



Society for
Technical
Communication

Society for Technical Communication Annual Business Meeting

Meeting 17 May 2024, 5:45 pm CT

Agenda

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| • Call to Order & Introductions | Liz Herman, President |
| • Adoption of Business Meeting Agenda | Liz Herman |
| • Outgoing President's 2023-2024 Report | Tim Esposito, IPP |
| • Treasurer's 2023-2024 Financial Report | Bobbi Werner, Treasurer |
| • Nominating Committee Report | Aiessa Moyna, Chair |
| • Introduction of the 2024-2025 Directors and Officers | Liz Herman |
| • Incoming President's Remarks | Liz Herman |
| • Adjournment | Liz Herman |

Call to Order & Introductions

Dr. Liz Herman, STC President, called the 71st annual business meeting to order at 5:45 pm CT. Dr. Herman introduced the officers and guests participating in the meeting.

State of the Society Information

For this meeting, there is no business being acted upon; therefore, no quorum is needed. This new format, a State of the Society, includes 2023-2024 accomplishments and financial overview, results of the election, and my remarks on the upcoming Board year.

Motions can be submitted at any time to the Board by emailing board@stc.org. Questions arising from today's State of the Society can also be directed to the board@stc.org email address.

A copy of the agenda was posted on the STC website; we will be following that agenda for this Annual Business Meeting.

As specified in the STC Bylaws and meeting rules, the Board of Directors shall correct and approve the minutes of this business meeting and a transcript will be posted on the STC website.

Outgoing President's 2023-2024 Report

Mr. Esposito addressed the members:

Hello and I hope everyone is enjoying the STC Summit so far! As outgoing President of the Society, my role today is to look back at the past year and summarize it for you. In the past year since I stepped up to the role of STC President of Board, the Society has seen so many changes. Twenty years ago, when I first joined STC, my manager told me that being a technical writer was a lot like changing a tire on a moving car. It turns out being on the board of directors for a technical communication society is much the same.

During my vice-presidential year, STC experienced some unprecedented change: we changed executive directors at the same time as using new society management teams, like accounting and HR. While this was stressful to adapt to, it was also beneficial in that it gave the board and staff a chance to step back and take stock of what STC had been doing, and what it could be doing. My presidential predecessor, Aiessa Moyna organized a search committee and we screened and interviewed dozens of potential candidates and selected Tim Shaw as an interim executive director, right before the Summit last year, who then became non-interim last fall. I like to joke that my hiring criteria included the ability to look like a pirate, understand my pop culture jokes, and have a superior first name.

Tim Shaw checked all those boxes and also brought years of experience of working with nonprofits and professional societies. His outlook provided a new lens from which to view the society. Working closely with the board, Tim has outlined a project plan to move the society forward and modernize its structure. Not all of the changes could be made overnight, and many may be invisible to our members. Here are some of our past as well as ongoing projects.

- **Revise the STC Bylaws.** Over the course of the past year, Tim and the board have reviewed the bylaws in depth, clarifying some areas and bringing them up to modern best practices. This serves to protect society members, community leaders, the board, and the staff, as well as run a better society.
- **Revise the Elections Process.** Following industry best practices, the STC election process was reviewed and revised this year. Our goal is to increase the board size to better represent the society members, and to divide the work more

equally among the board. Additionally, board executives are now elected by the board; candidates can run for an executive position after they serve on the board for a year. While exceptions can be made, this ensures that the person who assumes that role is more familiar with the leadership position, hopefully ensuring a stronger president, VP, treasurer, or secretary.

- **Website Improvements.** While the website hasn't been updated to a new model yet, I have been working with a website committee to help redesign it to provide a better experience for everyone. We have a rough prototype in place and hope to flesh that out to a working model in time for the end of the year.
- **Membership and Registration.** Again, something that's behind the scenes currently, but STC is working to implement a new membership registration experience. We are switching to a new online membership management system, which will improve everyone's experience when they purchase things from STC, from membership to conference registration, to online course registration.
- **Education and Certification.** The Education committee is working to create a solid catalog of educational courses offered by STC. Additionally, they rolled out the next level of certification.
- **Revised Summit.** As you may have noticed, the structure of the STC Summit is new this year. Tim (not me) and the conference committee have worked very hard to design an experience that will offer stronger opportunities than in the past. For example, pre-conference workshops are now integrated into the daily program as "intensives"; and our poster presentations have returned.
- **Establishing a Governance Committee.** Based on Tim's recommendations, the board established a new governance committee. The goal of that committee is to regularly review the bylaws and other STC governing agreements, such as the Code of Conduct that all Summit presenters (and attendees) are to follow and Conflict of Interest statements that keep our board and leaders on the same page. This group is very important to making sure that STC is doing the best for its community.

