

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
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Minutes (8 pages)

Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, May 12, 2025

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Quorum: Five Voting

Attend In Person (Voting):

Dan Sloan, President
Randy Schmidt, 2nd Vice President
Anthony Rowley, Treasurer
David Umeda, Secretary

Shuri Fukunaga
Taeko Nagayama
Suvendrini Kakuchi

Attend Virtual (Voting):

Dave McCombs (on and off)

Attend In Person (Non-Voting):

Simon Farrell, Kanji

Absent (Non-Voting):

Martin Fackler, Kanji

Absent:

Khaldon Azhari, 1st Vice President

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 (10:01 am)

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

—We are 11 months into our tenure and still a fair bit to do. The month of May is really an exciting month. And it's not just the professional activities that we are hosting, but also a variety of Library activities, Entertainment nights, and Hanif's farewell. Even with Golden Week, this is going to represent value for our Membership and perhaps encourage even greater involvement in Club activities ahead, possible taking on leadership in individual Committees and/or people running for the Board.

—I want to thank you for your hard work. The Task Force chaired by Michiyo Nakamoto would like us to reasonably quickly establish a Committee A-Team focused on financial sustainability of the Club in terms of working externally to try to get financial support for the Club. And also in a way that these individual donors or corporates would be recognized. We can call it something similar to what a university does in a kind of endowment fund.

Some elements still need to be hammered out, but our goal would be a long-term fundraising attempt that will shore up financial support going into some very big payouts in the next few years. Hopefully Members who have name recognition whether in the private or public sector and who have experience in fundraising that we can leverage to get ourselves in the door. And promote our organization in a way that we're not promising anyone anything, but certainly through the relationship with the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan—and the kind of external visibility our Club provides—would be a positive for these companies or individuals. We've got to get going.

If you have somebody that you think would be appropriate to be on this committee(A-Team), please let me know and they will be contacted with reasonable haste by myself or the GM.

—In the past, what we called "Meet the Press", these events were intended to give our Membership, be they journalists themselves or people externally, an opportunity to meet and greet with somebody who's a professional. These also could be professional training sessions in which somebody with great expertise (e.g., video editing or camera work or audio or lighting) is invited to share best practices. Michiyo Nakamoto is in contact with Akiko Saikawa (Media & Press Conference Liaison Manager) to ensure that PAC is also aware of what's going on. The Profession Associates/Associates Survey expressed a desire to meet with journalists and this would satisfy.

D. Sloan brought up about the Page Society as another example, which Gary Bremermann, chair of the Membership Marketing Committee, is following through (*See MMC Report*). He also mentioned Rochelle Ford, which the event would serve as a coming home one for her.

We want to see more communications members and more kind of cross-fertilization of our facilities and our Club. Hopefully these events will prompt a greater desire to join. And we're certainly going to take the opportunity highlight the merits and benefits of Club membership.

—D. Sloan talked about the gifts for Hanif. The event gives a chance to say good things about someone while they are still with us. The event will be packed to the gills, so he requests that Zoom be set up for those outside. Attendance will be indicative of the impact he has had on all of us.

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

—The committee met on May 8, with much of the session discussing the contribution that is due to make by mid-May to the Task Force regarding FCCJ's medium to longer-term financial future.

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—The committee felt that FCCJ members should be appraised of the situation as soon as possible, beginning with the General Membership Meeting of Regular members scheduled for June 25.

—T. Nagayama reiterated the need to visit companies to get additional members, since many corporations have staff who can afford the fees. D. Sloan said that the new committee set up by the Task Force will do that. T. Nagayama said we shouldn't wait and should do it right away as soon as possible.

S. Fukunaga said that there must be an orchestrated strategy, a need to map out a plan as well as tools—people who can orchestrate the strategy. W. Hunter added that this effort is for the entire year.

S. Kakuchi asked if there was any progress on corporate membership. W. Hunter responded that we are slowly starting to see progress. S. Fukunaga wanted to make sure there is a distinction being made between corporate membership and corporate donations when responding to progress.

W. Hunter emphasized that each Board member has to be willing to move on this; S. Fukunaga added that maybe joining forces, rather than just relying on one person, per visit. S. Kakuchi felt that the Task Force can do this. A. Rowley reminded everyone that you can't demand volunteers that they should do anything, including the GM if he already has a full agenda. He added that sometimes people say let's do this without thinking about specifically who is going to do it and how they got the time to do it.

D. McCombs brought up again about an audit before approaching corporations for donations.

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

K. Azhari said GM will talk about repairing Fire Door. He requests GM to remove ANA airplane display in the Bar, effective today, until negotiation with ANA for a fee is made. Suppliers are being sourced to cover tile and change the layout of the tables and chairs to produce a more quiet and friendly space. The Standing Bar Table from the Denki Bldg. is stored, and there are plans to bring it to the Bar under the stairs, which is currently an unused dead space. Regarding his suggestion for a gallery of distinguished past FCCJ members, *see Any Other Business*.

