



**National Storytelling Network
August 2025 Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes**

I. Call to Order 5:03 Central time

Chair Rishi Nixon

Quorum requires a majority of the number of Directors in office—currently **16**—so **9** board members are required to conduct business.

Present: Karen Amano, Caleb Hubbard, Margaret Read MacDonald, Barry McWilliams, Gwen Napier, Rishi Nixon, Lisa Overholser, Darlene Richard, Emily Stamets, Lisa Williams, Linda Yemoto. Staff: Dot Cleveland, Robert Johnson. Guest: Rachel Hedman.

II. Review and Approval of June 2025 Board Meeting Minutes and the July 2025 General Membership Meeting.

Motion: That the minutes of the June 2025 Board Meeting and the July 2025 General Membership Meeting be approved. Moved by Caleb Hubbard. Passed unanimously.

III. Georgia 2025 Conference Co-Chairs' Report

Co-Chairs Leslie Shelley and Rishi Nixon

Lesley offered thanks to all who helped. The board discussed ways to thank volunteers during the conferences. The conference was a great success. It felt like a healing process for many long time NSN members. Final financial numbers are looking good.

IV. Chair's Report

Chair Rishi Nixon

Rishi's focus for the coming year:

Increase our membership. Work on partnerships with other organizations...ISC, NABS, Americans for the Arts and others.

Appointment of Zenobia Judd-Williams to Membership Committee

Celebrating Jonesborough supporters Bill and Virginia Kennedy's 60th anniversary
Flowers sent to celebrate their 60th anniversary.

Congratulations to Bob Johnson for Oracle Award for National Service.

Actions to address insensitive conference showcase story. This issue has been dealt with through conversations with the teller and those who expressed concern. An ad hoc committee is formed to discuss ways to avoid such issues in the future: Caleb Hubbard,

chair. Members: Gwen Napier, Margaret Read MacDonald, Darlene Richard. Sue O'Hallaran and Laura Packer will be invited to join the committee as well.

Discussion taking an organizational membership in Americans for the Arts
The membership fee is \$100 annually.

Discussion of adapting the Americans for the Arts diversity statement.

Motion: That the issue of joining Americans for the Arts and/or adopting Americans for the Arts diversity statement shall be tabled until the September meeting. Moved by Caleb Hubbard. Passed unanimously.

Board members are asked to examine the Americans for the Arts website and be ready to vote on these issues at the September meeting.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/membership/member-benefits-and-pricing>

Discussion with NEST re possible future NSN conference (2029?)

V. Preliminary Conference Hosting Talks

Rishi is in discussions with NEST re a future NSN conference (2029?)

Rachel Hedman, Executive Director of Story Crossroads joined the board meeting to discuss her possible interest in hosting an NSN Conference, perhaps in 2028. Rachel had hoped to host this during the first week of May, in conjunction with Story Crossroads events, but several problems with that date were voiced. She will explore summer possibilities.

We have no host yet for 2027.

VI. Conference Co-Chairs' Report

Co-Chairs Caleb Hubbard and Trudy Hanson

Conference will be July 23-26, 2026. Working on meeting rooms, dorms, catering, etc. with West Texas A & M University. Caleb wants to coordinate with SIGS soon on there Conference needs.

VII. Vice Chair-Elect's Introduction

Vice Chair-Elect Darlene Richard. Darlene is an organizer with Tejas. She will be focusing on Membership in her position as Vice Chair-Elect.

VIII. Secretary's Report

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald

By-laws amendment to exclude chairs of committees (except those with Board-delegated financial powers) from need to sign our annual Conflict of Interest form. Tabled until September meeting. By-laws committee will rework this amendment to include Dot as signer of Conflict of Interest form.

By-laws committee's recommendation on current 2014 conflict of interest form versus proposed 2016 amendments to the form. We found this proposed amendment in NSN's digital files. By-laws committee recommends keeping the Conflict of Interest form as it currently appears on our website.

Dot will send the Conflict of Interest form to all board members shortly. All board members need to sign this form annually.

IX. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bob Johnson
Available on the NSN website.

