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**Society for Technical Communication**

**Board of Directors Meeting Summary Hyatt House, Falls Church, VA**

**2-3 November, 2018**

# Board

* Jane Wilson, President
* Ben Woelk, Vice-President
* Kirsty Taylor, Secretary
* James Bousquet, Treasurer
* Alyssa Fox, Immediate Past President
* Alisa Bonsignore, Director
* Todd DeLuca, Director
* Jessie Mallory, Director
* Robert Perry, Director

**Office**

* Liz Pohland, STC CEO
* Stacey O’Donnell COO

# Agenda – Friday 2 November 8:30-5:00

* 8:30-9:30
  + CEO Report – Liz Pohland 20 min
  + Treasurer Report – Jim Bousquet 20 min
  + President Report – Jane Wilson 20 min
* Break 15 min
* 9:45-11:00
  + Card Sort 25 min
  + Review of strategic areas of focus – 50 min
* 11:00 – 2:00 – Lunch and field trip to proposed new office site
* 2:00-5:00
  + Marketing workshop report and discussion – 3 hr (with breaks)

# Saturday 3 November 9:00-5:00

* 9:00-9:45 Summit report
  + Ms Bleiel and Ms Currie to dial in – 30 mins (20 min report, 10 min questions)
  + 5-15 min wrap up after the phone call
* 9:45-10:30 Community Updates
  + Update on Chapter baseline implementation – 15 min
  + Community communication plan – 15 min
  + SIG community plan – 15 min
* Break 15 min
* 10:45-11:15 Committee liaison reports
* 11:15-11:30 BoK update
* 11:30-1:00 Lunch
* 1:00-1:30 Nom Comm report – Alyssa Fox
* 1:30-3:30 2019 Budget discussion
* Break 15 min
* 3:45-5:00 – Strategy wrap up

# Consent Agenda

* Approve September meeting minutes and summary
* Approve Intercom Editory Advisory Panel

# Friday, 2 November

The meeting was called to order at 8:30am. A quorum was established. The agenda was approved. The consent agenda was approved.

# CEO Report

2019 membership opened on 1 Sept. -75 compared to last year on that date. Income is close to last year, thanks to two sustaining members and upgrades to Gold membership. Still a lot of marketing to do, very early in the season. On track so far.

**Education**

1010 attendees to end Oct. $43k behind the planned budget. Working on with Ms Krat. Summer was an issue – several summer online course volunteers cancelled their sessions.

**Certification**

229 Foundation exams to date since 2016. 86 taken so far in 2018.

Practitioner level is no longer on track for launching by the end of year due to the GDPR delays. Mr Baehr is mostly doing the work, and APMG are training him to write questions, unlike the Foundation exam. Ms Pohland will share the updated schedule when it is available. Royalties are $1,252.74 to end Sept.

**General updates**

Email going out today asking for donations to the student scholarship fund. Have not yet promoted general fund donations. The potential new lease agreement has been reviewed by our lawyer.

For the 2017 audit, the auditor did not send us the final document. Will be in contact with the auditing firm regarding this matter.

Summit registration opens on Monday.

# Treasurer Report

Mr Bousquet presented the financial report to end September, 2018.

Cash is $43,750 (up from August, but down $44k on last year). Investments are higher than last year by $27k. Accounts Receivable is down. Total assets are $586,713, which is lower than last year.

Total liabilities are ($809,906).

Total net assets is ($241,193). About $150k more than last year. 2017 and 2018 monthly net assets were compared. There were some accountancy changes in 2017 where the accountant was realising Summit revenues per month before the Summit occurred (rather than waiting to realise all revenues after the Summit occurred.

Revenue - Webinars are close to last year, but below budget by $50k. Dues are short – and account for about half of the total revenue shortfall. Revenue is $100k worse than last year. All revenues are below budget, except for some small areas that aren’t making a big impact on the overall numbers.

Expenses are doing better than budget with fewer personnel.

Operating change in net assets - operating loss of ($81,071) – for a difference of $120k on last year.

Total change in net assets is ($69,513).

*Move that the board accept the financial report for the month of September 2018.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

# President Report

Ms Wilson presented an update.

Reviewing the idea of the TC Council, the initial goal was to organise a regular series of virtual meetings among the leadership of a core group of organisations with similar missions to STC. To foster a sense of community, partnership and collaboration.

The meeting paused at 9:13am. The meeting resumed at 9:21am.

Ms Wilson introduced the idea of a card sort.

We are at a pivotal moment. We need to do something different. We are building a bridge, and want everyone to contribute and share ideas; also to be open to new ideas and the sharing of ideas.

# Card Sort

The board engaged in a card sort exercise. The five key words of who we want to be are:

* Market-driven
* Innovative
* Empowering
* Cutting Edge
* Premier

# Review of strategic areas of focus

Reviewed the existing strategic plan: focus areas. All board members provided comments and input around the strategic areas and how the new words from the card sort might fit into them.

Suggestion that point 5 – Manage the operations of the society – should be moved into an operational plan, as it is operational rather than strategy.

