

# MGWA MINUTES

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Minnesota Ground Water Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Regular monthly meeting

## **Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2020**

### **Attendance:**

Attendance: Kate Pound, Former President; Julia Steenberg, President; Tony Runkel, President-Elect; Vanessa Baratta, Treasurer; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Sherri Kroening, Newsletter; Sean Hunt, Management.

### **Agenda:**

- Approved with the addition of acknowledgement of officer elections.

### **Past Minutes:**

- Approved.

### **Introductions:**

- All members present introduced themselves, where they work, and their current position.

### **Elections:**

- Hunt noted that there were 168 votes cast for president in the recent election. All 168 votes were cast for Tony Runkel. There were 165 votes cast for secretary. There were two write-in votes and 162 votes cast for Michael Ginsbach. The outcome of the election was noted.

### **Reports:**

#### **Treasurer:**

- Baratta shared the Treasury Report with the Board – total income was \$106,990.20, net income was \$24,840.57, and total assets were \$95,962.95. Baratta noted that the assets were lower than the previous reporting period because the assets were zeroed down for assets with no cash value, such as old printers.
- Baratta noted that Use Taxes have been paid, business registration is done and donations given to the MGWA Foundation that came on membership renewal checks have been passed-through to the Foundation. Clarification was provided by Baratta that the pass-through is to pay annual expenses for the Foundation. Hunt confirmed the financial transactions.
- Steenberg asked for a pie chart displaying these numbers; Baratta stated that they are waiting for final numbers.
- Baratta stated that she and Jeanette Leete had discussed the Treasurer role. This role oversees a portion of Leete and Hunt's work. Leete and Hunt also work with the Foundation Treasurer. Baratta is going to add an asterisk to what has been delegated to Leete and Hunt. Baratta looked through the paperwork to discuss the roles moving forward. Baratta noted that another day is being planned to oversee, audit, and verify taxes. Hunt stated that while a larger non-profit organization would have an external audit, MGWA is small enough to have an internal audit.
- Baratta stated that an external auditor would just identify errors and not help with corrections. Pound asked about taxes and Baratta's role in overseeing the taxes. Baratta said she works on year end taxes but it would be good to be more informed about taxes

#### **Newsletter/Webpage:**

- Kroening provided an update that the first issue of the new format newsletter is out and while there have been a few errors these have been fixed. Anneka Munsell created the first iteration of the new format newsletter and will be training other staff on how to update the newsletter. Kroening said that a focus has

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been on how to put in images and, in particular, new things to work on with authors on figures. These include efforts to minimize figure edits, adding alternative text for screen readers. Kroening also reported that as the new newsletter is web-based articles with images will work better.

- Kroening said that the newsletter team is planning on posting articles on a quarterly basis moving forward, with a monthly meeting and review schedule to keep the quarterly schedule. A focus on avoiding duplications in articles is a focus of the newsletter team. Hunt mentioned that there are three primary communication methods: direct email, news on the homepage, and newsletter items. Hunt also stated that the webpage and newsletter are both being managed through WordPress. Hunt asked if the best way to communicate information to members was to post short blurbs on the homepage and use the newsletter for longer articles. Kroening stated that the newsletter team will continue to check for errors, see if the images are high resolution, and if the images are clipped correctly.
- Kroening also noted that she had seen emails on advertising from Midwest Geosciences Group and asked if these emails had been resolved. Steenberg stated it would be good to have input from the newsletter team on how to handle advertising going forward. Particular concerns were related to over advertising and if it would be better to put ads in blank spaces or at the bottom of the page and if the trend was to move to sponsorships rather than advertising. Kroening mentioned that Dan Kelleher wanted to give money for an ad and asked how to deal with it – is this a separate square on the newsletter with the add and would this make Kelleher happy. Kroening also asked about booths for the Spring Conference and if this would be an opportunity for advertisers who are not trying to get clients but instead want to sponsor something. The company Midwest Geosciences Group wants to get in right before the conference to advertise their products – could the booths for both sponsors and advertising of products? Steenberg will follow up with Leete to see if there has been a follow-up with Kelleher about advertising and see if they may be willing to be an exhibitor at the spring conference.
- Kroening will check in to see what the Newsletter team has to say about advertising. Hunt stated that the newsletter used to have information about submitting advertising but this information was moved so a larger header could be used for the newsletter information. Any update should reflect the new process. Kroening stated that Munsell has an analysis on the new format and that “a good chunk of people” clicked on the link.
- Hunt stated he has a list of recent accomplishments from Leete including: 2019 financial closeout, detailing online orders such as credit card processing fees, 2020 memberships renewed in 2019, and assets and Use Taxes. Hunt said that membership renewals and reminders for 2020 have been sent out along with emails about North Central GSA.
- A question was raised about an opt-in process for the newsletter and a discussion about if the emails could potentially be marked as spam. Kroening said that she and Munsell had had a back-and-forth about how to make sure the emails were not marked as spam. Hunt mentioned that the email list has about 1150 email addresses on it. The free version of MailPoet has a cost cutoff of 1000 and suggested that the emails be automatically sent to the 650 or so email addresses. The 650 email addresses were pre-loaded. Others wishing to subscribe to the newsletter announcement emails will need to opt-in and verify their email address.
- Hunt stated that the University of Minnesota conference center reservations needs to be made a year in advance; Runkel mentioned that the conference is currently at capacity and asked for clarification of the 2021 reservation dates.
- Hunt stated that total membership in 2019 was around 500, with 330 members renewed so far in 2020. Membership renewals often increase when people register for the Spring Conference as many like to do one financial transaction for registration and renewal.
- Hunt noted that MGWA web pages were upgraded to include SSL security. Users will be redirected to HTTPS versions of the webpages if they start with a non-secure page. Most MGWA web pages don't really need this added encryption, but major web browsers are starting to display scary notes for non-encrypted pages and there is a push by them to use SSL on all pages. Credit card transaction pages already use a secure connection. Steenberg noted that the webpage looks cleaned up. Hunt said that if something is old or broken to inform him.
- Steenberg asked about officer email access for the president and if it could be done for all other positions. Hunt said that this could occur. Ole Olmenson had suggested moving the website to a new service provider soon, so that could cause issues when emails need to be migrated. Pound suggested that using officer email addresses on the website would reduce spam to personal email accounts for officers and could provide continuity as new officers take over positions.