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

See General Manager's Report and Membership Committee.

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

D. Umeda

Reminder about making sure your voice is picked up cleanly by the receiver in the center, including speaking clearly if online. The results of the AMLC Survey is covered later, with the Board receiving the Report beforehand.

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

No objection to the proposal regarding membership fee.

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g. General Manager's Report (W. Hunter)

–W. Hunter pointed out that, though the March Board meeting had requested that the statement about avoiding conflicts of interest in the Freedom of the Press awards be dropped, the Cabinet Office last year had instructed the Club to include a similar provision to Article 6 of the “Regulations Concerning the DeRoy Memorial Scholarship.”

Proposed Resolution: If any of the applicants has a special interest in the selection committee, the relevant selection committee member will be excluded from the nomination as an evaluator.

APPROVED.

–Further requests for an estimate on a simple audit of the year-end results were sent to five companies. It is also possible to ask our external accountant to perform a simple audit.

–The Mitsubishi maintenance contract has been revised for the first time since 2021 due to increases in labor and materials.

–The fire door in the Sushi Bar failed inspection and must be repaired by law and is part of the Mitsubishi maintenance contract.

–Ricoh declined to barter; however they will reduce the cost. Waiting on revised estimate.

–The History Channel proposal for potential monetization of the Club archives will be received next week.

–Expect an official request from ANAC to renegotiate the revenue split.

–Zealand restaurant in the Shin Maru Bldg. held the staff luncheon.

–Will inform Chambers of Commerce of the ending of the reciprocal agreement but will welcome their joining under the Corporate category. Vouchers would be offered to offset initiation fee.

–Waiting on Kyodo News Digital possible reduction in cost for Library news wire service (most expensive of the ones we use).

2) Approval of Consent Agenda

Proposed Resolution: Approve the consent agenda as follows:

a. April 11 Board Meeting Minutes

Proposed Resolution: Approve the April 11, 2025 Board meeting minutes as presented.

APPROVED.

b. May Membership Applications

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

APPROVED.

c. Honorary Membership for Chie Hayakawa, Yui Suzuki & Lily Franky

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Proposed Resolution: *Approve to grant one-year honorary memberships to Film Committee guests Chie Hayakawa, Yui Suzuki and Lily Franky, as presented.*

APPROVED.

d. Honorary Membership for Kenryo Hara

Proposed Resolution: *Approve to grant a one-year honorary membership to exhibition curator Kenryo Hara as presented.*

APPROVED.

e. Masukomi Sushi Bar Open Access

Proposed Resolution: *Approve a six-month extension to December 31, 2025 of the current open access policy for non-members to Masukomi Sushi Bar.*

APPROVED.

f. Pen & Quill Dining Room Member Introduction

Proposed Resolution: *Approve to extend the trial period that opens the Pen & Quill Dining Room for reservations by non-members with a member introduction until December 31, 2025, as presented.*

APPROVED.

3) Old Business

a. Life Membership Gregory Clark

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

Requires all BoD present (or online). D. Sloan will consider arranging for a set online meeting.

b. Honorary Membership for Stuart Varnam Atkin

Board agreed to provide one final Honorary membership as approved at the May 2025 Board meeting.

c. Regular Member Entrance Fee Reduction

Proposed Resolution: *Approve to recommend to the membership to reduce the entrance fee to ~~1,000 yen~~ zero for all categories of Regular membership for a period of one year as presented.*

4 APPROVED, 2 OPPOSED, 2 ABSTAINED. WILL PRESENT TO THE GMM (June 25).

—D. Sloan said this proposal is for the GMM (June 25). In kind of concert with this proposal to our Regulars is to set up a meeting with the Bureau chiefs, be they foreign news agencies or Japanese news agencies, and present this proposal to them so they see the kind of merits of having more of their own staff as members of the FCCJ.

—S. Kakuchi commented that the deposit is like a security matter. She asked how much money we are talking about.

—D. Sloan felt that other earlier incentive programs and rebates to attract more Regular members have not found traction.

—W. Hunter was concerned about what everyone would think about the image a reduction gives.

—S. Fukunaga suggested a tentative duration since it's difficult to bring it back one you eliminate it.

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- T. Nagayama queried if we know what Regular members think about a reduction in the initiation fee. S. Kakuchi concurred about whether we have thought this through enough.
- D. Sloan said it is definitely a barrier to getting them even to contemplate joining. He liked the idea of a limited time offer to kind of get people to come to the table and take advantage of this discount. W. Hunter concurred.
- S. Farrell referred to email from D. McCombs regarding opposition to this proposal.

4) New Business

a. AMLC Survey

–D. Umeda and S. Farrell briefly reiterated from their Report about Benefits Interest; Length of Membership; Category of Membership; and Likes and Dislikes (stating that these comments fell under 8 categories—(1) Membership, (2) Milieu, (3) Dining, (4) Library, (5) Publications, (6) Hours, (7) Events, and (8) Reciprocal arrangements).