Discussion around communities and how they fit into the strategic plan.

Fostering engagement throughout the society was discussed.

The meeting paused at 10:41am for lunch and to visit a potential new office site.

The meeting re-convened at 2:01pm.

# Marketing workshop report and discussion

Ms Pohland, Ms Bonsignore, and Ms Fox presented detailed information and suggestions after the intensive two day Marketing and Content Strategy meeting, attended by the three of them and Ms Andrea Ames. All attended at their own expense.

The meeting paused at 3:16pm. The meeting resumed at 3:25pm.

The meeting concluded for the day at 5:04pm.

# Saturday 3 November

The meeting convened at 9:01am. Ms Bleiel and Ms Currie joined via phone and web.

Mr Bousquet joined the meeting at 9:03am.

# Summit report

Have a leaner conference team this year; one co-chair also doubling as a track manager. Have re-designed and refreshed the website. Are in progress with broadening the scope of the educational program, and are on track to open registration this coming Monday – a month or more earlier than recent years. Have put more emphasis on STC’s major programs.

The Summit committee met face-to-face on 21 and 22 Oct (at their own expense). This was very successful, and allowed them to talk through everything. Acceptance and decline letters were all sent out on the same day (not staggered over multiple days). 175 proposals were received; 87 of those were accepted (49% acceptance). 18 pre-conference workshop proposals were received; 8 were accepted (44% acceptance).

The big name companies who will be represented with speakers at the Summit were mentioned, including many academics from a number of institutions.

The proposed schedule was discussed, with more education sessions, but still allowing for time to visit the expo hall. Invited speakers were discussed.

Ms Wilson thanked Ms Bleiel and Ms Currie for their and their teams’ hard work. Ms Bleiel thanked Ms Krat and Mr Fiagbedzi for their assistance to the committee.

Ms Bleiel and Ms Currie left the meeting at 9:30am.

Try something social and compelling on Wednesday after the conference to keep people engaged?

The majority of education program will be available on the website when registration is open.

# Community Updates

# Update on Chapter baseline implementation

The CAC has been working on trying to get information on chapter baseline. The CAC has been telling chapters about it; not getting much information back yet.

Chapter community budgets have been coming in; haven’t seen resistance to anything. Activity report and engagement plan – EIN added to form, etc. Mr Bousquet has looked at a few submissions, are being filled in nicely, giving the right amount of information, and not too much or too much time on it. Webinar has been held to discuss the submissions.

Discussion around roll out of baseline plan.

All communication from the board to communities are handled through the CAC. Is there an issue with limited direct interaction with the board?

Suggestion for some more, regular communication. Mr DeLuca and Ms Mallory have been discussing options.

Maybe there is a perception that the CAC is not board-directed? Ensuring that the awareness is there. Ensure the perception that the CAC and board are more intertwined.

RIT – has a very formal suggestion box, everything is responded to. Can see what has been raised, and what has been responded to. Not every answer is yes, and not every suggestion becomes an action, but there is open-ness in that process.

# SIG community plan

Mr Woelk shared an update on the SIG community plan. Has one person on the task force who is a general member rather than a leader.

SIG membership data indicates membership has been fairly stable. No analysis of Gold Members in SIGs to check for monetary impact.

Trying to gather data rather than intuition of what we should do.

Activities going forward – preparing a survey of members in Nov 2018. Aim to provide recommendations to the board in Jan 2019.

SIGs are paid for Gold members and student members – but Gold members still have to elect to join that SIG – they do not automatically join every SIG and therefore not every SIG automatically receives funding from every Gold member.

Are our members getting value from SIGs? Are the SIGs being kept topical and relevant? Are they providing content for the BoK and website?

SIGs are not a homogenous group – huge diversity in engagement and activity. Is there a level of tribal affiliation associated with SIG membership?

Tim Esposito has joined the CAC to help with the SIG website issues, so that Mr Fiagbedzi is not contacted as much by the SIGs.

Someone needs to care about seeding conversation. Moderation is required.

The meeting paused at 10:36am.

The meeting resumed at 10:51am.

# Committee liaison reports

Ms Mallory reported on CAC updates. Have been working on a gap analysis. Working on delegating out to the team. Have four outreach directors, covering chapters, SIGs and students. Slide lists the initiatives for the year. Social media outreach, website help, and other activities within the CAC team.

Having a few issues with a chapter. Looking at bylaws which seem to be out-of-date.

There are ongoing challenges with student chapters and getting information on leaders; reliant on faculty members being responsive.

Working on updating the CAC website, developing knowledgebase. Working on social media with our social media coordinator. Considering using Slack more. There is a lot of information in the CAC Google folder. Trying to work on clearing it up and documenting roles. Kicking off spotlight communities and blogs this month – calling out communities that are doing a great job, and being unbiased about it. Not just about winning awards. Blog posts could be related to anything. Maybe could have an intro to the board. Ramp up work on leadership program at the start of 2019, ready for Summit.

