

MEMORANDUM

To: SPJ Board of Directors
From: Jennifer Royer, Interim Executive Director
Re: IED Report
Date: Sept. 27, 2023



The beginning of this month marked one year since I moved into the Interim Executive Director role. At this time last year, we were one month away from MediaFest22. The executive director had resigned, we had lost two accounting staff members, a membership coordinator, an administrative assistant and were working to put the finishing touches on the convention (because it was a month later than this year's convention). We didn't know where we stood financially due to the loss of staff, among other things, and the institutional knowledge those staff members took with them.

After MediaFest22 ended in late October, there were multiple fires that President Claire Regan, this board, and myself, inherited and had to put out. We had to get our bearings, gather information, figure out what needed fixed first, and move ahead to make the best decisions possible with the information we had. November through April were spent cleaning up and getting things in working order. That is six months that it took just to get a handle on where we stood.

Today, while the numbers are not where we want them to be, we know where we stand financially and are working hard to reduce or eliminate the PROJECTED deficit budget. I emphasize projected because a lot can happen in the last quarter of 2023, and since we're in Las Vegas, I will bet that we end the year in a better position than many are anticipating right now.

The 2022 audit will be complete in the next couple of weeks and the auditors describe it as another "clean" audit, meaning they have found no mismanagement of funds. Immediately after convention, we will begin putting together the 2024 budget. We have made many difficult but necessary cuts in expenses this year to try to offset the loss of revenue. At the same time, we are working on plans to increase revenue. Part of that plan was hiring a new fundraising director who you will meet later in the meeting.

Also in this meeting, I will explain why this board and the SPJ Foundation board should explore the idea of moving headquarters functions to an association management company. And while this board approved staff moving ahead with the 2024 convention in Indianapolis, we will revisit that decision before contracts are signed and the decision is set in stone.

While it is easy to look at budget projections and let them cause panic and bring us down, there has been a lot of progress made by this board and staff over the past year. If anyone wants to

discuss this progress in detail with me, I am happy to speak with any concerned SPJ leader or member one on one.

We are in a much better position than we were a year ago; we have made progress (though admittedly it is never as fast as we would like); and we have ideas and options for moving forward.

I'm confident a year from now we will be in a much better position than today – IF we all work together. So instead of complaining about what's wrong and being pessimistic about SPJ's future, I urge us to collaborate on solutions and be optimistic about the way forward. We are all on the same team. Until we act like it and stop being so critical and skeptical of the people in our own organization, we will never make the strides that I know every single one of us wants to see for this Society.

The only way SPJ will get through these trying times is for us to work together in a positive and productive way. Let's see how far we can take SPJ in the coming year, so we can look back next September and celebrate our accomplishments.