

**ABRIDGED MINUTES**  
**from the January 19, 2023**  
**APS Council Call**

**A. Call to Order (Walcott)**

Meeting called to order 11:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Council attending:** Ron Walcott, Nik Grünwald, Amy Charkowski, Karen Garrett, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, Nicole Donofrio, Courtney Gallup, Nicole Gauthier

**Council regrets:** George Sundin, Sydney Everhart

**Staff:** Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Greg Grahek, Laura McGrady, Linda Schmitt, Tressa Patrias, Eric Fletty, Erik Uner

**Invited:** Tom Hodnefield

**B. FY22 Audit (Tom Hodnefield)**

**RECEIVED** FY22 audit and management letter.

- Audit complete and tax forms drafted. No open items except for approval of Form 990 that we'll accept on this call.
- Overall clean audit

**C. Form 990 (Laura)**

**RECEIVED** 2021 tax Form 990. Highly visible public document.

**MOTION:** to accept the form 990 as received. *Seconded; motion passed.*

**D. Financial Statement (Laura/Lawrence)**

**RECEIVED** the November 2022 statement.

The American Phytopathological Society's (APS) fiscal year began on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The November 30, 2022, financial summary represents five months of activity for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. APS's financial results are reported monthly to leadership.

The net operating loss for the four-month period ended November 30, 2022, was \$138,098. The net operating loss compares favorably to the budget by 96,957. The investment portfolio increased by \$287,262, the majority of which is unrealized gain. This results in a total net gain for the period of \$149,164.

Total revenues fell short of the budget by approximately \$189,963. Much of the variance relates to annual meeting registration revenue. Total operating expenses compared favorably to the budget. Much of the positive variance relates to staff payroll expenses and expense reductions related to the annual meeting.

Although the Business Center recap tab shows most business centers compared favorably to the budget at this time, the annual meeting, APS Press and G&A (general and admin) do not currently compare favorably to the budget.

## E. Publications (Greg)

### PDMR Update:

- The Task Force met for a second time in early January. Noted Council will receive a formal report but for now there is some consensus on a few strategies:
  - Free-to-read like PD Notes
  - Encouraging raw data sets be deposited, but not requiring it.
  - Posting PDMRs in a “Just Published” workflow.
  - Bringing author fees down as low as possible.

Next steps include:

- Survey authors, companies, and readers
- Requirements and expense analysis

### Diagnostic Assay Validation Network (DAVN) Update:

- The Publications Board met with the DAVN leaders this month. They too came to consensus with the following:
  - The Publications Board will review recommended author instruction text for publishing diagnostic assay papers in APS journals.
  - DAVN and the EiCs recommend webinars to inform the APS research community. Also recommend some communication about DAVN at annual meetings.
  - The DAVN Focus Issue will be out soon. A second Focus Issue is planned for *PhytoFrontiers* in 2024.
  - Recommend establishing a more robust leadership team and committee structure and include a broader diagnostic group.

**ACTION:** Amy and Greg will ask current DAVN leads to establish a formal committee structure that includes information on committee makeup and rotation.

### Year-end Journals Update

- *MPMI* and *Plant Health Progress* have successfully transitioned to their new boards.
- Submissions were up about 2.5% in 2022. Biggest gains were to *Plant Disease*, *PhytoFrontiers*, and *Phytobiomes*.
- Acceptances were down about 4%. *Phytopathology* dropped 17%. And PD Research papers acceptance rate was down 10%. *PhytoFrontiers* more than doubled its acceptance rate.

	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Submissions</b>	4,110	4,002	3,837	3,733
<b>Accepted</b>	1,581	1,651	1,691	1,653

## F. Plant Health 2023 (Tressa)

**RECEIVED** meeting narrative explaining registration rates.

## 1. Meeting Registration

### Budget:

- Total Income: \$763,000.
- Total Expenses including payroll: \$934,000.
- We are budgeting to have 350 less **paid** attendees since IS-MPMI is having their meeting in Providence RI (July 2023) and ICPP is having their meeting in Lyon, France (Aug. 20-25,2023)
- Expenses for in-person meetings have gone up 30-50%. This includes food & beverage, audio visual, shipping, and internet pricing. Staff is working to develop new meeting models that find ways to return meetings to a profitable position, but it's unlikely that significant changes can be incorporated fast enough to impact the financial results for Plant Health 23.

### SHARED rates for other meetings:

- IS-MPMI – proposed rates- \$789. Members – not including closing party.
- ICPP - €690. prior to April 15; €890. After April 15, 2023.

