

MGWA MINUTES

Minnesota Ground Water Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Regular monthly meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 18, 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; David Crisman.

Agenda:

- Approved with no changes.
- Discussion on changing to a “consent agenda” as learned from the bootcamp - can get it in writing ahead of time.
 - Would exist as a Google Doc.
- Baratta noted that there are always spots for particular Board members in there and that you can put short updates on the agenda. Would allow for expedited processes, particularly for the Treasurer position, where the updates are always new numbers.
- Steenberg said that it would be good to try this for next month.
- Pound shared an NPR News story about non-profits with financial issues and this brought home the amount of responsibility that board members have.

Past Minutes:

- Steenberg suggested approve per changes coming.
- Ginsbach will upload the past minutes to Google Drive where comments can be made with track changes and members can make changes in the document.

Reports:

Treasurer:

- Dollar updates:
 - Total income (January to February 14) is \$13,491.94
 - Net income is \$10,861.78
 - Total assets are \$107,149.07
- Profit and loss comparison between this year and last year - down a little bit (few thousand) from last year. This is primarily due to membership dues down in the Professional categories. Student and retired numbers are higher than before.
- Steenberg, Baratta, and Hunt noted numbers tend to go up
- Baratta noted that Jeanette Leete has not shared the annual report yet. Baratta noted that there was a tentative decision made to combine financials and membership reports in a 2019 year-end article for the newsletter. Thoughts were that this had been done in the past and Baratta will follow up on this.
- Steenberg asked what this would be. Baratta and Kroening said that it would be graphics, such as a pie chart.

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- Hunt asked about a soft deadline for tasks. Kroening said that within the next week or two would be beneficial.
- Pound asked what format images should be in for posting online. Kroening said that JPEGs would work but there is a problem about white space and noted that cropping that white space is important to reduce work on the newsletter team. Kroening asked for alternative text that will go along with the images.

Secretary:

- Hunt provided information about membership numbers on a printed document which can be used for the proposed 2019 year end graphic.

Past-President:

- Registration is in for NC GSA. The “swag” has not been addressed yet but will be.
- Pound will get the boot camp and operations manual into Google Drive. Baratta noted that she and Ellen Constandine will take first attempt at editing the operations manual. Pound will share _____ with Baratta for edits.

President:

- Steenberg stated that the 2020 Darcy lecture was applied for. The lecturer will be in Illinois, possibly Minnesota and Wisconsin in mid April. Steenberg said she has not heard back about our request.
 - Reed Maxwell is the 2020 Darcy lecturer.
 - Would likely be co-sponsored with the UMN Geological Department or Water Resources Center. MGWA and co-hosts would be responsible for room and board and food.
- Minnesota Minerals Education Workshop contacted MGWA to see if MGWA would like to have a sponsorship role in summer workshop in June (23/24) in Winona. This meeting is geared mostly to mineral resources but recognize that groundwater is an important resource, especially in Winona.
- Baratta and Steenberg agreed to be part of it for an afternoon. Baratta got approved to bring a karst groundwater model to this workshop.
- Pound said it would be important to liaison with the educational committee. Steenberg said she will do that and that while she planned on attending the February meeting the group did not meet. She plans on attending the March meeting.
- Steenberg sent in a letter of support from MGWA for Josh Feinberg’s urban hydrogeology field camp.
- Pound noted that the president’s email has a series of inboxes. All of the emails from previous conferences are located in folders for each specific conference. No need to recreate the wheel - can use the effort put in place for previous conferences.
- Steenberg shared a draft version of the spring conference agenda. Pound asked if there should be a change in title to remove reference to Twin Cities. Pound, Runkel, and Baratta noted that it could be good to change to “urban” instead of “Twin Cities”.

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- Potential other speakers could be Kelton Barr (tracers), Gary Krueger/Liz Kaufenberg (general 3M), and David Fairbairn (general stormwater contamination).
- Ginsbach will follow up with Krueger/Kaufenberg/Higgins about who would present and if they would still be interested in presenting.
- Likely won't be any time for lighting talks this presentation but will want to invite abstracts for posters. Steenberg would like to continue the mentoring program. Baratta said she would be willing to help organization of that (such as find the people to be mentors)
- Hunt notes that this is a critical time for the conference. Good to have the "squishy" content filled out soon and to create a website for the conference. Can do both the second membership notice and conference mailing at the same time. Hunt would prefer this week or next week to receive conference details. If talks/presenters are mostly set, could use those or Hunt notes that can we can also show a topic or proposed talk title, even if there is no identified speaker yet. Usually have an email announcing the conference (title, topic, cost, etc). Hunt notes that draft titles are fine. Pound said when she was the President organizing a conference, she emailed folks to see if they could use a title for the time being until they are finalized. Titles and speaker bios are required for professional development credits.
- Steenberg asked if the pamphlet can be more general or if specific titles are needed. Hunt mentioned that the pamphlet can be general and more specific titles can be released later.
- Pound asks if the second paragraph on the draft conference agenda is necessary.