X. Immediate Past Chair's Report

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed: not present
50th anniversary oral history project
Interview logistics and funding sources
Reaching out to the International Storytelling Center

XI. Environmental Storytelling Special Interest Group (ECO SIG) Report

Directors Linda Yemoto and Claire Nolan

ECO's next big event is the Sun Day Concert on September 21. Information is available on the thirdact.org website. It's a four-hour concert with HSA and Third Act.org featuring wonderful tellers including Margaret Read MacDonald, Judith Black, Fran Stallings, Heather Forest, Jenny Cargill-Strong (from Australia), Valentina Ortiz (from Mexico), Diane Edgecomb, Laura Simms and many more.

The other event is our September 9 Swap featuring Karen Golden. Karen will be sharing ideas to foster sustainability with our youngest audience members. As always we meet at 8:30 pm EDT.

We picked up a few new members at the conference, and our field trip to the Smith Gilbert Gardens was well-attended and wonderful! Thank you to Leslie for organizing that.

Here is the registration link: [Sun Day Storytelling Concert](#)

Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (PRO SIG) Report

Directors Lisa Overholser and Barry McWilliams. No report.

XII. Storytelling in Organizations Special Interest Group (SIO SIG) Report

Director Lisa Williams. No report.

XIII. Youth-Educators-Storytellers Special Interest Group (YES SIG) Report

Director Karin Amano.

September 27 Angela Lloyd Sunbrella Concert co-sponsored by YES and HSA.

XIV. Adjournment

Chair Rishi Nixon

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm central time.

Next Board Meeting: **Wednesday, September 17, 2025**

6:00 - 8:00 pm Eastern Time

5:00 - 7:00 pm Central Time

4:00 - 6:00 pm Mountain Time

3:00 - 5:00 pm Pacific Time



**National Storytelling Network
August 2025 Board of Directors Meeting**

CONFIDENTIAL

**Appendix I
Context on actions to address insensitive conference showcase story**

The agenda item on **“actions to address insensitive conference showcase story”** is about [REDACTED] regional teller showcase story at our 2025 conference in Georgia.

One of the women upon whom [REDACTED] performance on tales of Southern women was based was a slave. After telling the story of this woman's brave actions—saving her slaveowner—during wartime, in order to emphasize her selflessness of character, [REDACTED] added the additional information that, as a slave, she was said to have refused her freedom when it was offered to her, and bequeathed her own seven children as slaves to each of the slaveowner's seven children.

While this may be a historical fact, as storytellers, we must be mindful about how we wield historical fact. The major issue was that in the context of the ending of [REDACTED] story, the addition of this information made [REDACTED] story seem to portray this refusal of freedom and perpetuation of slavery in a positive light.

Many attendees were—understandably—very angry about this, and one or two asked us to make a public apology or retraction. Sue O'Halloran—our opening teller of the conference, who is very well-known as a speaker on diversity—had a one-on-one conversation with [REDACTED] after the showcase explaining why her story was problematic and hurt many in the audience. [REDACTED] apologized profusely, and it was clear [REDACTED] intention was not to be hurtful. Sue was optimistic that [REDACTED] expressed [REDACTED] would take much deeper care in [REDACTED] content moving forward.

I wanted to update the board that this issue seems resolved—Leslie has spoken to many of the attendees who reached out about [REDACTED] story and they largely think this one-on-one conversation with [REDACTED] was an appropriate response. They are no longer pressing us for a public retraction or apology.

I want to emphasize we have apologized individually to each attendee who has raised this, but given that it is now clear this was not an intentional comment on slavery on [REDACTED]'s part, and that [REDACTED] has expressed [REDACTED] sincere regret, we feel it would be unnecessarily cruel to publicly denounce [REDACTED]. In keeping with this, at the board meeting, I will address this issue **without mentioning [REDACTED] name**, instead only referring to [REDACTED] as "the regional teller." **I ask you to also please refrain from using [REDACTED] name during the board meeting.**

To prevent this from happening at future showcases, during the board meeting, I wanted to discuss the extent to which we should vet showcase tellers for potentially problematic content.

