

Ozarks Writers League Minutes of the Board Meeting

January 4, 2021, 3:00 pm, via Zoom

Welcome, and thank you!

1. Attendance (Duke, Kimberly, Ronda, Veda, April, Margarite, Diane & Ricky, Rochelle, Bonnie, Diana, Linda, and Russell attended the meeting.)
2. Minutes from last meeting (Duke read the minutes and requested guidelines for officers to be submitted as a disaster relief method to give prospective board members the information to help them fill the position. Margarite moved Veda seconded the motion passed to accept the minutes as read.)
3. Treasurer's report: Diane Yates (The balance is \$4483.13. 24 members have paid dues for 2021. Veda asked if that included the 9 who paid early. Diane said yes. April motioned, Rochelle seconded, vote was unanimous to accept the report.)
4. Website Committee report and thoughts for 2021: Ricky Yates (Ricky has been going through and cleaning up the website a bit. He is trying to find ways to drive traffic to the site. Possibly featuring members' books. Ronda said videos may help if it's something people are searching for. Ricky said tips and tricks may attract people. Ricky suggested an adopt an OWL mentorship where young writers are paired up with experienced writers. Ricky said we need to modernize the look of the website and seek feedback from some of the board members. Veda said that's a great idea. Ricky said we can push it on Facebook. Bonnie suggested a giveaway to subscribers. Diane suggested writing tips to be talked about in a similar manner on social media so people can learn about OWL. Margarite said that tips and tricks is a great idea and most writers would want/need that. Bonnie said that especially new writers would want that and suggested that every Tuesday, for example, would be best. Diane said it might be a once-a-month thing because of the work involved. Ronda said our first mixer on next Thursday night at 7 pm. The mixers will be open to anyone and links available on Facebook for new people to learn about the paid member only speakers and events via Zoom. She will do a YouTube playlist. Ricky suggested a book trailers for members. Anything to put out new and changed information on the website because people don't come back if everything stays the same. Diane said the writing tips is probably the most promising. She suggested author features to promote our members. Ronda recommended an author spotlight each month. Motion to accept Ronda, second Bonnie, unanimously passed to accept the report.)
5. Membership Committee report: Bonnie Tesh (Bonnie talked with Duke about a membership email and maybe a newsletter and they plan to get that done. Duke said that with the holidays over, things should get back to a slower pace and the task can be accomplished. Duke moved to accept the report, Margarite 2nd, unanimously accepted.)

6. Writing Contest Committee report: Ronda del Boccio (Ronda said there's nothing more to add because she's just getting started. She's seeing what categories people want and she will ramp it up by seeking sponsor. Russell motioned, Bonnie 2nd, unanimously accepted.)

7. Historian report: Linda Runnebaum (Linda hasn't been able to scan things because she's in a new house and finally has internet but not printer etc. She will begin scanning as soon as she's set-up for it. She's new to the office and just learning how to do it. Duke said that he's asking for guidelines from officers to help future officers do the job. He doesn't know what the historian does either. He asked Linda to send that in within 30 days. Margarite moved to accept, Veda 2nd, unanimously accepted.)

8. Art Contest Committee report: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields (Rochelle has taken copious notes about how to do this virtually as opposed to in person. She thought that people could send .jpg files but then how do you make that anonymous. As contest chair she won't be entering it and perhaps she could judge it. Duke said he didn't know if she was the best judge or not, but he suggested that perhaps she could log in the entries, giving them a number or something to hand over to the judge so the entries would be anonymous. Ronda offered to show Rochelle her system since it's the same idea for writing. Rochelle agreed that Ronda's system is a good one and would like to work with her to see how to do it. Duke said the judge could receive a single page created by Ricky to make it easy to judge the art contest. Russell moved, Veda 2nd, motion passed unanimously.)

