



Meeting of the EBSA Executive Committee

09.30 – 16.30 (UK time) Saturday 23rd January 2021 via Zoom

The EC agreed that the meeting can be recorded to help capture the Minutes.

Present: Jesus Perez-Gil (President), Elena Pohl (Vice President), Anthony Watts (Past President), John Seddon (Secretary), Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer), Rob Gilbert (EBJ), André Matagne (Bursaries), Mauro dalla Serra (IUPAB cross-representative), Sarah Köster, Nuno Santos (ISE), Jacqueline Cherfils, Dejan Žikić, László Mátyus (co-opted: EBSA Webmaster), Helmut Grubmuller (co-opted: future congresses), Ilpo Vattulainen (co-opted: EBSA Newsgroup), Pierre Emmanuel Milhiet (co-opted: EBSA Workshops Coordinator), Maria Sunnerhagen (co-opted: 2023 EBSA Congress).

Guest from 13.00 UK time: Birgit Plochberger (Congress organizer)

Minutes

1. Welcome and Apologies (JP-G)

Jesus Perez-Gil welcomed the Committee, noted that Birgit Plochberger would join after lunch for the discussion of the Vienna 2021 Congress, and reported that there were no Apologies.

2. Minutes of the July 2020 meeting of the EC via Zoom (JMS)

There were no comments on the Minutes, and all the items were on today's Agenda.

John noted that colleagues are still occasionally receiving scam emails, purporting to come from the EBSA President, and asking for the transfer of funds. We are trying to reduce this by changing how email addresses are reported on the EBSA website, but it is almost impossible to eliminate completely.

Action: John to send Edited version of the July 2020 Minutes to Laszlo to put on the EBSA website.

The Draft Minutes of the July 2020 EC meeting were Approved subject to minor correction of misprints.

3. Treasurer's report (TW)

Tony summarized his report, and informed the EC that the EBSA Balance is €171K as of today, and has increased from €125K since 31st March 2020.

€93K was received from Springer, partly offset by €17K in EBJ editorial expenses.

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The IoP has now paid EBSA £4K as its share of the remaining balance from the Edinburgh 2017 EBSA Congress, and £2k from AW as surplus from the Pre-congress EBSA workshop, El Escorial, Madrid.

He noted that Israel has not paid its subscription since 2015, Switzerland since 2017, and Denmark since 2018. Tony has drafted a letter to EBSA President's, reminding them to pay their EBSA subscriptions.

A Privacy Notice for EBSA has been prepared by John, Tony and Anthony.

Anthony confirmed that a payment of £320 as Indemnity cover was included in the Accounts.

Jesus asked whether there are any accounting changes due to Brexit. Tony replied that we need to wait and see. Anthony confirmed that nothing was stated in the Brexit agreement concerning service industries, such as insurance – we need to wait. But the current indemnity insurance does cover all committee members in the UK and EU.

Rob commented that the Fees status for EU students in the UK is still unclear.

Action: Tony to send Accounts sheet to JPG, AW and JMS.

Action: John to send Treasurer's letter to EBSA Presidents.

Action: Anthony to chase the Israeli, Swiss, Danish, Romanian and French Societies for payment of their subscriptions.

Action: John to send the Privacy Notice to Laszlo to put up on the EBSA website.

The Treasurer's Report was Approved.

4. EBJ (RG)

Rob reported that 2020 was a good year for EBJ, with 236 submissions. The IF (based on 2019) fell slightly.

There were two Special Issues, on Multicomponent Membranes (Claudia Steinem) and on ARBRE-MOBIEU. He noted that the latter group has gained long-term funding. He also noted that the Special Issue on Analytical Ultracentrifugation had also been very successful.

Helmut noted that Claudia Steinem had found the editorial web interface to be very clumsy and difficult to use. Rob agreed, and he will bring it up with Meran from Springer.

He asked the EC to encourage colleagues to submit their papers to EBJ.

There have been some new Editors appointed, and he asked the EC to suggest further appointees, for example someone from ARBRE. He is keen to improve the gender balance.

Maria asked whether there are areas where EBJ lacks reviewers? Rob mentioned theory / modelling, membrane physics, and molecular forces, as areas that are currently poorly covered.