Mr Perry presented updates on his committees. Jay R Gould is all fine and on track. Ken Rainey is in place and timeline/website are updated. Thanks to Ms Gilliam for her help. Karen Schriver has someone interested in being on the committee next year. STX/AS – Lloyd has been very responsive; is having issues getting committee members. Ms Gilliam has provided information to him. Mr Perry has been trying to reach out to people to help find another committee member. Mr Woelk has ideas to share for another committee member.

The Audit committee has a contract signed and on track for starting next year.

Associate Fellow and Fellow – have had three submissions each, and considering extending the deadline to 30 Nov.

CAA/DCSA – DCSA deadline was end Oct; extended to 30 Nov. All leaders have been notified. CAA and Pacesetter – discussing in next leadership webinar in Nov.

Certification – considering reviving Certification committee with rolling out Practitioner, etc.

Scholarship – Basically in fundraising mode. Looking at more social media blasts to promote the scholarship fund. $350 received so far.

No updates from the Academic taskforce, as Mr Houser has been working on Summit.

May need to consider the STX/AS committee as there is a perennial issue with gathering committee members.

# BoK update

Ms Fox delivered an update on the BoK. Has recently redefined technical communication – the definitions between the BoK, STC website, and BLS all had different definitions. Have written a short blurb similar to the STC website; additional information is in the BoK.

Continuing to edit legacy content. They have a backlog of content assets from Ms Pohland, Intercom PDFs, etc. Auditing content to identify duplicate content. Have had technical issues, which have been smoothed out. Using Asana for project management and communication. This covers Mr Fiagbedzi’s activities on the website that might affect the BoK website. Early stages of use so far. Planning a BoK workshop at the Summit.

Might want to use something like Asana in other committees. Help with integrating with the office staff, etc.

Has there been consideration for storing other forms of content in the BoK? E.g. videos. STC currently does not have a lot of space to store videos and other content without increasing content.

The meeting paused at 11:31am for lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 1:10 pm.

# Nom Comm report

Ms Fox gave an update on the progress of the nominating committee. October was spent doing interviews. Six people dropped out from an earlier list of candidates, but had plenty of candidates to be able to fill out the slate. The campaign schedule has been finalised.

Nominating committee worked really hard. Worked on various forms information. Need to enforce that it is a professional interview (from feedback from the committee members – Ms Fox did not participate in the interviews). Committee pointed out that some potential candidates who do not make it on the slate could have other opportunities to serve STC and that should be considered (not just those who are not elected).

Mr Bousquet left the room at 1:18pm. The candidacy for the position of Treasurer was discussed.

Mr Bousquet re-joined the meeting at 1:24pm.

Ms Fox went through the rest of the slate for board positions and nominating committee.

The nominees for VP were discussed. The nominees for Director were discussed.

The nominees for nominating committee were discussed.

*Move that the board approve the preliminary election slate presented by the Nominating Committee.*

The motion was seconded.

Ms Fox and Mr Bousquet abstained from voting.

The motion did not pass.

The meeting paused at 2:32pm. The meeting reconvened at 2:42pm.

# 2019 Budget discussion

The board discussed the budget as prepared by Ms Pohland and the staff. The budget was prepared to how we currently operate. Need to be realistic and conservative in this budget.

**Conference**

Suggest strongly that we review the Summit registration rates for the 2020 conference. To be discussed in 2019 well before the launch of registration.

For 2019, we are adjusting the dates for registration, but not the rates.

Ms O’Donnell was asked to research the cost of external companies who might be able to take on sponsorship/booths sponsorship.

In the July meeting, the discrepancy between Summit committee stipends and board stipends was discussed. Invoices should be required from all board and committee members receiving stipends, up to the stipend amount/the amount they spent (if less than the stipend).

Stipends that have been received by conference chairs will change to reimbursements (up to a specified limit).

**Education**

Not as overly optimistic about education and webinars as the 2018 budget.

**Governance**

Wanted to moderately increase the board travel stipend/expense reimbursement for face-to-face meetings from up to $600 to $750 per person for North American travel effective from May 2019. Decided we were unable to do that in the current financial climate.

**Marketing**

Accountants have added $60k of salary from membership to this budget. For marketing expenses.

Mr Woelk left the meeting at 4:49pm.

Ms Mallory left the meeting at 4:50pm.

Ms O’Donnell left the meeting at 4:50pm.

Mr Woelk, Ms Mallory and Ms O’Donnell re-joined the meeting at 4:52pm.

Mr Perry left the meeting at 4:53pm.

Mr Perry re-joined the meeting at 4:55pm.

Ms Bonsignore left the meeting at 4:55pm.

Ms Bonsignore re-joined the meeting at 4:57pm.

Ms Fox left the meeting at 5:02pm.

TBD: F&I committee review the IT support numbers, and evaluate if a different number is required for the budget.

Ms Fox re-joined the meeting at 5:05pm.

Budget – to be reviewed/updated for approval at the 28 Nov meeting.

Ms Wilson thanked everyone for their time and effort getting here, for their engagement during the meeting. Ms Pohland reminded the board to submit their expenses.

The meeting adjourned at 5:24pm.