

## 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](mailto:front@fccj.or.jp) Tel:+81-3-3211-3161 Fax:+81-3-3211-3168

### Minutes (7 pages)

#### General Meeting

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Ver du final

#### Quorum:

Prepared by N. Iwamura, Membership & Board Liaison Manager – As of March 13, 2025:

Total voting members: 199

Quorum: 100 needed

Total absentee votes: 161

Total proxy votes: 2

Total in person vote: 0

Grand Total: 163 votes

#### Board of Directors

##### Attend In Person (Voting):

Dan Sloan, President

Khaldon Azhari, 1st Vice President

Randy Schmidt, 2nd Vice President

Anthony Rowley, Treasurer

Suvendrini Kakuchi, Director

Dave McCombs, Director

Martin Fackler, Kanji

##### Attend In Person (Non-Voting):

David Umeda, Secretary

Shuri Fukunaga, Director

Taeko Nagayama, Director

Simon Farrell, Kanji

##### Attend In Person (Club Staff):

Wayne Hunter, General Manager

Naomichi Iwamura, Membership & Board Liaison Manager

#### 1) Call to Order (7:00 pm)

This followed Secretary D. Umeda confirming to President D. Sloan that there was the required quorum.

##### a. D. Sloan Welcome Address

For the first time, Associates were invited (though can't vote), reflecting part of the new direction ahead, whereby the multiple skill sets of our membership can deliver a fruitful, sustainable "next decades." In this light, we want to take a moment to pay tribute once again to Mary Corbett, who was a cornerstone for both YC&AC and the FCCJ, expressed most recently during a moment of silence dedicated to her during the March 15<sup>th</sup> St. Patrick's Day Parade in Yokohama's Motomachi—how impactful and important she was to that community and a sense of belonging.

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### b) Introduction of Members in Attendance

Reflecting the spirit of empowering people who care about the future of our Club, D. Sloan invited those around the room for self-introductions.

Gary Bremermann is an Associate member, who rejoined after a 10-year hiatus, and chairs the Membership Marketing Committee. D. Sloan noted that Gary and D. Umeda, A. Rowley, and Bob Peterson were very crucial to our Hacks & Flacks event in January, which again underscored our potential and our commitment to the community. Mamoru Obayashi is an Associate member and a retired professor of economics, and spouse of S. Fukunaga. Michiyo Nakamoto is a re-instated Regular member and chairperson of the Long-term Strategy Task Force, as well as co-chair of the F&B Committee. Robert E. Peterson is a reinstated Associate member and has been contributing to the Long-term Strategy Task Force. Howard Ihu is a YC&AC reciprocal usage member. Isamu Yorikane is an Associate member who joined last year and was with a bank for 25 years. Karen Severns is a Professional Associate member and chairperson of the Film Committee. Thomas Ash is a Professional Associate member. Akio Hayashi is an Associate member and was a member of the Corporate Executive Corporation of Japan for more than a decade. Toshiko Kawanami is an Associate member. Georges Baumgartner is former president of the FCCJ. Yoshisuke Iinuma is a Regular-Life member and a member of the Compliance Committee. Eiichiro Tokumoto is a 25-year Regular member. Milton Isa is an Associate member and has served on numerous committees. Ko Aoki is an Associate Member.

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### 2) Results of Voting

Chair D. Sloan and Membership & Board Liaison Manager N. Iwamura confirmed counts, Secretary D. Umeda reconfirmed, and President D. Sloan announced and signed off on the following. D. Sloan also commended GM W. Hunter for his efforts in getting Regular Members to vote.

**Motion 1** (Based on majority votes being 82)

**Approve the proposed FY2025 Budget and Business Plan**

In favor: 146 plus proxy votes 2 = 148

Not in favor: 11

Abstain: 12

Motion PASSED

It was brought up about providing details on the deficit, but D. Sloan said the purpose of the GMM is not to discuss what had just been passed, but to announce the results. He stated that the details had already been shared (about two weeks ago) with voting members, and so there was plenty of time back then to raise concerns before voting.

**Motion 2** (Based on two-thirds votes being 82)

**Approve the extension of the monthly levy of 1,500 yen for a period of one year to help the Club recover from the effects of the pandemic**

In favor: 125 plus proxy votes 2 = 127

Not in favor: 25

Abstain: 11

Motion PASSED.

**Motion 3** (Based on two-thirds votes being 133)

**Approve the proposed amendments to the Articles of Association**

In favor: 133 plus proxy votes 2 = 135

Not in favor: 5

Abstain: 23

Motion PASSED.

