**American Association for Public Opinion Research**
**Executive Council Minutes**
**February 19, 2015**

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| Michael Link | President | Present |
| Mollyann Brodie | Vice President | Present |
| Rob Santos | Past President | Present |
| Mary Losch | Secretary-Treasurer | Present |
| Dan Merkle | Associate Secretary-Treasurer | Present |
| Frauke Kreuter | Standards Chair | Present |
| Ron Langley | Associate Standards Chair | Present |
| Dawn V. Nelson | Conference Chair | Present |
| David Dutwin | Associate Conference Chair | Present |
| Jennifer H. Childs | Membership & Chapter Relations Chair | Present |
| Kristen Olson | Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair | Present |
| Eleni Delimpaltadaki Janis | Communications Chair | Absent |
| Jordon Peugh | Associate Communications Chair | Present |
| Cliff Zukin | Councilor-at-Large | Present |
| Joe Lenski | Councilor-at-Large | Present |

**Staff**

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| Susan Tibbitts | Executive Director | Present |
| Heidi Diederich | Administrative Director | Present |
| Abra Alscher | Administrator | Present |
| Lisa Kamen | Marketing Communications Manager | Present |
| Ashley Hicks | Accountant | Present |
| Michael Patti | Manager of Web Services | Present |
| John Waxman | Managing Partner | Present |

**Guests**

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| Anna Wiencrot | Education Committee Chair | Present |

## I.  WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER, REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Michael Link called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. EST and a quorum was established.

Mollyann Brodie offered a correction to the motion to approve the appointments of the National and Chapter Rights and Responsibilities Ad Hoc Committee, noting the correct name of Ad Hoc Committee, rather than "task force."

Jenny Hunter Childs asked that the issues with membership and the website that she had mentioned during the meeting be documented.

**Ron Langley moved, seconded by Jenny Hunter Childs to approve the minutes of the January 8-9, 2015, Executive Council meeting as revised. The minutes were approved unanimously.**

There was agreement that Council approval of the minutes of the January 15, 2015, Executive Council conference call should be delayed until the March Executive Council meeting, in order to provide adequate time for review.

## II.   EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION

Michael Link informed councilors of the following actions of the Executive Committee:

1. The Executive Committee voted on January 30, 2015, to approve the appointment of Fred Conrad to the POQ Advisory Committee.

2. The Executive Committee voted on February 3, 2015, to approve the Big Data Task Force Report as presented.  Response to the report has been tremendously positive.

## III.   SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

### December 2014 Pre-Audit Financials
Secretary-Treasurer Mary Losch noted that the December pre-audit financials reflected the deficit that was forecast for end of year. As of December 31, 2014, total year-to-date net income was ($16,763) and net income from operations was ($55,172). The loss is less than was projected.

Joe Lenski asked about the $161,000 decrease in the cash balance on the balance sheet between December 2013 and December 2014. Accountant Ashley Hicks pointed out that the difference resulted in part to depreciation of the expense for the responsive website and the $20,000 pre-payment for the 2015 Total Survey Error Conference.

### 2015 Conference Sponsor and Exhibits
Dan Merkle stated that as of February 18, sponsor and exhibit sales revenue was $150,000, or 79% of the 2015 total sponsor and exhibit budget. Total 2015 revenue was greater than the same date for both the 2014 and 2013 conferences.

Dan thanked Michael Link, Mollyann Brodie, Rob Santos, Jordon Peugh, Eleni Delimpaltadaki Janis, and Mary Losch,  who had volunteered to help him contact past exhibitors and sponsors and encourage their participation this year.

### Sustaining Sponsorship Proposal
Executive Director Susan Tibbitts advised Council that the current draft of the Sustaining Sponsorship Proposal had been uploaded to SharePoint. She encouraged councilors to review the plan and to offer their comments and questions prior to discussion and approval by the full Council at the March meeting.

