

**American Association for Public Opinion Research  
Executive Council Teleconference  
December 11, 2009  
Minutes**

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER.

Peter Miller	Chair	Present
Frank Newport	Vice Chair	Present
Richard Kulka	Past President	Absent
John Boyle	Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Barbara O'Hare	Associate Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Stephen Blumberg	Standards Chair	Present
Reg Baker	Associate Standards Chair	Present
Michael Link	Conference Chair	Present
Rob Santos	Associate Conference Chair	Absent
Nancy Whelchel	Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Kelly Foster	Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Absent
Michael Mokrzycki	Communications Chair	Present
Jon Cohen	Associate Communications Chair	Absent
Paul Lavrakas	Councilor-at-Large	Absent
Roger Tourangeau	Councilor-at-Large	Absent
John Waxman	Interim Executive Director	Present
Barbara Gunderson	Staff	Present

*The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. CST.*

Minutes of the November 19, 2009 Executive Council meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

**Draft Budget Review**

John Waxman reported on the first draft of the 2010 budget that was sent to the Council for review. He stated that in this draft budget all revenue and expenses for 2010 have been projected with the exception of the Endowment Funds. Revenue is projected to be flat in 2010. The Council was asked to consider whether the anticipated economic conditions in 2010 and conditions in the survey/research industry will support these projections. Several changes were made in areas where items are reported in the draft budget compared to the past, which makes comparisons between 2009 and 2010 problematic in some categories. For example, total dues revenue in the 2010 budget now includes the POQ component, which accounts for the increase in that line item compared to 2009 budget and actuals. Dues are projected to remain roughly the same in 2010 as they were in 2009. Dues revenue is budgeted to be \$243,075 based on the number of members invoiced, reasonable attrition rate and anticipation of new members and subscription revenue of approximately \$36,000.

All revenue numbers were based on historical data and best estimates for 2010. If Endowment Fund revenue is comparable to 2009, the budget projects \$1,030,000 in total revenues vs. \$1,011,841 in 2009. The question remains, will the conference attendance and membership dues support these numbers or will the current economy cause us to see some attrition.

Some expense numbers are still unclear. Any one-time activities or new initiatives are shaded in green on the draft budget. Further discussion is needed regarding the parameters for these initiatives before these expense numbers can be detailed. The details and expenses of the transparency initiative will need to be determined for the budget as well.

Some line items have had no activity for several years. Council will decide whether to keep these line items or omit them in the future. The conference budget is broken down into key sections: conference operations and logistical management, marketing and promotions, exhibits and sponsored events, social events and catering and the educational events. Conference variable expenses are also broken out, those events that will not take place unless sponsorship is secured. In this draft the conference is almost \$200K over budget compared to actual in 2009. This is attributable to significantly higher projected food and beverage and AV costs in Chicago compared to 2009 in Florida, as well as a portion of the Sherwood management fee which has been assigned to the conference. The current estimate of staff time assigns \$85K to the conference budget in management fees. This may be adjusted in future years when staff time can be more accurately projected. The large food functions have historically been budgeted for every person attending. The 2010 budget reflects the cost of food and beverage for 75% of attendees, which historically has been the number of eligible attendees taking part in these functions.

The current budget runs at a deficit of \$129,757 with some expense categories left as To Be Determined. Some of this is accounted for by the increased cost of the conference being held in Chicago, while the higher management fees and expenses are also a factor. No new events or services are being initiated for the 2010 conference. AV is budgeted at \$82K for 2010 as opposed to \$66K spent in 2009. This bid is from the same AV vendor used in 2009. Union labor rates in Chicago account for the increase in that area. Food and beverage expenses are also significantly higher in Chicago. Sherwood staff will look at ways to cut back in those areas to reduce costs without negatively impacting the event.

