

COUNCILORS' REPORT FROM BOSTON

The 224th National ACS Meeting was held in Boston, MA, 18-22 Aug 02.

One way to check the pulse of the Society is to sit in on the Open Sessions of The Society Committee on Budget and Finance (Saturday, 17 Aug), and of the Board of Directors (Sunday, 18 Aug). Even though most of the tough issues are dealt with in Executive Sessions, some of it does leak out into the Open Sessions.

SOCIETY COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND FINANCE (B&F)

If an organization with an investment balance of \$237 million can be said to be experiencing financial hard times, then the ACS is. The net deficit for 2001 was \$8.3 million. The Board approved budget target for 2002 was a deficit of \$2 million. Present estimates are that the actual yearend deficit will be closer to \$4.2 million. As one might expect, this is due to two factors: (1) failure to rein in expenses, and (2) shortfall in income. The operating budget is projected to miss its target by \$1.3 million, Board approved expenditures by \$1.7 million, and the Insurance Program by 1.2 million. To meet the target bottom line will require cuts in Washington staff, and cuts, or curtailment, of programs, both sensitive topics. Income shortfalls were primarily in Investments (low interest rates and a down market) and the volatile advertising revenue. Chemical Abstracts Service continued to provide a steady revenue stream, even with, or better than, budget.

The guidelines for Debt Ratio, Liquidity Ratio, Fund Balance Ratio, and Free Cash Flow are being met. One problem looming just around the corner is that the Society will be required to fund fully its pension program in 2003. This will entail an additional budget stress of about \$8 million. This makes it appear that the projections of a \$1 million deficit in 2003 and a breakeven budget in 2004 may have been overly optimistic.

The Petition for Division and Local Section Funding, withdrawn before the Orlando Meeting, has resurfaced, in slightly modified form, for consideration at this meeting, and for action in New Orleans. The Subcommittee that makes estimates of the financial impact of pending amendments has determined that this petition, if passed, will have a major negative financial impact on the Society, of the order of \$982 thousand in 2004. The fatal flaws, noted in our report from Orlando, remain unaddressed. No one wants to deal with the issue of "where will this money come from?" Moreover, no formula has been proposed for the distribution of this putative funding. It would be left to the discretion of the chairs of the Divisional Activities Committee (DAC) and the Local Section Activities Committee (LSAC) with the entire membership of Council as oversight. Proponents of the petition dismiss these objections, with a wave of the hand, as "details". Others respond that the Devil is in the details.

It was pointed out that the change could be funded by a ten-dollar increase in full-member annual dues over and above any increase required by the dues escalator calculation. No one is so suicidal as to make this as a serious motion.

The petition was criticized as “budgeting by Bylaw”. Others asked what will the Society get in return for this additional funding. Some questioned whether there were not other ways to solve the problem. B&F made it clear that it was not opposed to the merits of the case made by DAC and LSAC. Rather, they were opposed to the proposed solution, and the mechanism chosen for implementing it.

All of this discussion led to the following motion, which I have paraphrased:

B&F OPPOSES THE PETITION FOR DIVISION AND LOCAL SECTION FUNDING. IT URGES THAT THE BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE, CONSTITUTE A TASK FORCE, WITH REPRESENTATION FROM B&F, DAC, AND LSAC, TO PROPOSE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM FOR THE NEW ORLEANS MEETING.

This motion passed without dissent.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Report of The Chair of the Board of Directors (Boston Meeting, Council Agenda, Page 53) contains this interesting statement:

“One of our goals is to place more action items in our open sessions.”

Now, back to the Sunday open session of the Board.

The Executive Director, John K Crum, who is scheduled to retire at the end of 2003, has had double bypass surgery and will be out for six weeks. During his absence, the Acting Executive Director is Dr. Joseph E. Clark.

It was announced that the Board would be organizing a meeting of Middle Eastern chemists.

Special guests: Adriaan de Graff, Gerhard Erker, and David Giachardi, representatives of NSF, the German Chemical Society, and the Royal Society respectively, were introduced, and each made a formal presentation. This was good public relations for the Society, and it served to minimize the amount of open meeting time available for substantive discussions.

The Board VOTED (voice) to approve the following Action items:

1. Proposed policy statement on undergraduate science education legislation currently before the Senate, and
2. Cosponsorship of the 83rd Annual Meeting & Exposition of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) that will be held 9-13 Feb 03 in Long Beach, CA.

Due to time constraints, the Reports of Officers were changed from oral to written.

The Petition for Division and Local Section Funding was brought up for discussion. The arguments and pleadings were essentially those heard in B&F the previous day. The Board members appeared to be seriously split. One group wanted to push ahead with the approval process, not wanting to delay the resolution of the issue with further study. Another group was more cautious, focusing on the financial issues and the ramifications that approval would have on the Society. The Chair made it clear that she would constitute a task force as requested by B&F.

After a lunch break, the Board withdrew to Executive Session.

THE COUNCIL

A resolution honoring deceased Councilors, Fred Owens (Philadelphia) and Don Berets (Western Connecticut) was read.

Minutes of the Council meeting in Orlando were approved by voice vote.