These projects also overlapped with ongoing work with our communities. I'd like to thank all the community leaders who reached out to me, personally, as well as the staff and CAC. We all spent many hours assisting leaders with their issues, hopefully solving many of them. Website technology assistance was a common request for me, so thank you for your patience as I tried to help you.

One last change I'd like to mention is the decoupling of the leadership change from the annual business meeting. Because the business meeting date varies, the board decided to separate the change of board from that event. That way board members are ensured a 12 month term and not one that could be shortened or extended based on a conference and meeting date. Therefore, at the start of the month, I turned over the role of president to Liz Herman, who will lead STC into the future

As I even more formally step away from the role of president, I would like to thank:

- The 2023-2024 Board of Directors ...

- Our staff members Tim Shaw and Erin Gallalee ...
- Our Committee Chairs and volunteers ...
- Our community leaders ...
- And you, our members ...

... for the trust you placed in me and for your tremendous support over the past year. Thank you.

Treasurer's 2023-2024 Financial Report

Ms. Werner presented the Treasurer's Report:

Thank you very much, Tim.

The financial statements for 2023 were approved by the STC Board at its meeting on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. Our accountant subsequently updated December financials in February. These updates were distributed to the Board, with significant changes impacting 2024 start-of-year totals reported at the February 28, 2024 Board meeting. These changes were approved by the Board on February 28 and are included in this report.

The 2023 financial statements remain unaudited at this time. The Society's income tax submission for the past year will be available for members on the STC website, and an annual report will also be made available in the next several weeks.

Pre-Audit financials

The Society ended the year 2023 with total assets of \$118,517 and total liabilities of \$847,506. Assets at fiscal year-end include \$84,270 in cash, investments totaling \$18,802, a Student Scholarship Fund totaling \$8,657, plus a variety of other assets. Liabilities include various accrued expenses and deferred revenue, and a low-interest Economic Injury Disaster Loan totaling \$500,000. The line of credit of \$334,517 was paid off in December 2023 using Society investments, thus significantly reducing liabilities.

Membership revenues for 2023 totaled \$486,471, falling \$82,064 below 2022. Total 2023 Summit revenue was \$341,781. Certification and Education revenue totaled \$194,048. We continue to rely on the great work of volunteers to provide and schedule these educational programs, and I'd like to recognize the Education Committee, the Summit Co-Chairs, our staff in the STC office, and a host of other volunteers who serve the membership with a steady stream of quality educational offerings and help to promote them.

To summarize overall financial activity, total support and revenue from operations for the year was \$1,145,467. Total expenses for operations were \$1,148,763, yielding net operating loss the year of (\$3,296). As of December 31, 2023, the Society had a net deficit without donor restrictions of (\$734,350). This is a significant net deficit, and more than double the 2022 net deficit without donor restrictions, which was (\$357,012). Key

causes of the net deficit include shortfalls in conference, membership, sponsorship, and education revenue, combined with the expense of an onsite conference, some prepayments toward Summit 2024, and the final reconciliation of accounts related to Liz Pohland, our departing CEO.

Investment performance

While the Society made no changes to its investment allocations as specified in our Investment Policy, the Board voted to withdraw funds from Investments to replenish Cash but primarily to pay off our Line of Credit, on which we were paying roughly \$75 in interest each month. Though our Investment balance was a modest \$18,802 at the end of 2023, we will continue to monitor investment performance going forward.

Closing

To close this report to the membership as STC Treasurer, I would like to acknowledge Society staff, Tim Shaw and Erin Gallalee, for controlling expenses and creating operational efficiency in 2023. I also want to thank the rest of the Board for their support as we all work through numerous financial and operational challenges.

This concludes my report.

Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Moyna, Chair, presented the Nominating Committee report on the 2024 Society election.

Of 1,240 eligible voters, 149 (12%) cast a ballot. There were some abstentions for each position.

Congratulations to those elected and thank you to all the candidates for your dedication to STC and willingness to devote your time and energy to improving our Society by running for an elected position.

Director

(Six candidates for six openings; two-year term)

- Dr. Jackie Damrau received 136 votes
- Dr. Guiseppe Getto received 137 votes
- MaryKay "MK" Grueneberg received 137 votes
- Dr. Amanda Patterson received 136 votes
- Dr. Wendy A. Ross received 136 votes
- Danielle Villegas received 137 votes

By the vote of the STC members, all six candidates were elected to the Board.