In terms of renewal of the EBJ contract, Rob and Anthony have been in discussions with Meran at Springer, and also with Bill Curtis (Nature Central, USA). There were concerns about the impact of Open Access, and whether many EBJ authors would be unable to pay. The publisher is moving towards an 'Open Choice' system (equivalent to Gold Open

Access). However, Bill confirmed that authors unable to pay would have the fees waived.

For the ARBRE-MOBIEU Special Issue, authors can self-archive (eg, via Pub Med).

For the contract, Meran stated that there is a standard contract, but that it is confidential. This was felt to be somewhat contradictory, and Meran is looking into this further. Anthony asked him about a sign-on fee, and Meran is looking into this, and hopes to have an answer soon.

If the Springer offer is generous, Rob and Anthony feel that there may be advantages in staying with them. It was noted that they support EBSA (eg, the Congresses), and don't interfere. Anthony mentioned that Meran was not present at the meeting in Heidelberg, although it is unclear whether anything should be read into this. Rob and Anthony stated that now, with Covid, is not the time to get into an extensive 'beauty contest' with publishers, and feel we should go with Springer. They will share the details of the offer with the EC once available. Rob confirmed to Jesus that we will be able to continue to operate as we do now, and that the deadline to sort out the new contract is mid-2021.

Action: Rob to report to Meran that the editorial web interface is unsatisfactory.

Action: Rob and Anthony to send details of the Springer offer to the EC, once available.

5. ISE (NS)

Nuno reported that there had been very little activity from ISE in the second half of 2020, apart from a position document on Covid in November. He asked the EC whether EBSA should remain a member of ISE. Their General Assembly will be on the 8th February, so we should inform them before then if we wish to leave, without having to pay for 2021. Nuno's recommendation is that EBSA should leave ISE.

Helmut stated that we get little benefit, and Anthony mentioned that we had previously nearly come to the decision to leave. After additional discussion with various EC members, the decision was made that we should leave ISE.

Rob suggested that we should consider whether there are other European bodies that would be more useful to join, for example COST actions.

Action: Nuno to write to ISE, telling them that EBSA wishes to withdraw from ISE, with immediate effect.

6. IUPAB (AW)

Anthony reported that he has been working with the IUPAB Executive Committee, and reminded the EC that the IUPAB Council has 17 members, and its Executive Committee has 5 members. The President Elect is Manuel Prieto, and the Secretary General is Juan Carmelo Gomez-Fernandez.

It has been decided to proceed with the 2021 IUPAB Congress, but it is not yet known whether it will be hybrid or fully online. It has been decided to move the Kyoto Congress to 25-29 June 2024.

All IUPAB meetings and workshops are currently on hold due to Covid.

There is a new IUPAB 'Young Scientists Presentation Award' of €250, which EBSA can apply for, to award at the EBSA Vienna Congress.

The IUPAB Newsletter #76 is about to go to press.

Laszlo confirmed that the EBSA voting delegates for the IUPAB General Assembly are the EBSA President (Jesus), the Past President (Anthony) and the Secretary (John). There will be two meetings this year: an online Extraordinary GA (in March) to revise the IUPAB Constitution to allow online voting, and the main GA, which will be held online, probably in June or October (if the IUPAB congress goes ahead in Brazil) 2021.

Anthony mentioned that IUPAB will be sponsoring a lecture at the Vienna EBSA Congress, and that they are keen to reach out to student bodies, to promote biophysics.

Action: Anthony to send Juan Carmelo info about the Vienna Congress, and continue to liaise with him about the ongoing developments at IUPAB.

Action: Elena and Anthony to put the application form (when available) for the IUPAB Young Scientist Award on the Congress website.

7. EBSA Website (LM) and Newsgroup (IV)

Analytics show the following users in 2020: UK (684), US (605), Germany (477), France (303), Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, India, China....

Jesus observed that the numbers will be much larger in the year of the Congress.

Elena suggested that the Award Winners' photos on the EBSA website should be updated, and it was also suggested that Maria should send in her photo and details, and that previous Congress organizers should send in any suitable photos to Laszlo.

Ilpo mentioned that his newest email address should be put on the EBSA website: (ilpo.vattulainen@helsinki.fi)

Action: Maria send her details and a photo to Laszlo to put on the EBSA website.