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### 4) Treasurer's Report and Board Transparency (A. Rowley)

We've had 3 major events in the Club's history that have deteriorated our financial position: the move to this building was costly; redundancy payments to staff; and COVID having hit us badly in terms of membership loss and members not coming to the Club so often, as well our membership aging and retiring. These are among the issues being addressed by the (Long-term Strategy) Task Force. We are doing our utmost to keep afloat, and we're having success over the past year or almost one year. We've had an improved cash flow situation. So that gives some ground for optimism. What I also want to emphasize is that we're not building up financial reserves at the rate we need to in order to meet upcoming major capital expenditures and staff retirements. This is a very broad background on the Club's financial situation.

GM W. Hunter commented that the Club doesn't make very much money from food and beverage. It's all about members and dues. The key to that is keeping the Members happy through our food and beverage and our events. The number of events over the last year has really grown, and we've taken that into account in the budget for next year.

### 5) Other Business

The in-house initiative for a Long-Term Strategy Task Force was motivated primarily by the need to draw the attention of FCCJ members to the problematic state of Club finances. Chairperson Michiyo Nakamoto said the mission is also a more holistic effort to define an overall strategy to reinvigorate the Club and ensure it remains viable and relevant for its core membership. We are looking at all aspects of the Club's operations—from membership, professional activities, and social events to capital expenditures. A final report will be presented in due course for consideration and action by the Board of Directors and by Club members.

The starting point for this review is that the FCCJ should remain a press club that primarily serves the media. Some preliminary findings explained by the chairperson included the need to serve our core membership with events and activities that make it essential for media professionals to join the Club and to use it. The growing influence of non-traditional communication channels require a need to redefine what we mean by the media and to adapt FCCJ services and activities accordingly. This Club enjoys a prime location in the heart of Tokyo's business and financial district, but its facilities are not utilized to the extent that they could be.

D. Sloan (and GM W. Hunter) have discussed as part of the next stages, the need for a University endowment fund. We'd create a kind of home for the goodwill, governments, corporations, and individuals on how they feel about us. Then we can leverage that to shore up our financial position and also ensure that we do what we're committed to.

Later, Peter McGill said we have to be extremely careful in considering who is giving money, how much money, and whether they expect something in return, for example.

D. Sloan explained that the FCCJ Compliance Committee will be kept in the loop on how we advance on this, and we will be absolutely circumspect in ensuring that we do not in any way compromise the reputation of this organization, a brand built up over eight decades, and a brand that can be shot down overnight by a bad association, and we're not going to forget that.

D. McCombs said that what we can do is get support for specific programs. Moving forward, we need to develop programs that are consistent with what corporate funders are actually doing and what they actually fund.

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Gary Bremermann referred to his memo every month to the Board that says we need to look at the Customer Journey. We need to see how we attract people, how we get them interested in the Club. The Committee also talked about expanding the definition of media people with independent journalists or podcasters or creators. So, the Committee is working on it.

Bob Peterson was wondering, based on the laws of the Club, whether we can go out and ask for corporate donations to the Club? Have rooms named after them, and their employees would come and be connected to the Club.

D. Sloan said that the FCCJ is something that Tokyo and Japan treasure, and many media organizations in this community treasure. What we need to do is leverage how important we are to them.

D. Sloan pointed out that the committees are our stakeholders, which tap the Club's human talent and human resources. He also stressed how acquiring more new members can serve as leverage to shore up our finances and reinvigorate our cost structure looking forward. He talked about the Return on Investment (ROI) in being a member of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. He cited as examples S. Farrell's Entertainment Committee (e.g., March 28<sup>th</sup> Noh Theatre and April 7<sup>th</sup> Ninja Night); W. Hunter's Palace Runs on the last Friday of the month; long-term Regular member Jake Adelstein's upcoming Book Break on March 31<sup>st</sup>; S. Fukunaga's F&B roundtables; the (Setouchi Triennale) Talk Show on April 3<sup>rd</sup>; the Sake Seminar on April 10<sup>th</sup>; and S. Farrell's special SNLs (e.g., March 15<sup>th</sup> St. Patrick's).

Karen Severns, chairperson of the Film Committee, was asked to explain how their Showings are so successful. The films are usually before they open to the public, and can involve famous people speaking, etc. The committee also aims to attract the Japanese press corp. In their GMM Report, they increased screening of documentaries in 2024 to nearly half the lineup; there was an increase in audience attendance at fiction films; and the committee continued its practice of escorting filmmakers/guests to the FCCJ dining room for post-screening drinks and dinner.

