

Minutes - Abridged
from the September 17, 2020
APS Council Call

A. Call to Order (Gleason)

Meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. CDT.

Council present: Mark Gleason, Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Lindsey du Toit, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, Katy Stevenson, David Gent, Courtney Gallup, Krishna Subbarao

Council apologies: Ashok Chanda

Staff: Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Kim Davis, Linda Schmitt, Jessica Egyhazi, Greg Grahek, Erik Uner

Invited: Aaron Balch, TIAA

B. Financial Health

1. Investments (Aaron Balch, TIAA)

SHARED August 31, 2020, Investment Review

- Federal interest rates expected to be low through 2023
- Council's investment policy is long term objective of 60% equity target allocations and 40% fixed income target allocations.

NOTED that APS headquarter building sale closing is in 30 days.

SHARED recommendation from Aaron Balch, Portfolio Manager, TIAA:

MOTION: to accept the recommendations from the TIAA portfolio manager to invest the building sale proceeds into an account over a 60-day period of time and that the account will keep the 60% equity target allocation and 40% fixed income target allocation per the investment policy statement.

Seconded; motion passed (one abstention).

2. August Statement (Davis)

RECEIVED August 31, 2020 statement.

The net profit from operations for the two months ended August 31, 2020 was \$89,553, which is \$85,399 better than budget and \$66,041 worse than prior year. The YTD net realized and unrealized gain on investments was \$463,273 for a total net profit after investments of \$552,826.

Total YTD revenue was \$707,201 which was worse than budget by \$61,733, and less than prior year by \$96,000. PMN and PHP/PDMR were separated into two business centers beginning July 2019 (FY 20). PMN was revamped further into GROW-PHE beginning July of FY21.

PhytoFrontiers has received 11 submissions, with some of those lateral transfers. Once acceptance starts, we will begin to see revenues come in. Journals on target, however under prior year.

Total YTD operating expenses were \$617,648 which is \$85,399 better (lower) than budget and \$29,959 better (lower) than the prior year. The IYPH video production was paid for in August, pushing the innovation department over budget.

After Investment gains of \$463,273 the Operating Profit after investments is \$552,826.

Most business centers showing net profit on target or favorable to budget. *PhytoFrontiers* is just starting and has not yet received payments on first four papers. GROW-PHE will soft launch in October and has contract income from partner coming later this year. APS PRESS income is down but running near net bottom line surplus target.

NOTED that staff is looking into hiring a Director of Education in the future – this person would help us do a better job of watching trends in the education that we provide to our members (e.g. adult learning styles, learning objectives for all our programs, and creating content against those objectives, online learning skills). Would also integrate components of information we currently have and help us utilize content we already own and to provide better resources on how we deliver education to members.

3. 2021 Dues Recommendation (Datnoff)

The U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) average for the past 12 months is .6%. This is lower than last year at 1.6% and significantly lower than 2 years ago at 2.6%. The recommendation is to increase dues by the .6% and round to the nearest dollar. By making smaller increases each year, you continually build income and members don't usually notice a small due increase each year.

The 2021 dues are proposed accordingly:

Regular	\$91
Early Career	\$62
Student	\$38
Sustaining Assoc 1-100 employees	\$690
Sustaining Assoc 101+ employees	\$930

APS defines [Early Career](#) status as any person working professionally, including those in a post doctorate position, and within 5 years of graduating with a bachelors, masters, or doctorate degree. Early career membership status is available for 5 years total.

RECOMMENDATION from Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) to increase dues across all categories (Regular, Early Career, Student, Sustaining Associate) by 0.6% effective January 1, 2021 in accordance with APS Constitution.

After further discussion, consensus from Council to not raise dues.

MOTION: to *not* raise dues across all categories for 2021 and to retain rates at:

- Professional \$90

- Early Career \$61
- Student \$37
- Sustaining Assoc (1-100 employees) at \$680 and Sustaining Associate (101+employees) at \$920. *Seconded; motion passed.*

NOTED that staff will communicate to members about not increasing dues for 2021.

C. Journals Strategy (Grahek/Subbarao)

COVID impact on research and budgets:

- *GROW* soft launch in October. Have approximately 700 webcasts up now and are tweaking site. Revenue won't come from subscriptions anymore. Funding will come from production fees, author fees, and sponsorships.
- Will have *GROW* Manual of Operation draft from Task Force for Council to review and approve.
- Submissions up 5.7% in 2020 (2597 submissions Jan-August 2020).
- Submission trends since March 2020, showed spikes in submissions, in part due to the pandemic shelter in place. In the past few weeks have begun to see a decrease in submissions. Overall, we are still doing okay compared to last year, but we expect submissions to decline.

***PhytoFrontiers*[™] Progress:**

- 16 submissions or lateral transfers since July 2020
- 4 accepted papers through Sept 15
- 3 rejected papers through Sept 15
- Survey of transfer rejections (Oct 2020)

***MPMI* Transition to Gold Open Access (OA)**

- Page fee change to APCs happened in July
- Communications ongoing – Web of Science blast in Sept.
- 2021 Renewal Billing stopped in Sept.
- Outsource editing in Oct.
- First OA issue January 2021 (end of December published and available)
- Goal of 30% to 40% increase in published papers. Has not happened to date, working with EIC and *MPMI* President to ensure they communicate with their membership to embrace this journal as their own and help to increase submissions. Holding *MPMI* webinars that have been well attended and received.

Overall Challenges:

- *MPMI* submissions remain flat
- Gold OA Journal fee waivers
- Web of Science Journal impact factors have not happened yet for *Phytobiomes* and *PHP*
- 2021 renewals of subscriptions have gone out – 2020 fee hold offer if they pay before 2020 rate is held. Big Brazilian consortia that gets APS journals, won't get *MPMI* this year as it's going OA. Is over \$100K revenue for us. Contacted by our agent in May that Brazilian economy is in rough shape due to pandemic and are asking for relief. Waiting for direction on subscription and contractual agreement. Agreed to discount. Libraries are in tough shape due to budgets. Will know more in January and will keep Council informed.

- Lateral Transfers to *PhytoFrontiers*[™] slow. Have sent reminders to EICs.
- Managing reduction of submission during COVID-19. Labs not in place due to pandemic, so this results in lack of manuscripts.

D. Phytobiomes Alliance (Charkowski)

As requested from the last meeting, Amy Charkowski received feedback regarding APS retaining a seat on the Phytobiomes Alliance Coordinating Committee

MOTION: to approve to suspend paying the \$5,000 annual fee for APS to retain a seat on the Phytobiomes Alliance Coordinating Committee. *Seconded; motion passed.*

ACTION: Amy Hope to contact Phytobiomes and cc Mark on notice that APS will suspend our seat on the Phytobiomes Alliance Coordinating Committee.

G. Administrative Items (All)

Noted to capitalize the word Black in minutes.

MOTION: to approve the July 16 and August 25, 2020, minutes as corrected. *Seconded; motion passed.*

TABLE Plant Health 2020 meeting survey results until October meeting.

TABLE Manual of Operation changes and approvals for *PhytoNews* and Public Policy Board until October meeting.

Meeting adjourned 12:31 p.m. CDT.