This year, each regional teller did submit a 300-word summary (albeit not a script) of their story, but I think it would have been hard to anticipate this issue arising from the application alone. [REDACTED] is a well-known teller ([REDACTED] Storytelling Network president, former NSN board member, performer at Jonesborough in the past); [REDACTED] submitted summary was detailed, focusing on inclusivity and empowerment of Southern women; and this problematic part of [REDACTED] story was not mentioned in the summary, likely because it wasn't part of the actual story, but an auxiliary detail [REDACTED] mentioned afterward.

It might not be feasible to ask for a video or script of the story at the application phase, but perhaps we need language to ask tellers to be aware of avoiding controversial or insensitive material? I know The Moth does this and we may find other organizations that have something drafted already. I would like to put together an ad hoc committee to examine this.

Rishi Nixon

Chair, Board of Directors

7:05 AM

08/19/25

Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network

Statement of Financial Position

As of July 31, 2025

	Jul 31, 25	Jul 31, 24
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1018 · US Bank General Account	13,445	42,833
1168 · US Bank Business Savings	176,580	70,215
1169 · Savings		
1077 · Ray Hicks Legacy Project	6,599	6,599
Total 1169 · Savings	<u>6,599</u>	<u>6,599</u>
Total Checking/Savings	<u>196,624</u>	<u>119,647</u>
Accounts Receivable		
1110 · Accounts Receivable	1,315	2,005
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>1,315</u>	<u>2,005</u>
Other Current Assets		
1250 · Undeposited Funds	-30	475
Total Other Current Assets	<u>-30</u>	<u>475</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>197,909</u>	<u>122,127</u>
Fixed Assets		
1645 · Machinery & Equipment	3,769	3,769
1760 · Accumulated Depreciation	-3,769	-2,262
Total Fixed Assets	<u>0</u>	<u>1,507</u>
Other Assets		
1800 · Other long-term assets		
1805 · CCU CD	63,855	61,328
Total 1800 · Other long-term assets	<u>63,855</u>	<u>61,328</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>63,855</u>	<u>61,328</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>261,764</u>	<u>184,961</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
2010 · Accounts Payable	24,019	0
Total Accounts Payable	<u>24,019</u>	<u>0</u>

7:05 AM

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Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network

Statement of Financial Position

As of July 31, 2025

	Jul 31, 25	Jul 31, 24
Credit Cards		
1013 · US Bank Credit Card	-161	604
Total Credit Cards	-161	604
Other Current Liabilities		
2110 · Direct Deposit Liabilities	0	-904
2450 · Payroll Taxes Payable		
2452 · FIT Withheld Payable	0	63
2453 · FICA Payable-Employee	35	107
2454 · FICA Payable-Company	35	107
2455 · Medicare Payable-Employee	8	25
2456 · Medicare Payable-Company	8	25
2460 · KC Earnings Tax	0	0
2461 · MO Withholding	8	0
2463 · MN Withheld Tax	-28	174
Total 2450 · Payroll Taxes Payable	67	502
2520 · Payable for Ray Hicks Legacy Pj	6,599	8,933
2570 · Short-term liabilities - other		
2575 · Due to ETSU (In-State Tuition)	0	-99
Total 2570 · Short-term liabilities - other	0	-99
Total Other Current Liabilities	6,666	8,432
Total Current Liabilities	30,524	9,036
Total Liabilities	30,524	9,036
Equity		
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets		
3000 · Net Assets W/O Donor Restrictns	35,832	21,064
3050 · Net Assets w/o Board Restrict.		
3100 · Board Restricted Net Assets	126,280	90,448
3102 · Due to SIGs		
3102i · Welcome Seed Funds (SIG)	1,129	0
3102g · Due to ECO (SIG)	3,415	1,712
3102f · Due to KSA (SIG)	0	36
3102c · Due to PRO (SIG)	6,128	5,138
3102d · Due to SIO (SIG)	8,382	6,333

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Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network
Statement of Financial Position
As of July 31, 2025