9. Fundraising Committee report: Margarite Stever and John Crawford (Margarite has been in touch with John Crawford and he didn't have any other ideas, so she said that since we are in a virtual realm and she suggested raffling of a new laptop. There are good ones for around \$300-500 and she suggested that the tickets be sold for \$2-3. She can keep track of it in an excel spreadsheet. If we have an in-person conference in the fall then we can give the laptop then or if we don't then we can draw the numbers and mail the laptop. Bonnie likes the idea. Diane likes the laptop idea and raffle tickets. She suggested that the tickets need to be more money. Rhonda suggested \$10/ticket. Diane said that we're raising funds and asked if we have someone to donate the laptop. Margarite said that when she was president, she donated most of the prizes. She asked if we could ask for donations of funds from members and from Walmart. She's going to try to approach Walmart. Bonnie said they may give us a big discount. Diane did the math and said that at \$10 you need to sell \$30 of them. Ricky asked how many tickets were sold for the tablet last time. Veda said that it should come from the treasury and Margarite should not be responsible for the money and not set a precedent. All the funds should come from the treasury for fundraisers and prizes. Diane said she had a couple of ideas from things she's seen recently was baskets of books from our own authors were popular. Ronda said that shipping is expensive since we're virtual. Russel said that gift card baskets would be great, especially if they're donated. Raffle the basket and make more money. Diane said that gift cards are not ensure in the mail. If we give away electronic books and some of the gift cards can be done by email then there's no risk. Veda asked what the likelihood things will not be delivered. Ronda said it's high. Bonnie said she would not be inclined to buy a raffle ticket for books because she has so many. She says she would do it just to

contribute, but it wouldn't be attractive. She has more than she can read in her lifetime already. Ronda isn't super excited about a basket of books either. She suggested that we see if we can get a free subscription to one of the writing services. It could be a \$100 membership donated. Russell moved that we table this for the next meeting because for the sake of time we're not coming to a conclusion last night. Bonnie suggested that Margarite see what she can come up with before the next meeting. Russell said more than one fundraiser would be nice. Ronda said that she will check on a few things. Duke said Russell motioned to table the discussion and Bonnie 2nd, it passed unanimously.)

10. Newsletter report: Kimberly Pennell (Duke said the newsletter should be coming out next month and confirmed that with Kimberly. We need any information that goes in the newsletter submitted by the 15th of January or it won't be included. Bonnie said that having a newsletter come out will be good to increase membership. Duke suggested that each committee chairperson and each officer put together a short description of what we're doing. Veda said people like the kudos section but we need to get the invitation to submit out to old membership. Ronda said she has an email list of last year's membership. She'll coordinate and make sure she has all of this year's paid members too.

- a. Duke raised the topic of our online contest. Ronda said she wants to do the contest kickoff this spring.
- b. Veda said that she lined up guest speakers who were professionals and understood that the events may be canceled. That's why she asked Joan and Marty. They're both nationally published and have a lot of experience. Marty hates speaking but because of the panel she was willing to do it. She suggested that they find some other people who can do a Q&A. Another thing she had planned was a first pages session because that involved the members and was easily canceled if necessary. Diane said the first pages session was a great idea and she had someone in mind. Duke said that rather than look for speakers would it be possible to look for topics and then poll the members and then find speakers. Diane said it's a good idea, but she wasn't sure how much time we have to do it. She suggested that the board have input. Duke agreed that the board should decide what members need. Ronda agreed. Duke asked if anyone would like to put together a list of suggested topics. Ronda volunteered. Diane offered to help Ronda. Veda asked if Diane was thinking of her editor contacts because that's always a draw for members. A day in the life of an editor or agent would be interesting. Diane said she will try. Bonnie asked if Duke had any contacts in the western writer community. Duke said that most of his contacts are amateurs and we'd be better off with one of our own like Billie Holladay Skelley. She will do it for free but it's good grooming for Billie. He said that OWL was formed to bring New York to the Ozarks. The world has changed. Kimberly said that the latest poll we did said the members were interested in editors, publishers, and agents 33% said they were interested or very interested; 35% were interested in hearing from successful writers; 32% were interested in panels of professionals; 21% were interested in pitch sessions. Duke said he didn't think we would be able to do a very good online pitch session. Kimberly said 21% were interested in

small group hands on activities such as critique sessions. Ronda will send the responses and the questions out to the board. Bonnie said she thinks she can get JC Fields to speak for us and he's very successful and knows how to do it all. Duke asked if she would try to get him. Margarite said he was glad to be featured on Ozarks Maven. Duke suggested that all of us go out and find suggestions for speakers using the poll responses.

