

**American Association For Public Opinion Research  
Executive Council Teleconference  
November 19, 2009  
Draft Minutes**

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER.

Peter Miller	Chair	Present
Frank Newport	Vice Chair	Present
Richard Kulka	Past President	Present
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	Present
Nancy Whelchel	Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Kelly Foster	Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Michael Mokrzycki	Communications Chair	Present
Jon Cohen	Associate Communications Chair	Present
Paul Lavrakas	Councilor-at-Large	Present
Roger Tourangeau	Councilor-at-Large	Present
John Waxman	Interim Executive Director	Present
Barbara Gunderson	Staff	Present

*The meeting was called to order at 10:05 p.m. CST.*

Minutes of the October 16, 2009 Executive Council teleconference were reviewed. The minutes were unanimously approved as revised.

**Treasurers Report**

Endowment Committee: Barbara O'Hare reported on the endowment committee's progress in defining each of the funds and their purpose. Currently the General Fund includes the Roper Award. The general fund has a total of \$18,700 and the Roper Fund has \$119,685. The Roper Fund was started with a single donation of \$100,000. The Sudman Student Paper Award was started with a single donation of \$35,000. These amounts should be kept intact, restricted.

The General Fund is a board-designated fund, while the other two funds are temporarily restricted. The purpose of each fund should be clearly communicated to the membership for donation purposes. This should remain consistent when the funds are mentioned or promoted. Communications and membership committees should coordinate with the endowment committee for consistent descriptions of the funds in their materials.

The Endowment Committee has considered a campaign to solicit contributions from members and companies to be made over the course of five years. The additional funds would enable the committee to have grant money available for other purposes than those currently allowed. Council members recommended the Endowment Committee only initiate a fund raising campaign in coordination with the Council and that these decisions will be directed by the strategic plan.

Financial Report: John Boyle reported total assets equaling \$943,000 - an increase from 2008. Total revenue collected (net gain) for the year to date is \$201,277. Even with the transition costs, which are factored into current expenses, and the increased management costs for the remainder of the year, a positive balance is expected at the end of the year and the organization is not expected to dip into reserves. John Waxman noted that the Blue Book revenues were deferred until the book was published, so an additional \$17,000 in revenue will be reflected in the October statement. A correction to the accounts receivable was made in regard to Westat, whose account receivable for the conference should be \$4,000 rather than the \$8,000 currently shown as outstanding, which slightly reduces the expected net gain. The treasurer recommended that although a modest net gain was expected, given additional costs anticipated for 2010 and in the absence of a budget for 2010, larger discretionary expenses, such as the Web site redesign, be delayed until the 2010 budget is approved.

In response to questions about whether the EC should communicate to the members about the favorable state of AAPOR finances, John Waxman recommended waiting until after the budget is in place. Then a broader message could be crafted, assuring the membership that the organization is financially sound, and is delivering as much of its resources as possible to membership and thanking them for their support which enables the organizations continued success.

John Waxman reported the mid-year audit is complete. In their roles as Secretary-Treasurer, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, President and Past President, Barbara O'Hare, John Boyle, Peter Miller and Dick Kulka will serve as the interim Audit Committee to review the audit. A formal Audit Committee should be formed to select the auditor and to review the audit. This is best practice for non-profits and recommended by the Sherwood Group. A permanent committee will be in place by early 2010 to review the 2009 year-end audit and to approve the 2010 auditor. John Boyle will prepare a proposal for the new audit committee for the December teleconference.

Concern was expressed by some councilors that the current financial report was too detailed to be an effective management tool. John Waxman reported that Sherwood is drafting a revised monthly financial report which will be formatted like the 2010 budget. It will include a one-page summary by category, providing a snapshot of the organization's well being. Supporting line item detail for each category will still be available as well. This should make both the budget and monthly financial reports more useful for management purposes. A draft of this document will be available for the January meeting.

### **Membership and Chapter Relations Report**

Nancy Whelchel reported she and Kelly Foster met with Sherwood staff on November 18, 2009 to discuss integrating chapter membership information into the database and adding a calendar of events to the home page of the Web site. Progress on these projects is being made.

