

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

"I find the TMS Board related meetings (including retreats) to be the best 'meetings' experience that I have encountered in my professional career. . . . The breadth of the big topics covered shows that we are consistently seeking to improve and not just go through the motions."

—TMS Board Member (Anonymously), August 2022

A painless primer on TMS civics: the individual members of TMS are the owners of the Society. The members set the Society's bylaws and they elect willing volunteers to sit on the Board of Directors to steward the Society, create a governance structure, and assure that the interests of members are well represented. TMS has 14 Board members with each serving a three-year term. These officers and directors take the job very seriously, and the Society has benefited mightily from our Board of Directors' commitment over the decades.

The TMS Board typically convenes six times per year, focusing their limited time together on providing the Society with strategic direction, updating governance practices and policies, addressing the uncharted, considering new initiatives, and keeping a weather eye on the headwinds and tailwinds impacting our resources, financial and otherwise. As I write, the Board has just finished a two-day session at TMS headquarters.

Day one was a retreat. Three separate subjects were discussed: whether the TMS Vision and Mission Statements should be updated (yes, they should); defining our vision and guiding principles for the TMS Annual Meeting & Exhibition for the remainder of the decade (the plan, "TMS Connects," culminates almost two years of work); and whether we should add a fourth goal to the "TMS Aspires" Strategic Plan that would advance industrial engagement (that's an affirmative). The latter two items should be finalized by MS&T22; the discussion of modifying the Vision and Mission Statements will carry into the new year.

Day two was a business meeting. Particular attention was given to our financial status as the pandemic and international travel issues pruned participation in our 2022 meetings. Curtailed attendance means less revenue. Conversely, we added event expense by deploying hybrid participation options and incorporating COVID mitigation measures. Less revenue + more expense = us projecting a 2022 deficit exceeding \$1 million. Fortunately, we have accumulated reserves built on years of positive outcomes and can endure the shortfall. The underlying philosophy is to take a long-game view and keep our staff and operational capacity intact in anticipation of a more normal 2023. Companion topic: the Board accepted the 2021 audit—another unqualified opinion from our auditors.

Beyond the balance sheets, . . . at the request of the Membership and Student Development Committee, the Board approved changing the committee's name to Membership Diversity and Development Committee, with the director position on the Board being similarly renamed. The Board had requested that such a change be made so as to better reflect the Board's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Separately, the Board discussed whether the Society should maintain or modify its traditional stance of neutrality in accepting participation by scientists and engineers from countries that may be under some form of sanction. The Board retained the traditional position of TMS remaining neutral unless required to take action in response to a legal requirement. Also, with a global mindset, the Board asked the Public and Governmental Affairs Committee to work with the Technical Division Council and consider whether TMS should have a climate change position and, if yes, to propose a position statement.

Consideration of some of the above will continue at MS&T22; some will carry into next year. Simultaneously, there will be new topics that are introduced and start new discussion cycles. As the introductory quote reminds us, the Board seeks to improve. In my assessment, they do an exceptionally good job at this.

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