

公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

100-0005 Japan, Tokyo-to, Chiyoda-ku, Marunouchi, 3-2-3, Marunouchi Nijubashi Building 5F
<https://www.fccj.or.jp> E-mail: front@fccj.or.jp Tel:+81-3-3211-3161 Fax:+81-3-3211-3168

Minutes (6 pages)

Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, February 10, 2025
du draft

Quorum: Five Voting

Attend In Person (Voting):

Dan Sloan, President
Anthony Rowley, Treasurer
David Umeda, Secretary
Taeko Nagayama

Attend Virtual (Voting):

Khaldon Azhari, 1st Vice President
Randy Schmidt, 2nd Vice President
Dave McCombs
Shuri Fukunaga

Absent:

Suvendrini Kakuchi

Attend In Person (Non-Voting):

Simon Farrell, Kanji

Attend Virtual (Non-Voting):

Martin Fackler, Kanji

Attend Virtual (Guest):

Larry Cisar, Parliamentarian

Attend In Person (Club Staff):

Wayne Hunter, General Manager

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1) Call to Order, Prioritized Agenda (10:00 am)

a. President's Report (*D. Sloan*)

As per the Finance Committee's request, we have launched a Task Force with Michiyo Nakamoto as chair. The intent is to look at mid- and long-term issues that won't be addressed in the Budget, presented in March (27th, Thursday). If you are working with a committee, I encourage you to share details on the specific needs or challenges the group faces in the coming years.

b. Treasurer's Report (*A. Rowley*)

The Finance Committee met on February 3, 2025. There were overall satisfactory financial results for the months of November and December, and for the year to end December 2024. While the Committee noted a slow but steady improvement in the Club's financial results in recent months, at the same time it expressed concern at the fact that we are not generating sufficient financial surpluses to create the reserve cushion needed to cover future capital and other expenditures.

In this regard, the Committee is providing inputs to the Presidential Task Force, which has been established to look at the many different factors that will impact the viability of the FCCJ in the medium to longer term. These will be reported to the Board and to the membership, so that optimum policies can be decided and implemented.

A. Rowley, however, notes that said Task Force is getting good inputs on the financial side, but we don't see as of last week to be getting much on the membership side and from other committees. D. Sloan will send out a second note since he thinks that maybe the other committees are still not aware that the Task Force is taking place.

c. First Vice President's Report (*K. Azhari*)

There was a meeting with the Joint Committee comprised of the House & Property Committee and the Food & Beverage Committee. The meeting was led by Michiyo Nakamoto, co-chair of the Food & Beverage Committee. They are working on two parts to improving the Bar area. One part can be accomplished by our own staff (e.g., Refer to GM Report). The second part may require rebuilding or demolishing the current Bar. That is a big and expensive project, but the Joint Committee will at least try to see what the best solutions are. K. Azhari has tried to recruit volunteers, especially from the Associates, who are architects or have relevant experiences to share with us. The aim is to provide the Board with a new bar layout and ideas, which would include estimates and how much we want the landlord (i.e., Mitsubishi) to contribute, by the end of this month (February).

Secondly, K. Azhari recommends that Dan, with Board approval, establish a Negotiating Committee to talk with Mitsubishi about the rent, reducing it or whatever.

Working with the GM, the Committee wants to remove the model airplane in the Bar, and have ANA pay for the time it was there. Also, regarding the Mitsubishi name on the skirt around the main table during press conferences, the Committee is trying to find out how much the agreement is set for and how much they pay us. Since the current agreement is about to expire, the Committee would like to set up market value fees to charge. With regards to the banner, the Committee decided not to consider any advertisements other than of the FCCJ.

d. Second Vice President's Report (*R. Schmidt*)

The Membership Committee met on February 6, 2025. The Monthly Membership Tally was presented as of January 31.

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e. Secretary's Report (*D. Umeda*)

J. McCurry ran coverage in the February issue of the Number1 Shimbun on Hacks & Flacks, despite taking place just 8-days before publication, written by MMC chair G. Bremermann. GM W. Hunter says there is a carousel of photos from the night in the Club's entrance hall at the right side, shown on our nearly floor-to-ceiling LCD screen.

D. Sloan says we must pay attention also to our new membership and welcome them and integrate them. Literally, they can be the ambassadors to get others interested in joining the Club. R. Schmidt wants more social networking events, which are also good for us to host.