	Jul 31, 25	Jul 31, 24
3102e · Due to YES (SIG)	21,012	18,535
3102h · Due to MAL (SIG)	0	2,540
Total 3102 · Due to SIGs	40,066	34,293
Total 3100 · Board Restricted Net Assets	40,066	34,293
Total 3000 · Net Assets W/O Donor Restrictns	166,346	124,742
3300 · Net Assets With Donor Restrictns		
3301 · Use restricted net assets		
4012 · Scholarship Grants	4,644	2,500
3325 · Member Grant Restricted Funds	11,277	5,420
Total 3301 · Use restricted net assets	15,921	7,920
Total 3300 · Net Assets With Donor Restrictns	15,921	7,920
3998 · Current Year Earnings	-35,832	-21,064
3999 · Prior Year Earnings	-0	-0
Net Income	48,974	43,263
Total Equity	231,240	175,925
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	261,764	184,961

7:04 AM

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Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network

Income and Expenses Compared to Budget

January through July 2025

	Jan - Jul 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4000 · Contributed support			
4010 · Indiv/business contribution	4,845	11,202	-6,357
4130 · Gifts in kind - goods	300		
Total 4000 · Contributed support	5,145	11,202	-6,057
5000 · Earned revenues			
5112 · Teller Page Listings-Storynet	2,120	2,440	-320
5150 · Auction Proceeds	1,354	2,144	-790
5160 · Program-related sales other	3,297		
5180 · Conference & Other Program Fees	110,210	90,021	20,189
5210 · Membership dues - individuals	17,295	20,933	-3,638
5220 · Assessments & dues - orgs	2,550	2,800	-250
5310 · Interest-savings/short-term inv	2,983	3,034	-51
5440 · Non-program sales	40	0	40
5450 · Advertising revenues	6,450	7,500	-1,050
5477 · SMP Fees Earned	50	100	-50
5478 · ETSU Admin Fees	290	100	190
5490 · Miscellaneous revenue	390	0	390
5495 · Resource Room Admin Commission	0	531	-531
Total 5000 · Earned revenues	147,029	129,602	17,427
Total Income	152,175	140,804	11,370
Gross Profit	152,175	140,804	11,370
Expense			
7000 · Grant & contract expense			
7019 · All Grants	150		
7023 · Scholarships for Conference			
Total 7019 · All Grants	150		
Total 7000 · Grant & contract expense	150		
7200 · Salaries & related expenses			
7220 · Salaries & wages - other	3,723	6,225	-2,502
7250 · Payroll taxes	515	525	-10
7260 · Payroll Processing Fee	0	88	-88
Total 7200 · Salaries & related expenses	4,238	6,837	-2,599
7500 · Other personnel expenses			
7555 · Other	94		
Total 7500 · Other personnel expenses	94	0	94

7:04 AM

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Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network

Income and Expenses Compared to Budget

January through July 2025

	Jan - Jul 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget
8100 • Non-personnel expenses			
8105 • Computer Equipment & Software	1,320	1,104	215
8110 • Supplies	1,877	1,400	477
8130 • Telephone & telecommunications	255	233	22
8140 • Postage, shipping, delivery	260	200	60
8170 • Printing & copying	4,107	3,500	607
8180 • Books, subscriptions, reference	780	0	780
Total 8100 • Non-personnel expenses	8,599	6,438	2,161
8300 • Travel & meetings expenses			
8310 • Travel	503	6,000	-5,497
8320 • Conference, convention, meeting	40,520	40,700	-180
8322 • Comp Conference Fees	24,745	1,200	23,545
8325 • Honoraria	0	150	-150
8330 • Sound, technology, Zoom etc	2,000	4,297	-2,297
8321 • Presenter payout	4,242	7,701	-3,459
Total 8300 • Travel & meetings expenses	72,010	60,048	11,961
8500 • Misc expenses			
8516 • Marketing Expense	1,200	10,239	-9,039
8520 • Insurance - non-employee	3,245	3,500	-255
8530 • Membership dues - organization	200	200	0
8547 • Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	3,750	0	3,750
8555 • Program Related Fees	1,571	5,000	-3,429
8560 • Outside computer svcs/Website	3,933	8,901	-4,968
8561 • Website Enhancement	236		
8590 • Other expenses	115	0	115
Total 8500 • Misc expenses	14,250	27,840	-13,589
8600 • Business expenses			
8640 • Bank Fees	3,414	3,722	-308
8670 • Organizational (corp) expenses	446	300	146
Total 8600 • Business expenses	3,860	4,022	-161
Total Expense	103,201	105,184	-1,983
Net Ordinary Income	48,974	35,620	13,354
Net Income	48,974	35,620	13,354

