



MINNESOTA
NEWS MEDIA
INSTITUTE

Minnesota News Media Institute Board of Directors

11:00 am Thursday, April 24, 2025
MNA offices, 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis

Present: Justin Lessman, Jackson; Bill Albrecht, Coon Rapids; Crystal Miller, Albert Lea; Tara Brandl, Tracy; Kelly Boldan, Willmar; Doug Hanneman; Steve Jameson, Mankato, Ted Almen, Kerkhoven; Tim Douglass, Glenwood. MNA Staff: Lisa Hils, Lisa Schwarz, Laura Niemi

Absent: Chairman Bill Gaier, Minneapolis, Elisia Cohen, Minneapolis

Captrust Financial Advisors Portfolio Review: David Koch, Principal/Senior Financial Advisor and Thomas Saunders, Financial Advisor presented a market commentary, executive summary, summary of investment goals and objectives; and summary of investment goals and objectives of MNI.

Welcome and call to order: Lessman called the meeting to order at 11:09 am

Approval of Minutes: **MOTION** by Jameson with a second from Douglass to approve January 29, 2025 MNI Board meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Review 2025 Board Meeting Dates. Hils provided a copy of the meeting dates and encouraged Board members to plan accordingly.

Annual Organization. The 2025 Election Slate for the MNI board was provided by Hils, in addition to an outline from the bylaw outlining the MNI Board structure.

Hanneman ends his position as MNI Member at Large after 6 years of service with this meeting. The board and staff thanked Hanneman for his years of service and looks forward to continued collaboration on projects through MNI and MNA.

Hills asked for suggestions for potential replacements for Hanneman's position. Names submitted for consideration: Sandy Neren, Representative Gene Pelowski and Marie Zimmerman. MNA staff will reach out to those potential members, in the order listed.

2025 Election Slate

- Director Bill Gaier, Finance & Commerce, Minneapolis, Chair of MNI
- MNA President: Justin Lessman, Jackson County Pilot
- MNA First Vice President: Tara Brandl, Tracy Area Headlight Herald
- MNA Second Vice President: Kelly Boldan, West Central Tribune, Willmar
- MNA Third vice President: Steve Jameson, Free Press, Mankato
- MNA Directors: Ted Almen, Kerkhoven Banner, Tim Douglass, Pope County Tribune, Glenwood
- MNA Treasurer: Bill Albrecht, APG
- MNA Immediate Past President, Crystal Miller, Albert Lea Tribune

MNI Members at Large

- Elisia Cohen, Professor and Director, Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication at University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (Elected to serve a 3-year term in December 2021 and re-elected to serve a second 3-year term in 2024.)
- Doug Hanneman, retired editor, Hutchinson Leader term expires at this meeting. Hanneman served two 3-year terms in 2019 and re-elected in 2022.

MNI Financial Reports. Laura Wendle, All in One Accounting presented the Statement of Financial Position for MNI as of 3.31.25. Lessman reported a meeting of the finance committee before this meeting reviewed the Q125 disbursements and financial statements. Miller made a **MOTION** to approve the January-March disbursements and the January-March financial statements. With a second by Albrecht, the motion was approved unanimously.

Schwarz reported that the convention funding efforts were good this year. Silent auction, trade show and sponsorships, live auction and raffle did well. Lessman requested we find a fundraising element to the live auction at the upcoming convention. Almen expressed dissatisfaction with the amount raised on some auction items. It was determined that this coming year the minimum bid will be raised, and the estimated value will not be disclosed.

Grant Report - Schwarz

MNI's application for a \$1.5 million grant from the national Press Forward chapter has advanced to the second round. The money would fund a three-year technology initiative for MNA members and other news organizations capitalizing on tech development by the Minnesota Star Tribune, enhancing technical services for MNA members along with A.I. development. Grants are expected to be awarded in late spring.

MNI was invited to collaborate in a \$50,000 grant proposal by MPR News to provide training, networking and newsroom support across Minnesota. MPR News filed the application to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Other: Minnesota Press Forward announced there will be rapid-response grant funding this spring and another round this fall. Continued search for CJU sponsor/grants.

U of M survey – Hills

Hills reported that MNI Board Member Elisia Cohen, Hubbard School of Broadcasting anticipates the survey newspapers are asked to participate in should be complete in mid-summer. Results will be shared upon completion. This survey will provide valuable information to owners and MNA specifically with our legislative endeavors.

Programs – Niemi and Schwarz

- **Lunch & Learn** – next session will be held virtually on Friday, May 16th at 12 noon. The topic is Technology and Equipment. Twelve registered to date. Average attendance for these quarterly meetings is between 15-20. Recordings of the session will be made available.
- **Internship Program** – Nine out of ten of the positions have been filled. Follow up continues.
- **Online Media Campus** – To date 41 webinars have been viewed, this is almost half of what was viewed for the entire year last year, so there is an uptick in viewing.
- **CJU – Schwarz** – September marks the 4th year. Bethel University and MNI will continue the process that has been developed. A meeting of instructors will take place shortly. Tuition will remain \$150 for first time newspaper sponsors / \$300 for any returning newspaper sponsor. Out-of-state and nonmember students will pay \$600 for the five-week session.

Adjournment: The board adjourned at 12:04 p.m. on a **MOTION** by Boldan, second by Jameson. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Niemi

MNA Program and Member Services Manager