Action: Jesus to send photos from the Madrid Congress to Laszlo for website.

Action: Anthony to send photos from the Edinburgh Congress to Laszlo for website.

Action: Helmut to send photos from the Dresden Congress to Laszlo for website.

Action: Jacqueline to send the EC group photo (from Vienna) to Laszlo for website.

Action: EC member who took the screen shot, please circulate.

Action: Laszlo to put Ilpo's up-to-date email address on the EBSA website.

Newsgroup:

Ilpo reported that he makes 5 – 10 Newsgroup announcements per month. He removes a lot of spam. There are currently some 1,300 – 1,400 members of the Newsgroup. He can promote both the EBSA Congress and EBJ via the Newsgroup.

Jesus asked whether he is also happy to promote National Society meetings this way, and Ilpo confirmed that he is.

Action: Elena to send Ilpo a suitable Congress advert to send to the Newsgroup.

Action: Rob to send Ilpo a suitable advert for EBJ to send to the Newsgroup.

8. Requests for EBSA support and reports (PEM)

- The EJTEMM Meeting in Graz (Georg Pabst) on 7 – 9 April is moving fully online.
- The IC-ANMBES Conference in Brasov is being rescheduled to 8-10 June 2022.

- The Erice School (Helmut Grubmuller) will be postponed to Autumn 2021 or Spring 2022.
- The Iberian Meeting is scheduled for 14-16 June 2021, but it is still unclear whether it will be hybrid or online-only. Nuno confirmed that a decision will be taken in February.
- The Bilbao Membranes Summer School is currently on hold.
- The RBC (Pecs) Meeting may go ahead this summer, with a preference for a face-face Meeting. Laszlo confirmed that a decision will be taken in the next two months.
- Pavle Andjus (Serbia) requests €16K support for Satellite to EBSA Congress on "Advances in Ion Channels", Kotor (Montenegro), 8 – 12 July 2021. A decision on this request was deferred.
- Peter Pohl (Austria) requests €2,400 support for a Satellite to the EBSA Congress on "Proton Transport", Vienna, 22-24 July 2021. This request was approved.

John asked whether previously-agreed funding can be carried over, and this was agreed. He also asked whether the Debrecen Meeting (Peter Nagy) and the Oulu Meeting (Rikkert Wierenga), can be re-considered, and it was agreed that both can re-apply, although we will only be considering Satellite Meeting bids for 2021.

Action: Pierre-Emmanuel to inform organizers of decisions on funding support from EBSA.

9. Student Bursaries (AM)

Andre' reported that €4,720 was awarded in 2020 for working visits, but only one visit has taken place (Spain-Portugal). Two bids were received since July 2020, but both were rejected. Funding awards can be carried over to next year.

10. Future EBSA Schools / Biophysics Courses (JP-G)

Jesus confirmed that the Bilbao School (organized by Felix Goñi, Alicia Alonso and Anthony) is on hold. He asked whether it would be good to hold it in summer 2022, and Anthony confirmed that he would be happy with this. John asked whether it would then also be held in Bilbao in 2024, and this was agreed, subject to the local organizers being willing and available.

For the Pre-Congress School, Anthony said that the School needs to be face-face to work properly. He suggests that for the time being it is assumed that it will not happen in Vienna, but that the Congress organizers should be prepared to change at the last moment and go ahead if the situation with Covid restrictions improves before the summer. Elena stressed the need to be flexible.

Action: Jesus to inform Felix that the school should be planned for 2022, with a follow-on in 2024, if this is possible.

Action: Anthony to continue to liaise with Felix over the organization of the Bilbao School.

Action: Elena to tentatively book a venue for the Pre-Congress School.

11. EBSA 2021 Congress in Vienna (EP & local Austrian committee) 13.00 UK time

Jesus welcomed Birgit Plochberger to the meeting for the discussion of the Vienna Congress. Elena confirmed that Abstract submission, Registration, and the Payment tool are all working. She gave thanks to Eric Qiniou, Anthony and Rob for their assistance. The Programme is nearly finished, and all Plenaries have accepted apart from Ben Feringa. There are two sponsored Lectures: Karin Luger (Biophysical Society), and Francesco Bezanilla (IUPAB). 64 out of 69 Invited Speakers have accepted to date. For the 'New and Notable' session (Anthony Watts), the Speakers will be chosen closer to the time.