The proposal defines Sustaining Sponsorship as "based on the total amount of financial support for all AAPOR activities received by AAPOR from a single organization in any 12-month period. External partners that commit a minimum of $20,000 would be recognized as AAPOR Sustaining Sponsors." Susan pointed out that the proposal lays out the strategy, the recognition sustaining sponsors would receive and the relationship to sponsor opportunities at the annual

conference. She noted that sustaining sponsorship offers opportunities to support AAPOR activity that occurs throughout the year and outside of the conference. She offered examples that included the Transparency Initiative, technical editing for task force reports, education initiatives and the AAPOR newsletter.

Dan Merkle thanked Susan Tibbitts for her good work on the proposal and added that it is a new direction for AAPOR.

Michael Link added that the Sustaining Sponsorship Proposal would be discussed by Council at their March meeting.

## IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Michael Link noted that consent reports were presented for information from the Communications Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Membership and Chapter Relations Committee, Standards Committee and the Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee.

**Mary Losch moved, seconded by Kristen Olson to accept the consent reports as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Mollyann Brodie complimented Jenny Hunter Childs and Kristen Olson on the Membership and Chapter Relations Consent Report.

## V. OLD BUSINESS

**Standards Committee: AAPOR Code Revision; Member Comments and Discussion**
Standards Committee Chair Frauke Kreuter and Associate Chair Ron Langley led the discussion. Noting the problems that members had experienced with access to the website, the Council discussed whether members had had enough time to comment on the suggested revisions to the AAPOR Code. Noting the number of comments and extension of the deadline, the Executive Council agreed that enough time was provided.

Ron Langley presented the comments that were received, and noted that a few common themes had emerged. He invited Council discussion. Commenting on the detail and specificity of the comments, he observed that people are likely paying close attention to the Code language because people can be censured for their actions if they are inconsistent with AAPOR Code requirements.

- Ron noted that there is no explicit mention in the Code revision that cooperation rates (or refusal rates) be reported using AAPOR Standard Definitions and calculations (as is the case for response rates).
- There were questions about Section 3E regarding releasing data sets. Some councilors questioned the willingness or ability of many organizations to release datasets or to release them within one year. One councilor suggested language that would encourage but not require release of a public dataset. There was general agreement that release and sharing of datasets should be encouraged but not required. However, one counselor expressed the desire to keep the current language but add that the dataset should be released "upon request."

- The Council noted member comments about interpreting refusal conversion and the right to refuse. Some commenters had interpreted the Code language as advising against attempting refusal conversion.  There was general agreement that the Code language needed additional clarification to clarify that refusal conversions are not prohibited.
- Some commenters expressed the opinion that the Code revision is long and may be overly complex. The suggestion was made to consider moving Section 3 from the Code to supporting documentation that would be maintained by the Standards Committee, while retaining the requirements stated in Section 3. Discussion followed on the practicality and advisability of removing requirements from the main Code document. The suggestion was made that Council consider preparing an "easy reference version" format that might address the complexity issue. Council agreed that the Code is not too long and should retain the disclosure elements.
- There was discussion about clarifying the intent of the aggregated use of personally identifiable public polling data. Questions were raised about the identification of personal information and the issue of obtaining permission with the use of aggregated data.
- Council discussed comments on the application of the Code to non-members, and potential dilution of impact on the requirement for AAPOR members depending upon the interpretation of the phrase in the preamble that ends, "...and required of AAPOR members." There was general agreement to delete the phrase to avoid diluting the requirement.
- There was a member comment about the disclosure of incentives. Ron Langley noted that the Code addressed the issue previously and Council agreed that disclosure of incentives is germain to assessments of design and possible impact on participants and data quality.

Ron Langley and Frauke Kreuter indicated they would organize Council comments and recommendations, and send the Executive Council a redlined document by Monday, February 23, 2015.

