

PLATO Board of Directors Meeting
Approved Minutes

October 8, 2021

9:30 a.m. via Google Meet

Present: Kathy Brown, President, Jatinder Cheema, Dory Christensen, Patricia Herrling, Mike Kernats, Scott Kolar, Hedy Lukas, Rod McKenzie, Michael Stevens, Paul Thompson

Also present: Stephanie Steigerwaldt, MaryJo MacSwain

Approval of August 2021 Board Minutes –Motion made and passed.

Treasurer's Report – Scott Kolar reported on the state of PLATO's finances and budget. The budget had been based on the assumption of 975 members. We currently have 929 renewing members. All non-renewing members will be archived as Wild Apricot charges us by membership numbers.

We have less costs this year because of less in-person courses requiring host payments. However we have increased costs due to our contract fees for Stephanie instead of our old arrangement with DCS. We will be running a deficit but will still be in good financial shape for the coming year. We have also not increased member dues for over ten years and this is an option we need to consider for the future. Scott will be working up a budget reflecting these issues for the next board meeting in December.

He also reported that the liability insurance for the Board members had accidentally lapsed because of an error made by the agent's retirement, but we are now up-to-date with both liability insurance and renter's insurance.

Committee Updates

- Membership & Communication Committee – Hedy Lukas reported that the committee has developed two separate email communications to non-renewals to encourage membership renewals and to current members asking that they invite friends and family to participate in a PLATO class or program as a "trial" to see what PLATO can offer. In each communication they will also ask for feedback and what would make PLATO more appealing. These will go out in the near future.

According to our projected budget we are currently short of the number of members needed to break even. Reasons for membership reduction are likely due to no theater trips, reduced in-person classes, and normal attrition not replaced by new members due to reduced offering or pandemic concerns.

Hedy said that we will need to think strategically about how we might need to change as an organization to appeal to a new generation of retirees.

Curriculum Committee – Paul Thompson reported we currently have 14 in-person courses, 25 virtual courses, and 2 courses trying out a hybrid of in-person and virtual. They had sent a brief survey to coordinators about how things are going with the COVID protocols and 28 responded. Most felt things were going fine. Some in-person courses reported problems with hearing

speakers wearing masks and some difficulty in maintaining social distancing. Online programs reported some technical problems, and the hybrid courses seem to be working satisfactorily, with some minor problems they are working on solving.

Paul felt that as we plan for future hybrid courses the host locations will be adding the technology to make this possible.

- **Technology Committee** – Sandi Fike has stepped down as co-chair of Technology. Scott will continue as chair, and he will work with the Curriculum committee. The PLATO webpage has a new footer which shows Oakwood's logo and text that reflects PLATO is supported in part by Oakwood Village. Our new address and phone number is also updated on the website.

- Others:

PLATO Office Relocated – PLATO's new address is 6209 Mineral Point Road, #203, Madison, WI. 53705 and our new phone number is 608-572-6869.

September 21st the PLATO office moved to our new location at Oakwood Village West. A new MOA was signed and renter's insurance from State Farm is completed and in effect. COVID protocols to enter Oakwood include an Accushield kiosk sign-in and temperature taking. There are two keys to the office, one for Stephanie and one for Kathy Brown and others, and one pass card for Stephanie. There are no official office hours. Stephanie reports that she will probably be there on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- New expenses related to office relocation -- Our ongoing costs include \$200 in rent and \$100 for phone and internet services from Spectrum. One-time expenses for moving were \$1,400.

- Guidelines for meeting room use at Oakwood – Oakwood is making meeting rooms available to PLATO at no cost. Oakwood residents have priority. As in the past all reservations for meeting rooms will go through PLATO via Stephanie. The PLATO office at Oakwood is not large enough for meetings of more than 5 or 6 people and will be used only for small meetings where Stephanie's attendance is required. Reservations for Oakwood class and lectures space will continue as in the past through a representative from the Curriculum and the Special Events committees.

Louise Fowler is checking DCS occasionally for any mail still delivered to that office. The old phone number for PLATO has a message referring callers to our new phone number.

Annual PLATO Education Fund campaign – Rod McKenzie reported that an appeal brochure is in the works via both mail and email. They have information on the student scholarships from DCS. DaneNet no longer has its intern program for children so they are no longer part of the scholarship program. A new agency will probably be selected for scholarships in the future.

Other Business

- PLATO Board Meetings – we will continue with mostly virtual meetings for the future.

- Others

Next Board meeting: December 10, 2021