There are three 'Self-assembled' sessions within the Congress, for which no funding is being provided.

She stated that there are still Chair slots available and encouraged members of the EC to become involved and take on these roles.

Satellites

- Research Data Management (Carsten Baldauf): 24 July;
- Proton EU Network (Peter Pohl): 22 – 24 July;
- COST Action 18133 – Signal Transduction (Martha Somner);
- COST Action 17121 – Multimode Imaging (Andreas Walter);

Two further possibilities (decisions pending):

- COST Action 19105 – Lipid Net (Rosario Domingo);
- COST Action 16124 – Brillouin Scattering (Kareem Elsayad).

Sarah suggested a further Satellite on data storage / use.

Action: Sarah to email the EC further information about the proposed Satellite.

Elena stated that many companies are not interested in sponsoring or participating in virtual conferences, although Boehringer, Hamamatsu and Elements have already paid €15K.

There was a discussion about the possibility of Company talks, and Jesus confirmed that slots had been made available for this at the Madrid Congress. Elena suggested that it would be possible to accommodate up to 6 thirty-minute talks for example on the Sunday.

Birgit stated that the Committee will decide by the end of March whether the Congress will be hybrid or fully online. Maria expressed the view that this will be too late, and also stated that in Sweden there is a travel ban until August. Rob stated that he was pessimistic about UK participants being able to travel to Vienna in July. Elena stated that she is more optimistic and that people will come if they are allowed. Helmut is also more optimistic, and is confident that some fraction of the participants from central Europe will be able to travel. He supports a hybrid model and feels that hotels should be willing to accept late cancellations.

Elena confirmed that all Speakers have accepted on the basis of personal attendance. Birgit stated that speakers unable to attend can prerecord their lectures or give them live online.

In the event of having to go online, all participants will be moved to the Virtual Fee, and will be reimbursed the difference. Maria asked what will happen if it is run as a hybrid Meeting – can Fees still be returned? Elena stated that people can switch to online if they wish, and their fee will be reduced to the online fee.

The Austrian government has put a scheme in place to reimburse up to 90% of losses (limit of €1M) caused by Covid, in organizing conferences this year in Austria. Anthony pointed out that EBSA has already provided €25K to the Congress, and asked whether items such as the admin costs of reimbursing participants, admin costs of applying for compensation, and hotel cancellations would all be eligible for compensation under the scheme. Elena replied that they would, so long as we are awarded the compensation. Birgit stated that when the organizers apply to the scheme in the next 1-2 weeks we will see what we will be able to recover in costs in the event of losses due to Covid.

Action: Elena and Birgit to inform the EC once there is a decision about the Austrian government compensation for any losses on the Congress due to Covid.

Helmut suggested that once confirmed, we should make a statement on the Congress website that the Congress will go ahead in person. Birgit commented that in-person participants will have to take a Covid test. Anthony suggested that this should be stated on the Congress website. Birgit mentioned that the organizers have contacted Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca to see if they are interested in participating in the Congress, but none have so far responded.

Helmut suggested that we should commit now to having a physical presence in July at the Congress Centre. Elena stated that the deposit for the Congress Hall will be due in April. Even if the Congress is fully online, some space in the Congress Hall will still be needed. John asked whether, if necessary, the numbers could be reduced to, say, 500? Elena confirmed that this will be possible, and that the Congress Centre can provide social distancing.

Elena stated that current expenditure is €38K, against an income so far of €40K (EBSA support of €25K and Sponsorship of €15K).

The Abstract submission deadline is the 31st March. Maria stressed that the important info should be made as clear as possible on the Congress website. Jesus proposed that the organizers prepare a letter about the Congress, giving key dates, Registration details, Bursaries, etc, to be sent out to the EBSA Newsgroup. Elena agreed, and suggested that it should also be sent to the Biophysical Society and to IUPAB for their Newsletters, and to the Presidents of the EBSA National Societies. Maria stressed the need for some warmth in the letter, given the current difficult situation with Covid.

Action: Elena to prepare a letter providing details of the Congress, such as Abstract and Bursary deadlines, Registration, etc to be sent out to the EBSA EC for checking.