11:10 AM

08/19/25

Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network Profit & Loss by Class January through July 2025

	226-ECO (220-SIGS)	227-MAL (220-SIGS)	222-PRO (220-SIGS)
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4000 · Contributed support			
4010 · Indiv/business contribution	0.00	0.00	50.00
Total 4000 · Contributed support	0.00	0.00	50.00
5000 · Earned revenues			
5180 · Conference & Other Program Fees	0.00	0.00	20.00
5210 · Membership dues - Individuals	905.00	1,375.00	1,037.50
5490 · Miscellaneous revenue	0.00	0.00	40.35
Total 5000 · Earned revenues	905.00	1,375.00	1,097.85
Total Income	905.00	1,375.00	1,147.85
Gross Profit	905.00	1,375.00	1,147.85
Expense			
7500 · Other personnel expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
7555 · Other			
Total 7500 · Other personnel expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
8300 · Travel & meetings expenses			
8321 · Presenter payout	175.00	0.00	500.00
Total 8300 · Travel & meetings expenses	175.00	0.00	500.00
8500 · Misc expenses			
8547 · Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	500.00	0.00	500.00
Total 8500 · Misc expenses	500.00	0.00	500.00
Total Expense	675.00	0.00	1,000.00
Net Ordinary Income	230.00	1,375.00	147.85
Net Income	230.00	1,375.00	147.85

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Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network Profit & Loss by Class January through July 2025

	224-SIO (220-SIGS)	225-YES (220-SIGS)	Total 220-SIGS (100-Program Services)
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4000 · Contributed support			
4010 · Indiv/business contribution	0.00	0.00	50.00
Total 4000 · Contributed support	0.00	0.00	50.00
5000 · Earned revenues			
5180 · Conference & Other Program Fees	0.00	40.00	60.00
5210 · Membership dues - individuals	950.00	2,037.50	6,305.00
5490 · Miscellaneous revenue	0.00	0.00	40.35
Total 5000 · Earned revenues	950.00	2,077.50	6,405.35
Total Income	950.00	2,077.50	6,455.35
Gross Profit	950.00	2,077.50	6,455.35
Expense			
7500 · Other personnel expenses		93.88	93.88
7555 · Other	0.00		
Total 7500 · Other personnel expenses	0.00	93.88	93.88
8300 · Travel & meetings expenses			
8321 · Presenter payout	495.00	600.00	1,770.00
Total 8300 · Travel & meetings expenses	495.00	600.00	1,770.00
8500 · Misc expenses			
8547 · Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	250.00	500.00	1,750.00
Total 8500 · Misc expenses	250.00	500.00	1,750.00
Total Expense	745.00	1,193.88	3,613.88
Net Ordinary Income	205.00	883.62	2,841.47
Net Income	205.00	883.62	2,841.47

11:10 AM

08/19/25

Accrual Basis

National Storytelling Network

Profit & Loss by Class

January through July 2025

	Total 100-Program Services	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
4000 · Contributed support		
4010 · Indiv/business contribution	50.00	50.00
Total 4000 · Contributed support	50.00	50.00
5000 · Earned revenues		
5180 · Conference & Other Program Fees	60.00	60.00
5210 · Membership dues - Individuals	6,305.00	6,305.00
5490 · Miscellaneous revenue	40.35	40.35
Total 5000 · Earned revenues	6,405.35	6,405.35
Total Income	6,455.35	6,455.35
Gross Profit	6,455.35	6,455.35
Expense		
7500 · Other personnel expenses		
7555 · Other	93.88	93.88
Total 7500 · Other personnel expenses	93.88	93.88
8300 · Travel & meetings expenses		
8321 · Presenter payout	1,770.00	1,770.00
Total 8300 · Travel & meetings expenses	1,770.00	1,770.00
8500 · Misc expenses		
8547 · Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	1,750.00	1,750.00
Total 8500 · Misc expenses	1,750.00	1,750.00
Total Expense	3,613.88	3,613.88
Net Ordinary Income	2,841.47	2,841.47
Net Income	2,841.47	2,841.47