The Membership and Chapter Relations Committee felt that the current membership brochure needed to be updated. The cost of a new brochure was estimated at \$2300. The Council decided that the current brochure could be corrected with stickers, as is currently being done, while a new brochure is being developed. A new membership brochure will be developed by Sherwood staff once revised content is provided. This brochure will meet the immediate need for an informational and promotional piece for prospective members. In the future the council will discuss marketing pieces that meet the longer range goals of branding and a well-developed membership campaign.

The Council agreed Chapters may post the code of ethics to their own Web sites for their membership to sign in order to be in compliance with the new Council regulation.

The council agreed that AAPOR membership cards will no longer be printed and mailed out to members, as a cost savings measure.

AAPORnet is considered an important member benefit. However, the council agreed to continue the current policy of allowing members to post for non-members but continue to monitor the postings on behalf of non-members. If this practice becomes excessive it will be brought to the attention of the Council for further review.

Nancy Whelchel will be attending the MAPOR meeting to promote AAPOR membership.

### **Communications Report**

Mike Mokrzycki reported there have been some interesting discussions on AAPORnet. It is currently an unmoderated listserv. No filters are currently in place that would, for example, filter out profanity. There is no policing or process for removing posts. The council agreed it should remain unmoderated and no policy limiting discussions should be implemented. However, the Communications Committee would investigate filter options.

The Communications Committee will also investigate why some members decide to unsubscribe to AAPORnet. Concern was expressed about the underutilization of AAPORnet by members. Reg Baker noted that AAPORnet is based on an old technology, and there may be better ways to go, like Wikis. Wikis might be considered as an extension of this member benefit in the future.

The fall issue of *AAPOR News* is now on the Web site. The transparency initiative was announced in the newsletter.

Mike reported that he received an inquiry from a university researcher interested in obtaining the AAPORnet mailing list for the university's own research purposes. AAPOR does not make this list publicly available and it was agreed that the university should be informed of such.

The Council was updated on the AAPOR archives, housed at the University of Chicago. The current policy is that there is no access to Standards Committee records for a period of 20 years. The current policy is to allow unrestricted mechanical reproduction for accessible documents. The current policy is also that the AAPOR president has the authority to grant access to the archives to anyone as he/she deems necessary.

The last document submission to the archive was in 2005. This should be updated. Sherwood should check with Tom Smith at the University of Chicago annually about submissions to the archives. All important documents, including Standards should be archived.

The Council had questions concerning the following:

- Would the university modify their procedures to extend the length of time documents are kept restricted?
- Can AAPOR request materials back from the University once they have been archived so that Standards Committee records could be moved to alternative site if an extension of the restricted periods cannot be obtained?
- What is the University policy on electronic records and how does this affect AAPOR electronic files?

Mike Mokrzycki will follow up with the University of Chicago to answer these questions.

### **Conference Report**

Michael Link reported abstract submissions are on track and the submissions will be closed on November 30 as announced. The review process will take place on December 16 in Washington D.C. Nearly 200

members have volunteered to review the abstracts. The process of recruiting volunteers electronically has allowed more members to be active in this project. The Program Committee will consist of Michael Link, Rob Santos, Melissa Herrmann, Dawn Nelson, Mark Blumenthal and Adam Safir.

Michael thanked the Conference Development Committee for its work on the Exhibit and Support Prospectus. Sponsorships and underwriting opportunities were revised and streamlined. The prospectus was sent out to previous exhibitors and sponsors on November 11. On December 3 the prospectus will be available to all other potential sponsors.

The Endowment Committee has requested that a space for donations to the Endowment Fund be added to the annual meeting registration form. The Council rejected this idea. The Council has indicated they prefer to have a targeted campaign for donations to each of the funds.

The Membership Committee has requested that demographic information be collected on the onsite registration forms. Sherwood staff will consider how best to revise the onsite form to meet this need. Online registrations can easily include this information. Planning for online registration will begin shortly.

The Council was asked to consider reduced registration fees for student attendees. Currently the cost of attendance for students covers only the cost of their meal plan. The conference committee did not recommend implementing this change and no change will be made in student charges. Conference fees for 2010 will remain the same as 2009, but the entire fee structure, including student fees, will be reconsidered for 2011. The hotel room rate for 2010 will be \$245; this is lower than the 2009 rate of \$265.