Action: Agreed form of letter to be sent to Newsgroup (Ilpo), to the EBSA Presidents (John), and to the Biophysical Society and IUPAB Newsletter (Elena/Anthony).

Sarah asked when she can inform the Invited Speakers in her session when the session will take place, and in what format? Elena stated that the Programme is still preliminary and they will circulate it as soon as it is finalized. Sarah asked who her Co-Chair is. Elena replied that Sarah can choose one herself, and stated that if Speakers drop out, the Chairs should be ready to step in to give a lecture themselves. Birgit suggested that Stefan Wieser (Austria) would be a suitable Co-chair. Andre stated that he is not happy that the Programme is so late. None of the Speakers / Sessions he suggested were chosen, and he was allocated to Chair a Session on a topic he knows nothing about. He is not prepared to do this, and is upset that EC members were not consulted about this. Elena explained that they had too many proposals in Andre's area, and they had to balance nationality and gender in making the selections. Rob backed up Andre's comments, stating that the Chairs will need to be physically present in Vienna, and that a back-up plan is needed in case this is not possible for some sessions.

Jesus stressed that the final Programme needs to be available on the Congress website as soon as possible. Elena stated that the Programme will be updated on Monday 25th January. Jesus repeated Sarah's point that Speakers need to know which day their session will be on. Helmut agreed that the final Programme needs to be sent out as soon as possible. In his view there has been a certain lack of communication, and this needs to be improved. Nuno asked whether the Poster session is being planned as Hybrid. Elena replied that it will be only face-to-face. Birgit commented that there is help available on running hybrid conferences, and that RAM is looking into this, and will give feedback. Birgit asked whether the EC feels that the Congress organizers at this point should plan for a face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online Congress? John suggested that planning a hybrid Congress would be the most sensible option, and the EC agreed with this view. There should be as much face-to-face as *possible*, but as much online as *necessary*. Anthony stated that we will need to agree the level of risk we are prepared to tolerate. Helmut proposed that we should wait to decide until we know what compensation cover will be provided by the Austrian government. It was agreed that we should hold a brief Zoom meeting of the EC on the 13th February to make a final decision as to the format of the Congress.

Action: Elena to advise the EC of the level of compensation agreed.

Action: John to send round a Zoom invitation for a brief meeting of the EC on 13th February to agree the format of the Congress (hybrid or fully online).

Avanti Award

Even though Avanti has been sold to a UK company (Cordes), Anthony confirmed that the award will be made for this congress, but it might be for the last time, depending on how Cordes views such awards and support. Contact at the moment is: Kacee Sims (Kacee.Sims@avantilipids.com).

Action: Anthony and Elena to contact Avanti/Cordes 90 days before the congress to arrange payment (either directly to the award winner – preferred - or via EBSA).

Bursaries

The Bursary application deadline is 19th March, and the date should be corrected on the Congress website (where it shows a deadline of 31st March)

Action: Elena to have the Bursary deadline corrected on the Congress website.

André is willing to Chair the Bursary Panel again, and suggested that we use the same Panel as last year.

Bursary Panel: André (Chair), Jacqueline, Mauro and John

12. EBSA Young Investigator and Avanti Awards

The following Panels were agreed to be set up to select the winners:

2021 EBSA Young Investigator Award Panel:

Ilpo (Chair), André, Nuno, and Dejan

The EBSA Young Investigator Award nominees are:

- Austria: Mario Brameshuber
- Britain: Seamus Holden

- Denmark: Magnus Kjærgaard
- France: Taser Hashem
- Germany: Charlotte Uetrecht
- Italy: Gabriella Viero
- Netherlands: Josef Lorent
- Russia: Alexander Maltsev
- Spain: Laura Arriaga
- Switzerland: Alexandre Persat
- Sweden: Katja Petzold

It was agreed that the winner will be selected by the 28th February.

2021 EBSA/Avanti Award Panel:

Laszlo (Chair), Jesus and Rob

The EBSA/Avanti Award nominees are:

- Austria: Karl Lohner
- Denmark: Ole Mouritsen
- Finland: Elina Ikonen
- Germany: Rumiana Dimova
- Slovenia: Gregor Anderluh
- Switzerland: Aurelian Roux

It was agreed that the winner will be selected by the 28th February.

