Gulf Coast Writers Association
Executive Committee Meeting
November 11, 2025 by Zoom
Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. EST by President Mary Charles

Attending: Mary Charles, Ginger Wakem, Claudia Volkman, Mary Beth Leopold, Laura Fuller, Christie Zarria, Jeanne Meeks Absent: Claudia Geagan

Corporate Board: Andrew Conlyn attending

Reports from Officers:

Secretary: Minutes had been submitted via email prior to the meeting. Mary Beth moved and Ginger seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion passed. Mary Charles also commented on the success of the 30th Anniversary event and thanked Christie and Ginger for their hard work.

Membership: Jeanne Meeks reported a surge in Storm Stories sales following the 30th Anniversary event, with four books sold at the event and five the day after, generating approximately $14 in royalties. She noted a current issue with KDP regarding author copy orders, which she will work to resolve. We currently have 151 members on our roster, including 11 honorary, 137 paid members and a few unpaid members. We have added 64 new members since January. Jeanne also reported that she, Laura, and Mary Beth will work on the Stripe app to ensure reports accurately reflect incoming funds.

Treasurer: Mary Beth Leopold thanked everyone for their help during her transition into the Treasurer role. She did not send out the adjusted August and September reports prepared by former treasurer Mike Cole so that she might correct Stripe payment discrepancies Mike was unable to reconcile due to lack of app access. She will submit corrected reports before the next EC meeting. She also proposed moving MailerLite from the Admin budget to Communications, which was approved.

Programs: We discussed the planned brainstorming session at our upcoming November membership meeting. EC members offered ideas for structuring the meeting and we agreed to begin by summarizing 2025 accomplishments, then breaking into small groups to discuss topics for the coming year. EC members will submit ideas to Mary, who will create an outline to share with attendees upon arrival. Each small group will appoint one spokesperson to share their ideas with the whole group. It will be important to have a strong moderator to ensure equal time is allotted for each group.

Web Manager: Laura requested approval to change the home page layout. She asked for clarification on how to get approval once she's ready to share her ideas. We agreed she can submit her ideas to the EC via email. She also asked whether we could streamline the Gazette to improve navigation, as the last Gazette was rather lengthy. After discussion, Laura agreed to provide Mary with details on newsletter best practices, and Mary will discuss this further with Cheryl Lynn.

Communications: No report, as this position remains unfilled.

Special Programs: Claudia Geagan was absent. Laura Fuller reported that we already received our first writing contest submission and she will continue communicating with Claudia about the contest's progress during Claudia's recovery from surgery.

New Business:

Mary raised the topic of purchasing a wireless microphone for meetings. Christie advised that unless we can access St. Hilary's sound system, a karaoke-type system would better serve our needs. Christie agreed to research both options—using St. Hilary's system with our own mic versus purchasing a standalone system.

Mary reported that Laura Schueneman has agreed to chair the Welcome Committee, with Claudia V also serving on the committee.

Ginger proposed raising annual dues based on the value we provide to members, presenting statistics from other organizations for comparison. After discussion, Ginger moved to raise dues to $60/year for individuals, $90 for families, and $10 at the door for non-members. Motion passed. We also agreed to post an invitation on the website and Facebook for members to donate to the organization, noting that as a 501(c)(3), donations are tax deductible.

There being no further business, Ginger moved to adjourn and Claudia V seconded. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Next Executive Meeting: January 13, 2026

Respectfully submitted by Christie Zarria