### **Standards Report**

Stephen Blumberg reported each task force has been very active. The Online Panels Task Force is working on a final draft of their report for the Executive Council in late December. Among other topics, the documents developed will address guidelines for transparency, including what methodological information should be routinely disclosed.

The ad-hoc committee reviewing the AAPOR Code has completed its recommendations, and the final draft of the proposed code revision is expected to be ready for review by the council soon. Ideally it will be ready to be voted on by the membership during the election process. If the code is revised, all members will need to sign the new code when they renew their membership dues.

Paul Lavrakas reported that the Cell Phone Task Force has been working since July. They currently have 8 sub-committees gathering information. They hope to have a report for the Council by April or May. They plan to make a presentation at the annual conference, but will not be able to report findings at that time.

Ron Langley, a member of the Standards Committee, conducted an educational program on the ethics of survey research at the annual Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research conference. Of 150 breakout sessions, this session was the highest attended, emphasizing the demand for this type of education in the field.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has issued a request for public comment from survey organizations on their practices on improving implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act. Council was asked to consider if AAPOR should comment. It was recommended to solicit comments from members on AAPORnet and then draft a response. Paul Lavrakas will follow up on this recommendation.

## **Update on Budgeting Process**

The draft budget was not ready for Council review at the October meeting. Sherwood will have a first draft of the budget ready for review by the December conference call. The budget was redesigned and line items have been consolidated where practical. Although items have been consolidated under committees, Council will have the capability to see the detail of the expenses. Year to date tracking will be reflected in the monthly financial statements. Council reviewed the proposed budget format. Council members can send comments regarding revisions of the budget format to John Waxman before the next teleconference.

## **Strategic Planning**

Council members reviewed the Long Range Plan developed in 2005. Council members agreed a strategic plan should be a living document that is revisited every year and the vision should guide the decisions of each council. It was recommended by John Waxman that a key role of the Council would be to spend time reviewing the strategy and then ensure that the strategy is being implemented across the organization. Each Council should ensure the strategic plan remains relevant and that the mission of the organization is front and center. The plans objectives should be considered in all decisions for the organization. The vision should guide the organizations actions.

To develop the document the Council may consider a retreat with or without a professional facilitator. A survey of the membership may be a first step in this strategic planning process.

**Motion:** “The AAPOR Executive Council will form a committee to review the strategic plan.” Moved by Reg Baker and seconded by Roger Tourangeau.

**Discussion:** The committee will consider if a survey of the membership is required. The committee will determine what the best process should be for strategic planning. Committee members will be: Michael Link, Nancy Whelchel, Stephen Blumberg, Jon Cohen, Frank Newport, Reg Baker and Roger Tourangeau. Roger agreed to chair the committee. The committee will make its recommendations during the December teleconference.

The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Presidents Report**

The current AAPOR newsletter discusses the elements of the transparency initiative including a system for collecting and archiving disclosure information, education on how to make transparency a routine part of work and collaboration with other organizations with similar issues of integrity. The goal is to have a listing of organizations with whom to collaborate on the transparency initiative by the annual conference in May. The President will also be soliciting advice from those individuals and organizations most likely to be affected, including writing to those cited in the report on the 2008 presidential primaries. We hope to set up a client working group related to the initiative. There will also be a public comment period.

## **New Business**

Election nominations have been mailed out to all current members. A streamlined process for nominations will be developed before the January Council meeting. The Past President will make recommendations to the Council to approve for the Nominating Committee.

The interim audit committee will review the interim audit report prior to the next meeting.

The EC should receive the draft budget at least a week prior to the next meeting.

Sherwood will be interviewing for a new executive director. It is hoped the new director can be onboard for the January council meeting.

Sherwood is proposing expanded utility of the Blue Book. It could be marketed to outside agencies who would be interested in the services advertised. An online version that could be updated regularly would also be of value. Advertisers who are endorsed by AAPOR through the transparency initiative could be highlighted in the Blue Book.

### **Next Meeting**

The next teleconference will be Friday, December 11 at 11 a.m. Central/Noon Eastern.

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

*There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm CST.*