D. Sloan, referring to the same issue's cover story of journalists looking at leaving X and going to Bluesky, says the FCCJ is now on Bluesky, and states that we are going to expand our social media platforms, to extend our reach.

f. Kanjis' Report (*M. Fackler, S. Farrell*)

D. Sloan explains that, due to scheduling issues, there has been a delay in notifying the person about turning down his request for additional funding. The Kanjis confirmed to the president that the person did make his arguments known to them and that they had taken the arguments into consideration.

g. General Manager's Report

1 Proposed Resolution: *Approve the payment of 681,271 yen to Anderson Mori & Tomotsune for services rendered in FY2022.*

6 Yes, 1 Object, 1 Abstain, 1 not vote. PASSED.

2 Proposed Resolution: *Approve Management to give notice to cancel the Membership Marketing Representative contract with Mio Shimamura as presented.*

UNANIMOUS

–Board approved: GM bartering with Ricoh for new printer and software (related to Membership Card production by our Membership Office), which would replace current printer and software that have been used since 2018 (when we relocated) and are no longer supported. Ricoh runs the system throughout the building, so our only viable option.

–Board approved: GM bartering with Raine for website operating system update.

–The March 27, 2025 (Thursday) GMM information will be distributed to the voting Members on March 13 (Thursday). Voting will begin on March 17 (Monday). Some 33-35% of the voting members did not actually vote last time (EGM, November 26, 2024, Tuesday). D. Sloan says we have the list of who did not vote, what Regulars didn't. We will redouble our efforts to have them involved this time, we will be vigorous in our efforts to get early voting.

–Board approved: GM speaking with Mitsubishi about their brand promotion (e.g., head table skirt, banner, etc.) and the Club receiving market value for these. K. Azhari concurs.

–Reviewing if we can have the Club Banner and a curtain behind the performer and in front of the window during SNL. K. Azhari informed.

–Will source and place armchairs and a coffee table under the stairwell. K. Azhari informed.

–GM has initiated discussions with the History Channel, to look at our Archives. They would come in at no cost and do an audit of our Archives: how its kept, what format it is, how readily useable it is, what needs to be done to make it usable, etc. This would include our YouTube, our videos, our photos, our

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audios—anything we have they will look at. All such matters would stay Club property, and the History Channel wouldn't be given access to download our copies. And then the History Channel would provide us a proposal on marketing this and the profit-sharing percentages between the History Channel and the Club. Still at the first stage, though, so lots of work still to be done on our side (i.e., digitalize all our photos, check accuracy of file names, etc.).

—Rather than a big Welcome event, GM in talks with G. Bremermann about an Orientation for New Members, perhaps once or twice a month, running 45 minutes or so, followed by lunch or dinner in the Bar. Still working out details.

—Hacks & Flacks realized target of 250 attendees. Potential membership applicants who attended the event may more than compensate for the lower-than-expected deficit of the event.

—GM would like to have sales events as a member perk. Example: Crystal stemware Riedel (one of the Hacks & Flacks' sponsors D. Umeda secured) who would be allowed to rent a room and split the profits at an FCCJ Wine & Tasting event. Management would be responsible in determining vendors and setting fees and commissions. D. Sloan not in favor, but defers to the Board, which approved. He felt that Riedel, and not a tailor also mentioned, is worth a try.

2) Approval of Consent Agenda

Proposed Resolution: Approve the consent agenda as follows:

- a. January 17 Board Meeting Minutes

Proposed Resolution: Approve the January 17, 2025 Board meeting minutes as presented.

APPROVED

- b. February Membership Applications

Proposed Resolution: Approve the February membership applications as recommended by the Membership Committee.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE.

- c. Honorary Membership for Alan West (*Book Break*)

Proposed Resolution: Approve to grant a one-year honorary membership to Allan West as presented.

APPROVED

- d. Honorary Membership for M. G. Sheftall (*Book Break*)

Proposed Resolution: Approve to grant a one-year honorary membership to M. G. (Mordecai George) Sheftall as presented.

APPROVED

- e. Honorary Membership for Messrs. Adachi, Furutachi and Sugita (*Film*)

Proposed Resolution: Approve to grant one-year honorary memberships to Film Committee guests Masao Adachi, Kanji Furutachi and Rairu Sugita as presented.

APPROVED

3) Old Business

- a. Life Membership Gregory Clark

Proposed Resolution: Approve to grant a life membership to Gregory Clark as presented.

POSTPONED until entire Board of Directors present, hopefully in March (10th, Monday).