Nominations and Elections

Councilors were reminded to vote in the special election to fill the Director-at-Large vacancy on the Board created by the resignation of Joan Shields. Candidates are: Paul Anderson, Douglas Raber, and, by petition, Dennis Chamot. The voting deadline is 9 Sep. There are now three candidates for President-Elect for 2003. They are: Charles Casey, Alvin Kwiram, and, by petition, Ann Nalley.

By vote in Council, the following councilors were elected to the committees specified:

Committee on Committees (ConC)

William H. Braezeale, Jr.
Peter K. Dorhout
Nancy B. Jackson
Mame W. Moy
Wanda W. Rauscher

Council Policy Committee (CPC)

Eric C. Bigham
Martha L. Casey
Janan M. Hayes
Sharon P. Shoemaker

Committee on Nominations and Elections (N&E)

Peter A Christie

Valerie J. Kuck
Bonnie Lawlor
James W. Long
Sara J. Risch

Although the sample size is probably not statistically significant, it is curious that, while 61% of the candidates were male, 64% of those elected were female.

Candidates for President-Elect will be using the N&E website. In an upcoming issue, Chemical and Engineering News will carry an editorial on campaign practices. At the New Orleans meeting, the traditional visits of candidates to caucuses will be replaced by a Town Hall Forum.

Report of the Chair of the Board of Directors

The Matching Gift Fund has exceeded its upper limit. The Board has authorized it to continue to yearend. Further authorization is under discussion.

The task force recommended by B&F will be constituted.

Report of the Committee on Committees

By voice vote Council approved the continuation of the Committee on Science, the Women Chemists Committee, and the Younger Chemists Committee. During a break, an astute Councilor pointed out privately that continuation for the Committee on Science had been approved at the previous meeting in Orlando. Moreover, it was not listed on agenda for this meeting and thus could not be voted on. Also, continuation for the Committee on Nomenclature, Terminology, and Symbols, which was on the present agenda, had not been dealt with. The matter was straightened out and Nomenclature, Terminology, and Symbols was approved by voice vote.

Then Council got to the testy issue of the morning, the Bylaw Petition to Increase the Size of Society Committees. At issue is changing the permitted size of these committees to go from the range of nine-fifteen to the range of twelve-twenty. This petition was supported by DAC, LSAC, Membership Affairs, Meetings and Expositions, and Attila Pavlath. It was opposed by B&F, Committee on Education, and ConC. Mind you, the three Society Committees, B&F, Committee on Education, and Committee on Science, at present have 14, 15, and 16 members respectively. There was much venting with no shortage of strong feelings on both sides of the proposal. Attila Pavlath pointed out that he had long lists of hopefuls who wanted to be appointed to B&F or the Committee on Education. Finally, by a hand-count, the petition passed 263-126. Marvin Lang then requested a recorded vote. This call failed when only 77 voted in favor.

One wag suggested privately an action that would both shorten the waiting lists for Society Committee appointments and help the Society through its financial hard times.

Simply sell seats on these committees the way seats are sold on the New York Stock Exchange.

Approved, by voice vote, the recommendation that the Charge of the Committee on Technician Affairs be amended to clear up an ambiguity.

Twenty-seven members were recognized for having served the statutory limit of service on ACS governance committees, ten committee chairs for reaching the statutory limit, twelve councilors were recognized for 15 years of service on the Council, six for 20 years, seven for 25, two (Gordon Nelson and Attila Pavlath) for 30 years, and one, Ernest Eliel, for 35 years.

Committee on Budget and Finance

Staff efforts to develop a “strategic expense management system” (SEMS) are continuing.

Committee on Meetings and Expositions

As of Wednesday morning, the meeting had 17,121 registrants. Of these, 12,478 were attendees, 2,664 exhibitors, and 1,979 guests. The Exposition featured 409 booths (3rd largest) and 309 companies (2nd largest).

In 2003, the Advanced Member Registration Fee is recommended to be \$275.

The spring 2008 meeting will not be in San Antonio, but will be in either New Orleans or San Diego.

Committee on Membership Affairs

There are fewer unpaid members this year. Unemployed members requesting the dues waiver total about 1200, up 300 from last year. The projection for yearend is that the number of members will be down slightly.

The Petition for Approval of Non-U.S. Applicants as Society Affiliates was brought for action. At present, only residents of the U.S. and its territories are eligible to be national affiliates. If approved, this petition would allow non-U.S. applicants to affiliate with the ACS. DAC and Membership Affairs endorsed the petition. Ernest Eliel opposed it. It passed by voice vote.

Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs

At this meeting, the National Employment Clearinghouse was, for the first time, fully automated and “paperless”. There were 1242 candidates and 270 companies, with 512 jobs posted, and 4667 interviews.

Committee on Local Section Activities

The award-winning local sections by size category were: Very Large-North Jersey, Large-Detroit, Medium Large- Midland, Medium- Northeast Tennessee, Medium Small-Peoria, and Small-Central Utah.

Council approved by voice vote the motion to change the name of the Bolder Dam Local Section to the South Nevada Local Section.

Women Chemists Committee

Congratulations on their 75th anniversary.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. David B. Ford, Councilor

Dr. James A. Walsh, Alternate Councilor