### SHARED Proposed Registration fees for Plant Health 2023:

**NOTED** just approving meeting registration rates today, the full annual meeting budget will be approved this coming spring.

Still budgeting a large loss for the overall meeting even with these proposed registration rates and fewer attendees due to other meetings happening this year. Have a food & beverage requirement at the hotel so need to hold closing party.

**DISCUSSION** followed on lowering graduate student rate. **CONSENSUS** to reduce the graduate student registration rate to \$448.

**MOTION:** to approve the Plant Health 2023 meeting registration rates as amended with the graduate student rate reduced to \$448. *Seconded; motion passed.*

## 2. Discount for Staying at Sheraton Downtown Denver

We can keep our registration rates as low as they are because we committed to booking 625 rooms on peak night for a total of 2720 room nights. We need to incentivize our attendees to stay at contracted hotel(s) so we can continue to keep registration as low as possible. If an attendee stays at another hotel, we propose charging them an additional \$100. For registration. APS is financially liable for the contracted hotel rooms. Our registration rate would ultimately be higher if we didn't commit to using the number of hotel rooms that were contracted. In Pittsburgh 2022 we had 1143 attendees and occupied a total of 2460 room nights/ 560 on peak night at our contracted hotels; We did not incentivize attendees to stay at our contracted hotels and believe that we lost several hundred room nights as a result.

Our other groups have used this strategy with good results. Our plan is to publish that 'regular' rate – but to explain in the details that receiving the lower rate requires the commitment to stay at the Denver Sheraton. Upon registration, attendees will be presented with the higher rate, and get an immediate discount by committing to a hotel room. They agree that we can charge them an additional \$100. If they do not stay at the Sheraton. Post-meeting, staff will compare the list of attendees to the list of hotel stays. Any attendee that took the "discounted rate" but did not stay at the Sheraton, will receive an

email letting them know that they will be charged an additional \$100. We give them approximately 1 week to dispute before we process the fee. *Example: they shared a hotel room with another attendee.*

#### **Sheraton Downtown Denver Room Rates:**

- \$199 Single/Double
- \$195 Government Rate
- Per diem rate for Denver in August is \$199

If attendees do not stay at the contracted hotel, they will be charged the \$100 fee.

**MOTION:** to approve the \$100 hotel discount offering when attendees stay at the contracted Downtown Denver Sheraton Hotel for Plant Health 2023. *Seconded; motion passed.*

#### **3. Social Offset Platform (Carol)**

- [Social Offset](#) can provide local donations instead of destination boycotts.
- Flat fee of \$500 to APS to use Social Offset, and then 100% pass-through of donations to charities.
- Beta program at ASAE conference that raised \$3500. No other references yet.
- Donations would be linked to a dedicated page on our website.
- APS would direct to Social Offset site with APS brand for contributions.
- APS can select charities.

**QUESTION:** Do we need more info? Use in Denver, or wait until Memphis 2024?

**ACTION:** Carol will ask Social Offset about communication plan to legislation and policy makers.

**SUGGEST** we use Social Offset in Denver as a soft launch to introduce it to members and explain why APS is doing this. Also recommended we include brief survey questions about it in meeting app.

#### **G. Family & Caregiver Support (Carol)**

**RECEIVED** attorney response regarding onsite childcare.

- Attorney Response re: onsite childcare:
  - Liability exists to APS, can be mitigated through vetting of vendors but not erased.
  - APS sponsored field trips also entail liability which varies from state to state.
- Council will need to decide if benefits outweigh administrative burden and risk.
  - Council had concerns with liabilities to APS and the cost.
- Survey development in process.
  - Concerns about expectation setting regarding feasible services and costs.
  - Continuing to work with Family & Caregiver Support Committee.

**NOTED** will have Sprouts Corner at Plant Health 2023. Will also provide resources of available onsite childcare that is provided by Convention Visitors Bureau.

**MOTION:** to approve not moving forward with corporate caregiving options at Plant Health meetings. *Seconded; motion passed. Two abstentions.*

**NOTED** that APS Council continues to support the APS Family & Caregiver Support Committee and that the Sprouts Corner will be offered at Plant Health 2023. Council will continue to offer funds (FY23 was

\$1500) to the APS Family & Caregiver Committee to help support the [APS Caregiver Travel Grant](#).  
(Amount for FY24 to be determined).

**H. Approval of Minutes (All)**

**NOTED** to correct Item C header to read Plant Health 2024 not 2025.

**MOTION:** to approve the amended December 15, 2022, minutes. *Seconded; motion passed.*

*Meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m. Central.*