

PLATO Board of Director's Meeting
April 9, 2021 (Approved June 11, 2021)

9:30 a.m. via Google Meet

Attendees: Kathy Brown, Alan Capelle, Meg Taylor, William Eisinger, Michael Stevens, Scott Kolar, Rod McKenzie, Paul Thompson, Louise Fowler, Cheema JK, Hedy Lukas, Janet Cabot, Sharon Scrattish

Meeting called to order by Kathy Brown at 9:32 a.m.

Approval of February 2021 Board Minutes

Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report – Presented by Scott Kolar

Budget for coming year 2021-22, expenses are estimated from a “non-pandemic” year. This assumes that in-person programming and events would begin to occur during the year. The hiring of a contract office worker is expected to likely exceed the funds now sent on to DCS. Basis is 1300 members, and revenue at dues of \$60/year. Two budgets are “best case” and “worst case” and were presented showing that reserves would be spent down faster in the worst case, but there would still be a positive ending bank balance in both cases.

Committee Updates

Kathy expressed thanks for the input coming from committees for the Annual Report to the Membership

Hedy Lukas reported some initial survey results. Nearly 700 responses, 48% response rate. Some of results showed: Liked staying home, not dealing with parking or travel. Didn't like the technical issues with online experience, and loss of social interactions were the negatives. Responsive to both online and in-person options for future courses and lectures. While a majority of the respondents did not want to receive a printed copy of the Agora, they were supportive of dues funding the Agora as a printed publication. More detailed results and analysis to follow.

New Administrative Work Group

An update was sent to the Board in mid-March. The group has worked forward to generate a Request for Proposal (RFP), reviewed by legal counsel, and a contract was drafted. Kathy Brown has contacted the Dean at DCS to update them about the progress we've made. Additional work and progress has been made on a new MOA with DCS. Details were distributed prior to this meeting.

It's important that the RFP be shared as widely as possible to find good candidates who should know about our contractor position. Board members are urged to help in this endeavor. Members are being kept in the picture as to the evolving relationship with the University, and specifically the UW-Department of Continuing Studies.

Re-Opening PLATO Events

Plans are being made for reopening the PLATO programs and activities to be held in person. The COVID work group is looking at governmental guidance and other input to help the Board to make decisions about resumption. Meg Taylor reported that we should expect to rely on input from Dane County as guidance. Outdoor events might well be the first activities to resume. CDC preliminary studies suggest that vaccinated individuals are less likely to be transmitters. This is a moving target, and revised guidance should be expected.

The dilemma of fall course planning was highlighted by Paul Thompson. Meg made the point that the venues are going to heavily impact the decision-making progress. Paul plans to stay in contact with Meg and her team to discuss strategies to optimize course options for the Fall. Meg stressed the importance of fluidity in that programming.

Regarding proof of vaccination, Meg stated that it is PLATO's choice whether to require it for participation.

SEC Honorarium for Walk in Dane County.

Discussion occurred on a range of rates for the honorariums, which are donations to the sponsoring organizations. Questions were raised about broadening the idea of honorariums – should the Curriculum Committee have the ability to offer honorariums on a small scale. A motion was made to provide \$100 honorariums for up to 9 Walks in Dane County this summer. The motion was amended to add a contingency that discussions occur related to possible honorariums for courses. Motion carried.

Other Business

Kathy informed the Board that a New Board Member Orientation will occur sometime in May, and the new Board members will be invited to join us for the June Board meeting.

Next Board meeting will be June 11, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.