D. Sloan announced a May 21<sup>st</sup> community event at the FCCJ for one of our beloved staff members, Hanf, who is retiring and returning to Pakistan. We have created a funding mechanism to give him a kind of lift off. We will be sending out full communications about that, and I hope you both come and consider contributing to Hanf's future.

T. Nagayama said it was her third year as a Board member, and she had joined when the then-president asked her to find new vendors, which resulted in hiring ANAC. She has recruited 45 members over the past three years or so. It is very effective to visit big companies around here.

K. Azhari, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (House and Property), spoke about the negotiations with Mitsubishi in moving to this location, which also involved A. Rowley and Milton Isa. Presently, the committee is seeking advice on repairs, as well as determining market values for use of logos, etc. It takes a lot of time, including balancing between the ideal and reality, when proposing solutions and presenting them to the owner. Some examples include use of space, especially around the Bar and stairwell, and main corridor.

M. Fackler said that his PAC Committee is looking to ramp up two types of events that we did more of in the past. One is the luncheon discussions, and the other is Financial Tuesdays. The number of members on the committee is growing, getting different people involved and receiving different, fresh ideas. He expressed the following appreciation: We couldn't do our job without the staff of the Club.

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There was a discussion about the role of the moderator at a PAC event, especially regarding the Q&A sessions. M. Fackler pointed out that K. Azhari has provided a list of 5 or 10 guidelines for emcees.

D. Sloan mentioned that M. Fackler is also chairperson of our DeRoy Memorial Scholarship Committee, which is arguably, in addition to PAC and other Club endeavors for the community, provide interaction and is one of the noblest things we do to empower young people to become engaged and care, and try and discover journalism.

S. Kakuchi reminded everyone about the great library on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, wonderful staff, and lots of English-language books—all available on weekends as well.

S. Fukunaga, co-chair of the F&B Committee, said that ANAC is working hard to come up with something that is pleasing for us, making this a collaborative working relationship, rather than ANAC waiting for our ideas to be presented. Concerning the latter, the committee is bundling their ideas into two or three requests so they can be more manageable for ANAC to respond to.

R. Schmidt announced that the Freedom of the Press Awards, though still confidential, will be given out in May.

S. Farrell said that his AMLC, co-chaired by D. Umeda, is no longer hosting events, so this has freed us up to focus more on finding better ways for our (Associate) Members to become engaged in the activities of the Club and to help the Regular members run a sound financial establishment. Along with organizing opportunities such as a visit to the Osaka Expo or arranging for the Club's ANAC chef to visit an establishment that specializes in fish-and-chips, we are conducting a Professional Associate/Associate survey whose questions we hope will encourage responders to join committees and contribute to the Club in that way, as well as provide feedback on what they like and what they dislike about the Club.

D. Sloan talked about Justin McCurry, his team, and D. Umeda as Board Liaison. For the April issue, he has been deeply involved because one of the Club's former members, Steve Herman, and his colleagues lost his jobs after working for the Voice of America. D. Sloan also urged members to contact our magazine's editor with their ideas for articles or express a willingness to be contributors. It's our core value. It's our core responsibility.

Peter McGill's request about the FCCJ dropping "X" is based on the increasingly toxic content of X under Elon Musk's ownership. And if the FCCJ does this, it would send a strong signal, and we would be joining the groundswell of media organizations, universities, NGOs, public institutions, and government ministries, as well as prominent individuals.

D. Sloan said that further discussion will take place at the next Board Meeting in April, and thanked Peter for his concern and bringing this to our attention.

**Meeting adjourned at 09:00 pm.**

David M. Umeda  
Secretary

公益社団法人\_日本外国特派員協会

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Signed by:

Daniel Sloan, President  
会長 ダニエル・スローン

Khaldon Azhari, 1st Vice President  
第一副会長 カルドン・アズハリ

Randolph Schmidt, 2nd Vice President  
第二副会長 ランドルフ・シュミット

David Umeda, Secretary  
総務担当理事 デビット・ウメダ

Anthony Rowley, Treasurer  
財務担当理事 アントニー・ローリー

Shuri Fukunaga, Director  
理事 福永朱里

Suvendrini Kakuchi, Director  
理事 スペンドリニ・カクチ

Dave McCombs, Director  
理事 デビド・マッコムズ

Taeko Nagayama, Director  
理事 永山妙子