John Boyle expressed concern that the annual conference cannot be a money loser. Its purpose is to support the organization financially as well as intellectually. We must have a budget that has the conference at least revenue neutral. If the conference loses money it cannot be recovered through dues or other revenue sources. He recommended that if the Council were to approve a deficit budget it cannot be because of the conference. Michael Link suggested that breakfast only be offered if it is a sponsored event. Nancy Whelchel pointed out that the breakfast events are important to the sponsors and exhibitors to bring people into the exhibit hall. John Boyle advised the Council that the entire contribution of exhibitors in 2009 was \$12K, and the organization should not be budgeting significantly more than that amount to secure the sponsorships. Jacky Schweinzger will meet with the Conference Committee to look over the conference expenses to see where things can be lowered and to see if assumptions are correct. It was agreed that a revised draft budget would be produced by Sherwood and reviewed with the President and

Treasurers before the end of the year so that an updated version could be transmitted to the Council well in advance of the January EC meeting.

Sponsorship: Barb O'Hare reported the total revenue from sponsorships and underwriting opportunities is currently at \$70,475. This is a good indication that sponsorship and underwriting will be at or near where it was last year.

Membership: Nancy Whelchel reported 800 people have renewed for 2010. There are more student members currently than are listed in the budget; this will be an added expense. Revenue for 2010 is based on the membership numbers as of September 30, 2009. The assumptions in the budget for membership types are valid. There is not much change in the membership types from year to year.

A teleconference will be scheduled with the Membership Committee chair and Sherwood staff to go over the budget numbers as projected. A teleconference with the Communications Committee members will also be scheduled. A revised budget should be to the board a week to 10 days before the January Council meeting. Comments on the budget can be sent to John Waxman and John Boyle by e-mail.

Peter Miller questioned if the deficit of approximately \$129K was due to the increased management fee. John Waxman reported that the total amount spent on management in 2009, including transition expenses, search committee expenses, and two months of transition fees, will be comparable to management costs in 2010. The allocation of management fees to key areas has artificially increased the conference deficit. This may change next year when there is a clearer understanding of where staff time is spent across the organization. In terms of the overall deficit, revenue is flat and expenses have gone up significantly because of the costs of the Chicago location. Michael Link reported that the Conference Committee has not added any new events or costs to the conference for 2010 and have in fact discontinued some planned activities.

### **Strategic Planning Task Force Report**

Reg Baker provided a summary of the Strategic Task Force meeting, December 4. The task force is comprised of Michael Link, Nancy Whelchel, Stephen Blumberg, Jon Cohen, Frank Newport, Reg Baker and is chaired by Roger Tourangeau. The committee considered two things: what kind of effort do we want to undertake and what the plan should include. They considered two plans. One plan would involve a full-bore planning that would involve some offsite meetings involving the entire Council, and some facilitation in order to produce a plan. This would likely stretch out over much of 2010. The second plan considered was more self-contained, and would rely on a small task force made up primarily of Council members that would try to do the work offline and bring ideas back to Council for consideration. The task force favors this second approach.

This small group would develop a mission statement for AAPOR. The group could not find a mission statement currently. Their first point of order is to write something that is succinct and

hits all the key points and is a starting point for the planning process. In parallel with that, the plan is to gather other information that will be used for situational analysis used as the basis for developing initiatives to the plan. They will examine internal information we already possess from previous surveys and current collected data. They will look at the current long-range plan and the logic of what went into that plan and review external information including what is happening at the societal level, in the research industry in general, how that is unfolding over the next 3-5 years and how AAPOR will react to it all. The results of these discussions will be brought back to the Council for consideration.

At some point in the planning process, the task force recommends doing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. They will try to come to a consensus prior to the conference, regarding what we think about the situation we face both internally and externally, as well as what we think are our strengths and weaknesses in dealing with those issues and what we see as threats and opportunities in the external situations. Post conference, they will lay out the specific initiatives we want to undertake. As part of this process they may do some membership surveys. The task force would take the lead in developing the initiatives and bringing ideas back to Council for review and recommendation. The task force will also look at other organizations to see what we can learn from them. There is no formal timeline as of yet, but the goal is to have something developed before the conference. March would be a good time to do the SWOT analysis with the Council. The results of the SWOT analysis will determine what the plan should cover. Initiatives will be developed after this information is collected and analyzed. The plan for implementation will be discussed at this time as well.

The task force recommends doing the more scaled-down plan. The current members of the task force are willing to continue moving the plan forward. Additional members may be needed in the future.

