

ABRIDGED MINUTES
from the July 20, 2023
APS Council Call

A. Call to Order (Ron)

Meeting called to order 11:03 a.m. A quorum was present. Welcomed incoming Council members whose official terms will begin at the close of Plant Health 2023 this August.

Council attending: Ron Walcott, Amy Charkowski, Karen Garrett, Nik Grünwald, Nicole Donofrio, Courtney Gallup, George Sundin, Lawrence Datnoff, Sydney Everhart

Council Regrets: Jim Bradeen, Nicole Gauthier

Incoming Council members (non-voting): Carolee Bull, Jerry Weiland, Bonnie Ownley

Staff: Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Greg Grahek, Laura McGrady, Linda Schmitt, Eric Fletty, Megan Boatman, Erik Uner

B. Approval of Plant Disease Editor-in-Chief (George/Greg)

RECEIVED recommendation from the Publications Board to appoint Kerik Kox to succeed Mary Burrows who is stepping down mid-term as Editor-in-Chief of *Plant Disease*. Noted that Kerik is currently Associate EIC of the journal and has an impressive history with the journal and as EIC of PDMR.

MOTION: to approve the appointment of Kerik Kox as the Editor-in-Chief of *Plant Disease*. *Seconded; motion passed.*

C. PDMR Task Force Update (George)

Survey results received – small group met yesterday to review results and suggested recommendations and consensus from group. Will meet again August to finalize recommendations and further discussed in Denver and anticipate having a report to Council shortly thereafter.

D. Council match request from APS Foundation

John Sherwood has proposed a very generous gift of \$50,000 to APS Foundation to support the engagement of underrepresented minorities in plant pathology.

RECEIVED the concept note that outlines his thought and intent and will form the basis of the contract to set up the endowment.

RECEIVED e-mail request from David Gadoury (Foundation chair) with background information on the establishment of a new fund, *The Marie and John Sherwood Endowment for Engagement of Underrepresented Minorities in Plant Pathology*. David noted that this is both timely and a good fit to major initiatives of APS, and pairs well with the recently established Lafayette Frederick fund. The Frederick fund exceeded its funding goal of \$100,000 in less than 18 months from inception. Part of this was a due to a partnership between Council and Foundation to provide up to \$20,000 (each) to match contributions to the fund.

David met with the Presidential team (P-Team) last Friday to discuss the request asking Council to provide \$20,000 to match contributions to the Sherwood endowment fund. Noted that the expenditure would only come due in full if we receive a total of \$40,000 in new donations to the fund once it is

launched at Plant Health 2023. If it would facilitate agreement, Foundation could match the first \$20,000 in new donations, thereby delaying any expenditure from Council.

With support from the P-team, the request now is for Council to approve the proposed \$20,000 match to the Sherwood Endowment fund.

MOTION: to approve Council's match of \$20,000 to The Marie and John Sherwood Endowment.
Seconded; motion passed.

G. Approval of Minutes (All)

MOTION: to approve the June 15, 2023, minutes. *Seconded; motion passed.*

H. Plant pathogen database for USDA-APHIS-Biotechnology Regulatory Services, Biotechnology Risk Analysis Programs [BRS] (Nik)

SHARED background and objectives and APS role (slide presentation). BRS regulates the importation, interstate movement, and environmental release of organisms developed through genetic engineering, that may be plant pests.

Nik met with APHIS Biotechnology Risk Analysis Programs (BRS) team and worked with staff on the proposed budget.