- c. Veda said that Russell has membership information forms. Bonnie has some. Russell passed them on to Bonnie last year. Bonnie does not have them for everyone. She asked Ricky if the form is online, he said yes. She suggested that we request that members fill it out online. Ronda said that Google forms can be set up quickly.
- d. Veda said that members genre and interests are important when choosing speakers. Bonnie and Ronda will get on that because the information is outdated anyway.
- e. Duke said that the last April the 24th conference and Saturday in June for a conference may be a good idea with the fall in-person conference at the Camden Inn on October 24th. He has the contract but hasn't signed it until everyone agrees. Veda asked when the October conference for the Ozark Creative Writers is. Margarite said 2nd weekend of October it starts on Thursday the 14th. Russell is not in favor of adding a 3rd conference. We could add a second day and still have just one night in a hotel. We can do multiple online events. Duke says everything will be virtual and even the October conference may be virtual, though he's hoping we can meet in October. Ronda says we have a mix-and-mingles and a lunch-and-learns a month so we don't need more than two conferences. Duke polled the board members and it was decided not to add a 3rd conference. Everyone is good with the October in-person conference. He suggested that we call Ronda's Happy Hour meetings Happy Oowler meetings. Ronda liked that. Duke asked if we should hold off until we have the newsletter out. Margarite said to wait until after the newsletter because most people don't see things on social media. Diane said we've had a whole year without meeting and we need to meet soon. OWL needs to stay relevant and in front of people to let them know the plans. The newsletter will be excellent.
- f. Duke said that the newsletter should be out by the end of January. Ronda will send more notices. Kimberly will send Ronda content to send out.
- g. Bonnie said that membership is everyone's job as is fundraising. So, keeping OWL out there is the board's job. Inviting new writers in is important and letting old members know that we're still here. We all have friends who are interested in writing something. Connect with people who would like to write but don't know how.
- h. Diane said we can all make posts to drive people to our website. Duke asked Russell to be a speaker at the lunch-and-learn. The Happy OWLer is just visiting and breaking the ice like a mixer. Bonnie asked how many people can be on. Ronda said at least a hundred. Plus, people can watch the video on Facebook. Russell asked if we'd be putting up the links to the mix-and-mingle on Facebook. Ronda will. Duke asked for a three-month schedule. Ronda is working on that.

11. Duke suggested that the next board meeting be on **Tuesday, February 9, at 6:30 pm.**
 Everyone agreed. Ronda sends out the links and reminders and will set up the meeting tonight. Look for things in your spam or other folders. Veda asked if Duke can also send out the link. Duke said he'd be happy to. Ronda suggested we save the information into our calendars online. Duke said asked for any other new business.)

12. Old business:

- a. Duke has contacted the speakers who were scheduled for the fall conference to ask if they are amenable with doing an online presentation in April. As reported last month, Veda has agreed. Joan Banks declined. Still haven't heard from the others (Duke said he didn't have contact information for Chuck Sasser. Bonnie will contact him.)
- b. Duke still needs duties descriptions for the offices of vice-president, secretary, and historian; also need duties descriptions for social media director, writing contest director, art contest director, youth contest director, and fundraising director. If you have held any of those offices or positions, please send what guidance you would have wanted when you accepted that position to Duke@Pen-L.com.

13. New business

- a. Suggestions for speakers for the fall conference.
- b. Suggestions for monthly Happy OWLer meetings (the virtual lunch & learn meetings).
- c. Any other new business?

12. Request motion to adjourn (Russell moved to adjourn, Veda 2nd, unanimously approved.)

Board Members:

Duke Pennell, President	Ronda del Boccio, Vice President	Diane Yates, Treasurer
*Summer Farnsworth, Secretary	*Brenda Black	April Brock
*John Crawford	Linda Runnebaum	Bonnie Tesh
Diana West	Rochelle Wisoff-Fields	Veda Boyd Jones
Russell Gayer	Ricky Yates	Margarite Stever
*Absent		

Committee Chairs:

Website: Ricky Yates	Contests: Ronda del Boccio
Membership: Bonnie Tesh	Historian: Linda Runnebaum
Fundraising: Margarite Stever and John Crawford	Newsletter: Kimberly Pennell