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- Baratta mentioned that emails come in about conferences and payment to her work email. Hunt mentioned that this new email address won't end phishing emails but they won't be sent to personal emails. Pound mentioned that having an officer email is good for organizing conferences and doing cold calls.
- A discussion was had with Hunt, Runkel, and Ginsbach about Google Drive access. Hunt said he would provide access.
- Steenberg brought up the newsletter content. The treasurer of the Foundation, Kara Dennis, is working on putting together the annual summary of expenses. Pound mentioned that hearing from the awards scholarship winners would be good.

### **Social Coordinator:**

- Steenberg discussed Jane de Lambert's email about social hour, which is scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 and asked the appropriate method to advertise this social hour. Steenberg suggested it could be on direct email, on the homepage, or on the Facebook page, which de Lambert updates. Hunt will wait for confirmation of method and will send out the email at that point.

### **White Paper Committee:**

- Kroening said that the chloride white paper has been prepping for external review. At the spring conference the white paper will be presented. Kroening noted that there will be three internal reviewers that will clean up and check figures in addition to three external reviewers.

### **Education Committee:**

- Pound attended the January meeting and said there were four people present. The Education Committee had a question on if they should submit their budget to the Board or Foundation – Baratta noted it should be to the Board. Hunt stated that the Foundation funds projects and does not supply operating budget.
- The second question was on the operational budget and that the groups that will want money from education committee to work on small projects. A question was asked if the Education Committee can use the existing Foundation form. Pound discussed with Cathy Udem and said that there was a desire for no new forms, as the forms have to be registered with the IRS.
- The third question was related to how field trips get funded.
- The fourth question was a proposal to the Foundation for Groundwater models in cooperation with Freshwater Society. Pound indicated that the Education Committee was developing a work plan centered around those models and noted that the models would be posted at the Freshwater Society for easy access. The workplan from the Education committee would be for developing and working on curriculum related to the models. A \$5000 operating budget, including purchase of the model was floated; Pound suggested this was high. Baratta asked if the Freshwater Society could submit a MGWA-F proposal for purchase of the models.
- Kroening asked if there used to be an educational committee; Hunt confirmed there was an Education Committee in the past and it had an active web page about 10 years ago. A well was drilled at the Science Museum on behalf of the Education Committee. After that and some other projects it dispersed. It was stated that most MGWA activities have no direct financial needs beyond occasional reimbursements. Hunt stated the identified cost items look more like project costs and not operating costs. Baratta noted that there could be fuller discussion when Leete is present. Hunt said that no other board committee uses an operating budget. Steenberg stated she would be attending the February meeting of the Educational Committee for more information.

## **Other Business:**

### **Operations Manual:**

- There is fluid content on the Google Drive. Baratta and Ellen Considine will work on fleshing out the manual and get it more finalized.

### **Conference:**

- Draft conference title is “Keeping it Clean, Protecting Groundwater in the Twin City Metro”. Conference will highlight chloride white paper. Talks will be given about PFAS (Rebecca Higgins, MPCA, and Dennis Leeke, Pace Labs) and are still looking for other topics, including an out-state discussion.

### **North Central GSA:**

- Steenberg noted that there is a conflict with North Central GSA for the planned May meeting and a tentative meeting date of Tuesday May 12<sup>th</sup> has been set.

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- Pound has submitted an application to present at North Central GSA. Cost is \$250 for a booth, one full registration, and one exhibitor-only registration. Pound will be using the full registration and will ask about an upgrade of the other registration from exhibitor to full. A discussion was had about items to give out at the booth, such as pens or something else. Fleece vests are being considered to be shown and see if people buy them – a minimum order of 24 vests is required and will cost \$504 plus shipping. Binders and tote bags are other options.

### **Meeting Adjourned: 1:12 PM.**

#### **Action Items:**

- Hunt will look into the creation of MGWA email addresses for each Board officer, as well as the transition of accounts to new officers.
- Steenberg will discuss with Leete about advertising moving forward with the new newsletter format.
- Steenberg will attend February Education Committee meeting.
- Baratta will continue to work on fleshing out the Operations Manual.
- Pound will look in to items to be displayed at the North Central GSA booth.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, February 18, 2020, 11:30am-1:00pm at Fresh Grounds Café, 1362 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul, MN