As a next step, Michael Link asked Susan Tibbitts if it would be possible, and what the repercussions would be of separating the Code vote from the Executive Council election vote. She responded that the votes could be separated and reminded the Council that voting in the Council election would begin March 13, 2015 and end April 3. She added that it would be best if the final language for the Code revision could be ready by the end of February for testing to begin on the final ballot. Ron Langley stated that 25% of eligible voters were required in the last vote. Susan Tibbitts confirmed that that was her understanding of the By-Laws requirement as well. There was a question about the likelihood of achieving the required 25% turnout and whether voting could be continued if necessary until the minimum was reached. Mary Losch noted that the 25% was reached during the last review.  Susan Tibbitts stated that she would need to check the By-Laws to confirm the presence or absence of a notice requirement.

In response to a question, AAPOR Administrator Abra Alscher stated that in 2010, voting on the proposed revisions to the Code opened on April 22 and concluded on May 14, with the results announced at the conference on May 15. Barring an issue with notice requirements, there was general agreement that voting on the Code revisions could begin after the Executive Council election concludes on April 3.

Recognizing the need for additional review and discussion of the Code revisions prior to approval at the March Executive Council meeting, Michael Link asked staff to poll the Council for availability for a one hour call March 2 to March 13.

**<u>Website Status and Update</u>**
President Michael Link stated that he wanted to focus on the issues and relationship with Kellen, and specifically on the membership issues, the website, conference registration, and problems with the recent webinar. He added that some of the issues seemed to be a continuation of issues that AAPOR has been experiencing for a longer period of time, and some seem to have accelerated in the last two months. He stated that the Council needs to discuss those issues. He noted that he and Vice President Mollyann Brodie had had several discussions with Managing Partner John Waxman and Executive Director Susan Tibbitts. He asked John Waxman to share his perspective on the issues that AAPOR is experiencing.

AAPOR Managing Partner John Waxman apologized for the issues AAPOR has experienced with the website and with online registration. He stated that he was personally embarrassed and that services were not representative of the work that staff does. He stated his gratitude for the expertise of AAPOR member volunteers in questionnaire design and his appreciation that the AAPOR staff had such a willing and knowledgeable resource to call on to address and resolve the issues. He apologized that so many councilors had to invest time over the recent weekend and in long days and evenings to deal with the conference registration system.

He stated that over the last week and with AAPOR's assistance, staff had focused on putting in place a permanent solution to the recognition problem members had experienced with login; and on fixing, testing and successfully opening online registration for the 2015 Conference. He added that the problems that AAPOR members had experienced with login and recognition issues with the website have been resolved, and stated that the problems never should have gotten to that point. He noted that staff has been solely focused on fixing the problems and had not yet shifted focus to review systems, procedures and quality control protocols that will be examined and addressed to ensure that the problems do not reoccur. He offered to answer questions.

Michael Link asked if there were other clients that had experienced issues, or if the problems were confined to AAPOR? John Waxman responded that a few clients have experienced problems. He commented that the ATS product is not what we all expected it to be. He stated that AAPOR's conference registration is significantly more complex than other clients. He added that the complexity was not an excuse, that staff knows AAPOR's registration system and has worked successfully on five conferences with AAPOR. He said staff planned to evaluate the marketplace software product.

AAPOR Councilor at Large Cliff Zukin expressed his concern about how close AAPOR had come to opening registration with a seriously flawed system, and asked why testing hadn't uncovered the problems. John Waxman responded that he was disappointed that staff delivered a product that was deficient, and that staff hadn't discovered the extent of the issues before member volunteers began testing. He stated his intent to do a thorough post-mortem. Responding to a request for a date for the post-mortem to be completed, John Waxman explained that he needed time to consult with more colleagues now that Sherwood was part of the bigger Kellen organization. He added that he would need to bring Kellen colleagues up to speed on the issues AAPOR had experienced and would get back to the Council with a specific date. Discussion followed with Council pressing for a more immediate and definitive date. John Waxman

committed to providing the Executive Council with a post mortem and next steps by February 27.

