Gulf Coast Writers Association
Executive Committee Meeting
January 13, 2026 by Zoom
Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. EST by President Mary Charles.

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

Corporate Board: Andrew Conlyn attending

Reports from Officers:

Secretary: Minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. There being no additions or corrections, Jeanne moved and Andrew seconded that minutes be approved. Motion passed.

Treasurer: Mary Beth presented the November and December treasurer's report. A discussion regarding MeetUp ensued with regard to how to discontinue the subscription. Christie volunteered to contact Brian Devitt, who had previously administrated our MeetUp account, to determine the status of our subscription. Other items clarified included income of $3361 and expenses of $3548 for the 30th Anniversary, resulting in a $187 deficit, but the event still came in close to $500 under budget. Claudia moved and Jeanne seconded that we approve the treasurer's reports for November and December. Motion passed.

Website: Laura asked if the Zoom link for the monthly membership meeting should be in the Members Only area. Everyone agreed. For first time attendees, folks can contact Christie for the link. Laura suggested we change the name of the Gazette to Newsletter for better visibility on the internet. She also advised the group of newsletter changes that she and Cheryl Lynn Dratler have made with regard to spotlight on members. Laura additionally reported that there is an issue with Hostinger, which provides support for our website email capabilities. She is researching other possibilities which will not be as costly as Hostinger, and she will report back to the group. Finally, she asked the group to please include her on all information about any achievements or special awards of members, so the Accomplishments area of the website will be current and relevant.

Special Projects: Claudia asked for help in getting more publicity out about the writing contest, as our entries have been slow to this point. She agreed to produce a blurb which Mary will distribute to the media contact list we have from Sheryl. Claudia also reported that all slots for the Reading Festival in March have been filled.

Programs: Lori asked if the scheduled business meeting at the April membership meeting precludes a regular program, as she was planning a poetry slam. We agreed there should be time for both since the business meeting should not be longer than fifteen or twenty

minutes. She also reported that she has most of the year's programs planned and thanked the group for their support in her new position.

Membership: Jeanne reported that we currently have 144 active members, including 14 January renewals this month. She suggested that when we invite folks to give a report or speak on something at the general meeting, we ask them to keep it under two minutes to maintain the meeting schedule.

Officer at Large: Ginger mentioned the issue of coffee and snacks at the membership meeting. After discussion, we agreed that since the membership was split as to whether refreshments are necessary, we will simply announce to them that folks can bring their own coffee and/or water and if anyone would like to bring cookies or snacks, they are free to do so on their own.

New Business:

Zoom: Christie asked the group to consider adding Zoom users to our account to facilitate others using Zoom when she is not available. After some discussion, Christie moved that we upgrade our Zoom account to accommodate other users, Mary Beth seconded and the motion passed. Christie will contact Zoom to get further details and clarification and report back to the group.

Constitution and ByLaws: We discussed the Board and their terms and responsibilities, according to our constitution and bylaws. Andrew agreed to try and contact the other three board members to decide who wishes to continue in their position and to get input on changes to our constitution and bylaws. Mary raised the issue of increasing membership dues, which according to our constitution and bylaws, the general membership must be informed of at least one month prior to a vote at a regular meeting attended by at least ten percent of the total membership. We agreed to announce this Saturday that we will be voting on dues changes at the February membership meeting. Also, Mary asked all executive committee members to read the bylaws and constitution carefully and be prepared to discuss potentional changes at our next EC meeting in February.

There being no further business, Jeanne moved and Christie seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christie Zarria, Secretary