Please note:

- Vice President Elizabeth “Liz” Herman automatically ascended to the office of President.
- President Timothy “Tim” Esposito automatically ascended to the office of Immediate Past President.
- Roberta “Bobbi” Werner will complete her two-year term as Treasurer.
- The 2024-2025 Board of Directors has elected Danielle Villegas to serve in the office of Vice President and Jackie Damrau to serve in the office of Secretary.

Nominating Committee

(Two candidates for two openings; two-year term)

- Joana Donovan received 144 votes
- Kelly Smith received 146 votes

By the vote of the STC members, both candidates were elected to the Nominating Committee.

Congratulations to all those who were elected, and thank you to all the STC members who expressed interest in running for an elected position. Your dedication to STC and willingness to devote your time and energy to improving our Society through your service is deeply appreciated.

Note that the 2024 election slate was prepared in accordance with the current Society bylaws. The election was open from Monday, April 15, through Friday, April 26. To be eligible to vote, members must have paid their dues by January 31 of the election year. All eligible members received a ballot and invitation to vote via email.

Votes were cast through a secure, third-party software, provided by Jotform, with certification by the STC staff that the election results were accurate and confidential. All STC election rules were strictly adhered to, and all necessary internal controls were in place to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the voting.

The final election results have been certified and were approved at a special meeting of the Board of Directors on May 1, 2024.

I would like to recognize the 2023-2024 Nominating Committee members and thank them for their efforts on behalf of the membership. Please stand if you are in attendance.

The Society’s appreciation goes to:

- Rachel Houghton
- Kylie Jacobsen
- Zohra Mutabanna, and
- Mirhonda Studevant

Thank you all for your service.

Installation of the 2024-2025 Officers

Dr. Herman introduced the 2024-2025 Board of Directors who were installed on May 1, 2024 to stand and be recognized:

- Tim Esposito, Immediate Past President
- Dr. Liz Herman, President
- Danielle Villegas, Vice President
- Bobbi Werner, Treasurer
- Dr. Jackie Damrau, Secretary
- Dr. Guiseppe Getto, Dr. Jennifer Goode, MaryKay "MK" Grueneberg, Dr. Amanda Patterson, Jamye Sagan, Dr. Wendy Ross, Directors

Dr. Herman congratulated the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee and invited them to stand and be recognized:

- Rachel Houghton
- Zohra Mutabanna
- Kelly Smith
- Joana Donovan

Incoming President's Remarks

Dr. Herman addressed the members:

Now, please allow me a few minutes to share my remarks.

I stand before you as the 2024-2025 STC Board of Directors President, but I don't stand alone.

I've introduced you to the 2024-2025 Board Directors and Nominating Committee, a talented, passionate group of people whom I have the privilege and honor of working with over the next year.

There are the STC staff, Tim Shaw as Executive Director, and Erin Gallalee as Director of Membership, Operations, and Community Relations, who work incredibly hard for our members.

But there are also all the Board Officers and Directors and STC staff that have come before me and before this current Board who contributed to the strategy, sustainment, and success of STC.

I want to collectively recognize and honor them and the decisions they made at the time. I stand on their work, their commitments, and their dedication to the profession and this organization.

I believe that each Board does its best with the information and environment that they exist within. I believe that this Board will do its best as we make decisions within the context of the current environment in which we find ourselves and trust that there will be support and understanding as we navigate the year ahead.

I don't think I could stand before you as a technical communicator and not follow an industry best practice. So, in the interest of content reuse, I am reusing some of the content that appears in my first President's Letter in the May/June issue of *Intercom*.

I think it's no surprise that change, purposeful and balanced change, is the reality of our current environment. Change can be difficult, amazing, alarming, upsetting, or uplifting. It can be viewed positively or negatively. Sometimes both depending on perspective.

But to change is to grow and evolve and that is what we must do at STC. To sustain our professional association, the STC Board and Staff must seek transformations that continue to provide value while stabilizing and optimizing our financial footprint. Staying solvent is critical. We want to continue to be your professional home. This year, we expect continued focus on membership, marketing, and communities.

For membership, we are looking into better registration experiences including moving our member databases to something more user-friendly. We are exploring better pricing. We intend to improve overall member benefits.

Sustaining members and growing members relies on how we market ourselves, including our mission and vision, our outreach to current and prospective members, and our high-value education offerings to include packaging of education classes into bundles and offering certificates of completion. We look forward to a refreshed marketing strategy.

For communities, we're exploring what STC corporate can continue to do to help take some of the burdens off of our community leaders. That could be helped with expenses like Zoom or domain and website hosting.

We need to review and update the community handbook and all of the various codes and policies that go into that. Most importantly, we need to bring community leaders together to talk about this and use their expertise and experience to make this all a reality.

I am excited about the year ahead. Thank you.

Adjournment

Dr. Herman adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm CT.