Objectives for APS:

- review legacy regulatory listing taxa (<https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2019-02-07/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-340/section-340.2>)
- develop a draft updated listing of taxa of plant pathogens, by species and by strain where relevant, that are plant pests based on publicly available scientific literature (by March 1, 2024)
- review public comments on the draft updated list and modify the list in response to comments, as appropriate (by July 15, 2024?)
- after review, USDA would post the final updated list of tax on its website, including maintaining a version history for the list of taxa that contain plant pests to document updates/changes over time (by September 30, 2024)
- review the taxa list each fiscal year and provide USDA with an updated list of taxa for posting after USDA review by June 1)

APS Role:

- Develop a list of curated taxa for BRS' to describe "organisms that are or contain plant pests."
- APS will have an in-person meeting in Winter every year to revise the list including 20 subject matter experts (including bacteriology, nematology, virology and mycology).
 - Experts will revise the existing list.
- After a public comment period the list of plant pathogens will be further revised by APS during the Annual APS meeting in August

DISCUSSION followed on structure of committee. Noted we could tap into the Widely Prevalent Bacteria group as well as reaching out to APS subject matter committees. Suggested including the APS Public Policy Board (PPB) too. Recommended including in the agreement about updating the list of experts needed to keep it relevant.

Overall, Council is very interested in the cooperative agreement with USDA APHIS BRS to update and curate a database of plant pathogen that are “organisms that are or contain plant pests” and agree that it directly aligns with our strategic goals as a trusted partner in agriculture sciences nationally.

ACTION: Nik along with staff to provide final draft of agreement for Council to approve via e-vote with the caveat that APS will need more flexibility and time around developing the list.

CONSENSUS from Council to approve entering an agreement with APHIS BRS subject to a review and approval of the final agreement in the next two weeks.

I. Plant Health 2023 Updates (Megan)

- 1,118 Registrants
 - 363 First Timers

NOTED at 3 weeks out last year, we were at 1,080. Total reg for last year was 1,149

- Introducing Slido to facilitate Q&A during Concurrent Sessions
- Plant Health Collections
 - Using Meeting Content as a New Product for APS
 - Special Sessions, Technical Orals, Posters, Discussion Board
 - 2023 Topics:
 - Diseases of Hemp
 - Alternative Strategies for Managing Postharvest Pathogens
 - Fungi as Biocontrol Agents

J. Finance (Laura)

RECEIVED May statement.

The American Phytopathological Society’s (APS) fiscal year began on July 1st. The May 2023 financial summary represents eleven months of activity for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. APS’s financial results are reported monthly to the leadership.

The net operating gain for the eleven-month period ended May 31, 2023, was \$13,464. The investment portfolio performance resulted in a \$416,723 gain. This results in a total net gain of \$430,187 on May 31, 2023.

Total revenues fell short of the budget by approximately \$298,900. Much of the variance relates to annual meeting registration revenues and APS Press sales. Total operating expenses compared favorably to the budget. Much of the positive variance relates to staff payroll expenses and expense reductions in the annual meeting, Member Services, APS Press and Publications.

The Business Center recap tab shows Member Services, Journals, *Phytobiomes*, *PhytoFrontiers*, and *PHP/PDMR* compared favorably to the budget. General & admin, Education, Grow-PHE, Annual Meeting and APS Press do not currently compare favorably to the budget.

Key metrics from the statement of financial position on May 31, 2023, are as follows:

- Total Assets - \$13,040,504
- Total Liabilities/Deferred Revenue - \$2,389,136
- Net Assets - \$10,651,368

K. Thank you Council (Ron)

This is the last call with current Council members. Thanked everyone for their service and noted the presidential transition of Ron Walcott to Nik Grunwald will be done during the Closing Session at Plant Health 2023. The 2023-24 Council calls will resume beginning on September 28.

Meeting adjourned 12:10 p.m. CDT.

E-votes Passed in August

A motion to sign the agreement with USDA APHIS BRS to develop a database for a regulatory listing of taxa to describe “organisms that are or contain plant pests” was motioned by Nik and seconded by Ron and sent out for an e-vote on August 9, 2023. The motion was passed unanimously on August 10, 2023.

A motion to approve the July 20, 2023, minutes was sent out for an e-vote on August 10, 2023, and were approved via e-vote on August 11, 2023 with two abstentions.