Associate Secretary-Treasurer Dan Merkle stated that AAPOR management fees had increased over the last several years as AAPOR has bought more services, adding that AAPOR experienced a deficit for 2014 and is looking for new ways to raise more revenue. He noted that there is evidence to suggest that over the last two months, AAPOR lost revenue from membership dues, donations and webinar fees as a result of the recognition problems that members experienced on the website. He asked what Kellen will do to make AAPOR whole financially. John Waxman noted that he would need to discuss the issues with his Kellen colleagues. Secretary-Treasurer Mary Losch noted that other staffing issues had resulted in losses of revenue the previous spring. Waxman noted that Sherwood had previously provided restitution in recognition of a staff performance issue that affected conference sponsorships and exhibits. Losch noted that only some of the losses had been reimbursed. John Waxman responded that he would talk to his Kellen colleagues and respond by February 27.

Addressing the plan to move forward, particularly with conference registration, Associate Communications Chair Jordon Peugh expressed concern about the ability of Council to trust that what is supposed to happen will in fact happen. She asked if staff could provide diagnostics that Council can use to understand where things stand. Manager of Web Services, Michael Patti, responded that staff could provide Google analytics as a point of comparison for online registration this year versus prior years, as well as a comparison of revenue for the same period. He added that Kellen has recently hired a project manager who will be looking at the systems that are in place and offering recommendations on refinements. He stated that he and the Web/IS team have been working directly with the web and e-commerce vendors to address and resolve the issues AAPOR has experienced.

Cliff Zukin stated that it's important to look at general trends and revenue that AAPOR would have received if systems were working as intended. He stated that AAPOR had invested a great deal in member recruitment and expansion in 2014 and should be much farther ahead as a result. Councilor at Large Joe Lenski referred to the graphic provided to Council by the Membership and Chapter Relations chairs that showed that membership numbers were on pace with prior years before a sudden decline in renewals coinciding with the website launch.

Associate Conference Chair David Dutwin emphasized the importance of defining and sharing the testing protocol that will be in place for the future. Michael Patti acknowledged David's comments noting that the system itself has some limitations and staff has been working with the vendor on solutions. He observed that the larger lesson learned was about the process; how staff developed the registration form and who tested it; and how those processes will work in the future, particularly the importance of including outside/external quality assurance testing. He noted that the expanded resources available as part of the larger Kellen organization will help accomplish expanded testing, something that staff has wanted to do for some time. He added that Kellen hired a second certified Kentico developer that will contribute to needed process improvements. He asked that the Council bear with us while we complete the post-mortem and examine the processes that will be put in place.

Michael Link stated his belief that there is an overall issue of quality that needs to be addressed. He added that AAPOR has been asking for weeks and months for access to iMIS and still hasn't received it. He described the February 11 webinar as having issues, and added that we haven't had issues with webinars before. He noted that protocols were in place and staff did not follow them. He stated that problems involve more than the technology and more than the registration

system; that there's a sense that things are really fundamentally not working.  He emphasized that he didn't  want to leave the impression that all that is needed is an action item on system quality assurance, because there is a fundamental issue on the quality of work overall. He added that it feels like "we're working with a group that we've never worked with before, and we've been working with you for five-plus years."

John Waxman apologized and assured Council that he was listening, and that Kellen would make this right.

## VI.      EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 1:45 p.m. the regular meeting of the Council was adjourned and staff was excused, to permit the Council to meet in Executive Session.


## VII.     ADJOURNMENT
Michael Link stated that meeting was adjourned at 1:42  p.m. EST.

**Mary Losch moved, seconded by Jordon Peugh to adjourn the Executive Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

*{MERKLE NOTE: In the executive session Mary moved and Jordon seconded to adjourn. I do not have in my notes who it was for the regular session.*

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