–S. Kakuchi wanted to know what's the next step regarding Survey (results). W. Hunter said he will share with the Staff; with Michiyo Nakamoto (Task Force), F&B. D. Sloan said Committee chairs should also get a copy. S. Farrell requested send to all the Respondents. D. Umeda will follow through with GM.

–T. Nagayama asked about the comments, such as about the hours of operation. S. Kakuchi wondered if there were any requests regarding this. D. Umeda replied it was about the weekends. Simon added that they wanted to close later than 11:00 pm. S. Fukunaga wanted to know if there were comments about the Exhibitions, saying that late hours would benefit her rental of the gallery. R. Schmidt wanted clarity on current weekend access from GM. W. Hunter mentioned about using Membership Card.

b. Any Other Business

–D. Sloan spoke on behalf of M. Fackler regarding live streaming, whereby non-members will be prohibited from doing so for a variety of reasons. They also are proposing a kind of controlling who can access our YouTube channel for which we live stream and is currently made available to everyone. S. Farrell wondered how we will tell non-members about this restriction, for example, before the press conference. D. Sloan said we know who the attendees are, so we can instruct them by e-mail that this is no longer acceptable. W. Hunter pointed out that PAC is recommending this, so the Board is approving this too. D. Sloan clarified that this is a PAC policy, not the Board's policy, so we can support and not have to vote on it.

–Regarding the Freedom of the Press dinner on May 30 (per R. Schmidt), D. Sloan clarified to T. Nagayama that Associates are invited. 6:30 refreshment, 7:00 event, with light refreshments (W. Hunter).

–S. Fukunaga said they have started talking to people who are interested in renting out space for the week (between exhibitions). She said the calendar for exhibitions is already filled until towards the end of the year. The call for more people to become interested in the rental gallery segment needs to start in the 3Q (T. Nagayama) of this year. S. Fukunaga said they are fine-tuning the fee structure for eventual BoD approval.

–In reply to D. Sloan about Election dates, W. Hunter said the Notice will go out during this week.

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–D. Sloan responded to L. Cisar's explanation. The president said that unless the AMLC changes the rules for nomination, the past year's rules will be the default (not require BoD approval).

–D. Sloan responded to suggestion about photos of recently deceased members in the Genkan. He felt that the Memorials alone served that purpose.

5) Committee Reports

Committees / Liaison

a. Associate Members Liaison – S. Farrell

See New Business, a. AMLC Survey (D. Umeda)

b. DeRoy Memorial Scholarship – S. Kakuchi

Per M. Fackler, chairman, The Swadesh DeRoy Scholarship Committee had two items to report—

–First, we have contacted universities, journalism schools and a few international high schools to seek applicants for the 2025 scholarship. This year's flyer and application are attached. Please distribute these to every educator in your networks, to help us get the word out.

–Second, we have extended honorary one-year Club memberships to the scholarship's past winners, per the Board's earlier decision. The list of those accepting the memberships was included.

c. Election – S. Kakuchi

d. Entertainment – S. Farrell

e. Film – D. Sloan

See Honorary Membership proposal.

f. Finance – A. Rowley

See Treasurer's Report.

g. Food & Beverage – S. Fukunaga

ANAC considering bringing in a new touch monitor order system for staff so focus can be more fully fall on service. Report also covered Food quality & Menu; New suggestions and points made; Tasting; Pen & Quill Utility; and Breakfasts, Cocktails at Gallery.

h. Freedom of Press – R. Schmidt

i. House & Property – K. Azhari

j. Human Resources – R. Schmidt

k. Information Technology (Web) – K. Azhari

l. Library, Archives & Workroom – S. Kakuchi

Golden Week 2026 FCCJ holiday schedule will be discussed by management. Library books relating to WWII and Yukio Mishima to be displayed. Upcoming Book Breaks. Purchase approved.

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m. **Membership** – R. Schmidt

Approval of May membership applications as recommended by the Membership Committee. Monthly Membership Tally – April 30, 2025.

n. **Membership Marketing** – D. Umeda

Filed by Gary Bremermann, chairperson—

–Initiated planning for a collaborative event with the Page Society in June featuring their new CEO Rochelle Ford visiting from NYC.

–Discussed the need to have more luncheon events with “big name” speakers that will draw attention to the Club including bringing in non-members to visit the Club.

–The primary “to do” item for marketing is to work on improving the sales funnel from interest to application

o. **Professional Activities** – D. Sloan

March Attendance Figures.

p. Publications (No.1 Shimbun) – D. Umeda

Ad hoc Committees

r. Compliance – R. Schmidt

s. Deep Dive – A. Rowley

t. Exhibition – S. Fukunaga

u. Sports – D. Sloan

6) Adjournment (11:38)