, making this change will create some additional capacity.

There is also a need to increase marketing communications staffing to support the Transparency Initiative, particularly in the pilot phase. The proposal also includes a recommendation that AAPOR purchase the remaining 5% of the Executive Director's time available to provide executive oversight for the TI and archive projects.

Susan commented on the duties of education department staff assigned to webinars, and the shifting of member and customer service to the order processing department from the administrator position. There was a question about order processing staff time available through year end related to OPD staff time to date as shown in the staff time summary report. Joe Murphy responded that OPD staff time is heaviest at the end of year to support dues renewal and at the beginning of the year for conference dues processing. There was a request for more detailed data on staff time if available. John Waxman agreed to work with the Executive Committee.

Discussion followed on the proposed honorarium for webinar presenters. There was agreement to discuss the fee in an upcoming Council meeting. Other topics discussed included the expense for conference breakfast, the pass-through payment for WAPOR conference registration that is no longer displayed on the budget and the total net income in POQ restricted funds.

Scott recommended that the AAPOR budget be reorganized and the management fee be distributed by program function to better reflect actual support for program activities.

Staff was excused from the meeting and the recording was stopped.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**There was a motion by Joe Lenski, seconded by Paul J. Lavrakas to suspend the regular meeting and convene in executive session for the purpose of considering the proposed 2012 budget and management fee. The motion passed unanimously.**

The executive session of the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. EST.

The Council reconvened in regular session. There was agreement by the Council that the members of the Executive Committee joined by Dan Merkle, will meet the week of November 14 to discuss the details of the 2012 budget and proposed management fee, and will make a report to the full Council on December 1.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 P.M. EST.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will be held via teleconference on Thursday, December 15 at Noon EST.