4) New Business

- a. Scholarship Committee Conflict of Interest (*M. Fackler*)

Proposed Resolution: Following addition be made at the bottom of our page on the Club's website:

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"The Scholarship Committee will take steps to avoid conflicts of interest at all stages of the selection of scholarship winners."

PASSED

b. Main Bar Venue for Comedy Night (S. Farrell)

Proposed Resolution: *Approve to close the Main Bar for regular service on March 22 to stage a Comedy Night, and to charge an admission to pay for the performers.*

APPROVED

S. Farrell says Jake of the Comedy Club in Shibuya will be the emcee. The theme will be "News."

c. Any Other Business – Issues Inventory

D. Sloan suggests broadening invitees to events that are renting space from the Club, when RSVPs from the original membership category (e.g., Regular) aren't reaching capacity and there may be potentially a similar type of invitee in the other membership category (e.g., Associates). This would also apply vice-versa. Example: Hokuriku Night on February 2, Friday, 6-8 pm, open only to Regular Members (for free).

A. Rowley hopes to receive more suggestions for the Deep Dive Committee or Task Force regarding events, saying that some of these should be of an educational nature (e.g., AI and gold standard).

5) Committee Reports

Committees

Liaison

a. Associate Members Liaison

S. Farrell

- Creating new survey for Associate Members, followed by a town hall dinner meeting to discuss results.
- Updating invitation to Associate Members wanting to be nominated to become a Board Director. T. Nagayama earlier submitted criteria that are under consideration.
- D. Sloan suggests that a similar survey may be considered for Regular Members in March.

b. DeRoy Memorial Scholarship

S. Kakuchi

See Proposal on Conflict of Interest under New Business.

c. Election

S. Kakuchi

d. Entertainment

S. Farrell

- St. Patrick's Day SNL event on March 15.
- Comedy Night in the Main Bar on March 22. Need to close Bar and charge admission. APPROVED.
- S. Kakuchi planning Setonaikai Triennale for April 3.
- The first paid (by non-members) SNL went well: drawing 72 attendees, including 40 paying guests, on February 1.
- Planning to revive Trivia Night. Need new quiz master since previous one has left Japan.
- F&B has accepted Entertainment Committee passing on to them the craft beer tasting event.

e. Film

D. Sloan

See Honorary Membership proposal.

f. Finance

A. Rowley

See Treasurer's Report.

g. Food & Beverage

S. Fukunaga

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Two quick points—We had our first joint meeting with the Chef as well as the GM for greater collaboration; and about Events that could bring more people to the Pen & Quill. Specifically, we're introducing a project tentatively called "Table for Ten."

- h. Freedom of Press R. Schmidt
Detailed "Plan for the FoP Awards" was presented in the committee's Report to the Board. Deadline for Nominations: March 1, 2025. Two awards categories: Freedom of Press Asia; 2. Freedom of Press Japan.
- i. House & Property K. Azhari
See 1st Vice President's Report.
- j. Human Resources R. Schmidt
See 2nd Vice President's Report.
- k. Information Technology (Web) K. Azhari
–IT Committee needs more volunteers.
–D. Sloan discussed committee leadership with K. Azhari.
- l. Library, Archives & Workroom S. Kakuchi
–Book Break notices will mention dinner as suggested by D. McCombs.
–Approved management rules about Book Break late signups. In addition, separate drink tickets will be sold at the Front Desk.
- m. Membership R. Schmidt
See Second Vice President's Report.
- n. Membership Marketing D. Umeda
Phase 2, from the MMC chair Gary Bremermann: Making improvements on how potential members are attracted, communicated with, and moved through a "sales funnel," from interest to application. Making it quick and easy for non-members invited by members to register and pay for events online by themselves. And start to look at events that will draw non-members to the Club, and the membership categories that have the highest potential for membership growth, as well as updating the definitions of these categories.
- o. Professional Activities D. Sloan
January 2025 Attendance Figures.
- p. Publications (No.1 Shimbun) D. Umeda
See Secretary Report.
- Ad hoc Committees
- r. Compliance R. Schmidt
- s. Deep Dive A. Rowley
See Any Other Business.
- t. Exhibition S. Fukunaga
–Start marketing how Members can rent out the Gallery space for their own exhibitions through applying to the Exhibition Committee. We're trying to squeeze in time during November when these rental slots are available. GM has been asked to come up with a pricing structure for how the exhibitor can pay for an opening event. An example is a Champagne reception on the exhibition floor for maybe 2-3 hours.
- u. Sports D. Sloan

6) Adjournment (11:55)