Action: John to send the nomination papers to the agreed members of the Selection Panels for the EBSA Young Investigator Award and the EBSA Avanti Award.

Action: Panels to carry out the selections by 28th February.

Action: John to inform the EBSA Presidents of the Award winners, once these have been selected.

13. EBSA 2023 Congress in Stockholm – update (MS)

Maria stated that Sweden has been strongly affected by Covid, and that this has delayed the organization of the 2023 Congress. However, they will shortly be setting up the Main Committees for the Congress organization. She reminded the EC that the Congress will be co-organized by the National Committee for Biosciences, and the Swedish Biophysical Society. It is planned that the Meeting will be face-face. It should not be too complex to organize as it will be held at Stockholm University. They are working to the check-list that was provided by Anthony, and this is going well. By the end of April, they plan to have in place the Keynote Speakers and the Sessions, which will be presented at the Vienna Congress.

14. EBSA 2025 Congress

John asked whether the Italian Society is planning to submit a bid for the 2025 Congress, and Mauro confirmed that this is the case. They have already set up a Committee, and Rome is their preferred choice of venue. However, 2025 will be the Catholic Jubilee year, and this could be problematic in terms of accommodation. The possibility of Venice was discussed, but felt to be too expensive and too close

geographically to Vienna. Rob suggested that the Congress could be moved forward to around Easter, but there was not much enthusiasm for this.

Anthony raised the possibility of holding a forthcoming Congress in Athens, involving the Balkan Societies (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia...) and the newly-formed Greek Society.

Helmut was keen on Athens or Croatia as a location, but wondered whether it would be best delayed until 2027. He asked whether the Serbian Society are planning to apply for 2025, and Dejan confirmed that they are. Jesus wondered whether 2027 or even 2029 would be best for a Balkan bid.

Helmut wondered whether we could consider Serbia for 2025 and Italy for 2027. Mauro confirmed that this would not be a problem from their perspective.

Jesus reminded the EC that we do not need to make a decision on the 2025 Congress until 2022.

Action: John to write to EBSA Presidents, inviting bids for 2025 or 2027, which can be presented at the EBSA GA in Vienna. The decision about future congress locations is made by the EC.

15. Any other business

The EBSA Constitution needs to be updated, and changes will have to be approved at the next EBSA GA. Anthony suggested that the letter to EBSA National Societies' Presidents should propose that online voting will be done unless anyone objects, and that the EC can approve this at their First EC meeting on 24th July in Vienna. The GA will need to vote on candidates for the EC proposed by the EC, and any nominated by the National Societies. Each Society delegate has one vote, and each qualified EC member has one vote. John mentioned that a room will need to be booked for the EBSA GA, which should be held from 19.00 – 20.00 on Tuesday 27th July 2021.

Action: John to ask the EBSA Presidents for the voting delegate names (one only per society), and nominations for new Ordinary members of the EC, to be voted on at the EBSA GA. He should also propose online voting for those unable to attend the GA in person.

Action: John and Tony to update the EBSA Constitution, and add in an option for online and email voting.

The point was briefly discussed as to how to carry out the voting in the event that the GA is run in a hybrid mode.

Action: Elena to investigate the availability of an app for online voting at the EBSA GA, and to book a room for the GA from 19.00 – 20.00 on Tuesday 27th July.

Anthony informed the EC that the Greek Society HeCrA (Hellenic Crystallographic Association) has requested accession to EBSA as a full member – they are Associate, non-voting at the moment. He pointed out that there is also an active Biochemical Society in Greece, and there is a willingness to forge interactions with them to foster a biophysics activity. This will need to be voted on at the EBSA GA. He stated that there are possibilities for future Balkan cross-national Meetings including Greece, with a view to promoting biophysics across the region.

Anthony also mentioned that the British Biophysical Society is working to help develop an Irish Biophysical Society, and is planning a joint meeting to help catalyze this, with a view

to them joining EBSA at some point. Rob commented that the Irish biophysics community are already closely involved with ARBRE (through Hugh Byrne).

- 16. Next EC meeting:** 09.30 UK time, 13th February (Zoom), then 15.00 – 17.00, 24th July, Vienna.
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17. Sub-Meeting of EBSA Trustees (TW, AW, RG and JMS)

There was no additional Trustee business requiring discussion.