**Motion:** “The AAPOR Executive Council will establish a committee to develop a strategic plan and will appoint the members of the committee.” Moved by Barbara O’Hare and seconded by Mike Mokrzycki.

**Discussion:** If this process should be an ongoing activity, should this be a standing committee? The Council determined that the task force should be a subset of the Council at this point and they should discuss what is needed in the future. The task force can recommend if it should be a standing committee as part of their planning process. The task force should deliver an implementation plan. At some point in the future, other members or past Council members should be invited to join the ongoing task force.

**Vote:** Approved unanimously.

### **Membership Committee Report**

Nancy Whelchel reported AAPOR has its largest membership to date with 2,216 members. John Waxman reminded Council that revenue for those who joined after October 1 is deferred until

2010. Renewals as of November 30 are at 36 percent. Last year at this time renewals were at 25 percent.

Nancy recently attended the MAPOR meeting, which went well. Many chapter members were unaware of AAPOR and Nancy was able to inform them about AAPOR services. Kelly Foster is currently at the PAPOR conference representing AAPOR. Nancy is working with Sherwood staff to import chapter member data into the AAPOR member database and adding the new calendar of events on the AAPOR Web site.

Council was asked if generic e-mail addresses would be advisable for some committees. The Council agreed to have e-mails such as [membership@aapor.org](mailto:membership@aapor.org) in an effort to resolve updating personal e-mail information from year to year.

A holiday card will be sent to members on behalf of AAPOR.

### **Communications Committee Report**

Mike Mokrzycki visited the archives at the University of Chicago and met with Dan Meyer, the curator. He followed up on two questions from the previous Council meeting:

- 1) Can the restrictions on standard materials be revised?
- 2) If not, then can AAPOR remove records from the archives?

The answer to both questions was “yes”.

The university is converting all of its indices of special collections into an online format. AAPOR is not complete as yet. There is some material in the existing paper index that is potentially sensitive as far as Standards Committee records are concerned. Mike will work with Stephen Blumberg on these issues and will bring a report to the Council at the January meeting.

There is a conflict between the Document Retention and Destruction Policy that Council passed in March and past archiving practices. Specifically regarding some financial records and other materials that our new policy dictates should be destroyed after 7 years, some of this sits in the archives currently. Council will need to review the two policies and get them in sync. There is no recommendation at this point from the committee.

### **Conference Committee Report**

The review of abstracts is wrapping up. The Program Committee will meet in Washington, DC on Wednesday December 16 to review and slot abstracts. Over 650 abstracts were submitted.

### **Standards Committee Report**

Stephen Blumberg reported that the task force responsible for reviewing the Code of Professional Ethics completed its work. The Standards Committee generated a memo based on

their suggestions. Council was asked to read the revised code for discussion and debate during the January meeting. The revised code needs to be ready in time to get it into the election cycle. This schedule does not allow for any membership comments on the code revisions. There was a question of whether this type of vote has happened during the annual conference in the past. The Bylaws indicate the Standards Committee will review the code every 5 years. Suggested code revisions will be presented by the Standards Committee to Council for review, and then presented to the membership for its approval in the form of a ballot. Approval requires a majority of those voting and at least 25% of eligible voters must vote. We generally do not have 25% of the membership at the annual business meeting.

The changes that have been made include an expansion of the elements of disclosure. The code is now more specific about the organization applying the code to non-AAPOR members. The committee recommended the word “minimal” be dropped indicating all information about a survey should be made available upon request with the exception of the data file.

The Council recommended incorporating a process for input on the revisions from the membership. After the January meeting there should be time to post the recommended changes and receive any input before the ballot goes out. Council members can send their comments to Stephen Blumberg before the January meeting for discussion.

Stephen also reported there may be a need for an executive session at the January meeting for a standards complaint that has been submitted. The complaint concerns a lack of disclosure in accordance with AAPOR’s new revised schedule of procedures. The target of the complaint has been contacted and asked to disclose the information, but has not responded to date.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Executive Council meeting will be held in Washington, DC on Thursday, January 14 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, January 15 from 8:30 a.m. to Noon at Gallup Headquarters.

*There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. CST.*