

## PRESS ASSOCIATION MINUTES

Tuesday, May 4, 1:30 pm, EAC Crystal Beach Room

The meeting was brought to order at 1:30 p.m. President Tom Butcher was not present, but outgoing Vice President Donna Gagnon and Secretary Joanne Cordes made brief statements.

There was no old business or new business.

OTOW News Editor Doug Kates swore-in new board members Vice President Kathi Finley and Secretary Patti Branch. Both agreed to attend as many meetings as possible and to never argue with Doug or Chilly.

Doug talked about the 2026 Appreciation Dinner attended by 20 people. The event was moved from Philippe Park to the EAC Clearwater Room due to weather. As a result of low attendance, Doug proposed a recognition ceremony instead of a dinner for April 2027. All 18 people at the meeting liked the idea. Doug said all qualifiers (3 meetings and 3 contributions) will be called up to the front for recognition and receive an award trinket. The event also will be open to one guest per person. Doug is hopeful more than 20 qualified staffers will attend.

Doug told staffers that at Press Association meetings 18 years ago, the format included bringing in guest speakers and not the newspaper editor. During his second month at OTOW, Doug volunteered to speak about newspaper business and the format has stuck ever since. Doug asked those at the May meeting if they still wanted him to lead each meeting or go back to having guest speakers. Everyone in attendance said keep the current format.

Doug then explained that the newspaper had no choice but to raise advertising rates. Our printing company is hiking our cost once this spring and once this summer. It is not known how our advertisers will react to the higher prices. We need to thin the newspaper out to save money. Doug asked people to only submit good quality stories and take some months off so we can reduce the number of pages. He did not ask anyone to stop writing completely.

A question was asked why club and group stories do not have a photo of the person who wrote the story, like with building stories. Doug said he wants people to easily identify which club the story is about and adding a writer's photo may block the club logo.

There will be no meetings in June or July. The door is open to meet for lunch during the August meeting.

Doug said he will keep everyone updated through email blasts.

The meeting was closed and most people went to the newsroom to see the TV station's new broadcast desk.