President-Elect:

- Steenberg states that we are not completely sure what the field trip is going to be yet. SE Minnesota was the plan but that would require an overnight stay and would increase the cost and logistics. Steenberg said that the fall conference is going to focus on SE Minnesota. She notes that the education committee is also focused on field trips and that group views field trips for non-members while Steenberg always thought that the field trips were more for members.
- Steenberg asks if a field trip was to occur this fall would it be better geared for members or non-members. Baratta stated that it would be good to focus on members right now to increase engagement. Runkel notes that non-members would be more difficult to advertise to and that it would require rethinking of discussions to education non-hydrologists.
- Baratta notes that having the opportunity to attend field trips may be a potential selling point for membership. Pound says it would be good to use this to help build memberships.
- If SE Minnesota is not on the table, Steenberg said that we could do a metro-based hydrology field trip. One day, low cost field trips. Runkel asks if attendance would be lower if it is a two day field trip. Baratta said that SE Minnesota could potentially be a one-day field trip depending on start or end times.

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- Kroening asks how long field trips were in the past. It has varied in the past, including trips up the north shore. North shore trip was a two night trip. Hunt notes that a two day trip to the SE has occurred in the past - two hours of bus rides getting there and back. He notes it is more palatable if it is two days so the day isn't half taken up by travel.
- Pound says there are good resources in cooperation with the City of St. Paul to help organize trips with non-members. She notes that these community education events could help reduce the logistics involved.

Management Team (WRI):

- Hunt said that we want to do a paper membership renewal and send out with the conference brochure. He updated the 2020 officers list on the website last night. Steenberg asks if the email addresses have been set up for the officers and if these should be posted online. Hunt notes that a president and past-president email addresses have been set up.
- Kroening asks if an editor email can be set up to forward emails to the team. Hunt said there's a username and password to log in with the webmail access site, but they can also be auto forwarded. Kroening requests that they be auto forwarded to the team.
- Hunt said there's a list on Google Drive of officers and committee members.

Newsletter:

- Kroening said that the team will be meeting on Thursday to go over documents for the March issue. She states that the team is not quite sure where it's moved from an advertisement to a sponsorship. The team wants to make sure the advertisements on the new format will not be intrusive.
- Pound asked if it was possible to have a place on the blog page to have a note that says "sponsored by" as this would make it less intrusive. Baratta asks if this could be on a side ribbon. Kroening will follow up with Anneka on this. Steenberg notes that it would be small.
- Hunt notes that we have the opportunity to create what we want to do for the advertising now. Doing away with advertising has stopped the corporate membership. He notes that a sidebar might change the formatting. Kroening states that the current information on the new newsletter includes Baratta's report, Steenberg's letter, election results, annual report, and atlas updates.
- Kroening and Hunt discussed ads. Hunt notes that while we can't use a full-page ad but can link to a corporate website or somewhere else for large advertisements. The group discussed timeliness of the advertisements and how to maintain those long-term. Kroening said she will add this discussion to the agenda for Thursday's meeting.

MGWA Foundation:

- Foundation will meet in March. Steenberg asks if Kara Dennis has committed to a newsletter update. She also requests an update for 2020 officers. Pound asks if we need a 2020 report from them and Steenberg would like to still see that report. Kroening notes that this would also help support the Foundation. Hunt thinks that there should still be a standing portion of the newsletter dedicated to the Foundation.

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- Pound asks who has provided information from the Foundation in the past. Kroening said that contacting Dennis would be the person to contact and she will follow-up on this.

Social Coordinator:

- Happy hour occurred in February and there was good attendance with a wide variety of attendees.

Education Committee:

- Steenberg says they did not meet in February but will meet in March. She has to finalize some field trip information with the group. The Education Committee sent a draft work plan. Priorities include field trip, acquiring groundwater models, etc. There is some confusion and lack of communication that will be addressed in the March meeting.

White Paper Committee:

- No updates. Out for review.

Other Business:

Groundwater Protection Act White Paper Scoping Document:

- This work group has met with two representatives: one helped pass the original Act and one worked in MDA before joining the House in 2002. Crisman stated these discussions have been helpful to getting background to help scope the document. Other references discovered include original strategy from 1980s, a 1990 William Mitchell College of Law review, and a 2000 House review of the Act implementation. The House review author is interested in meeting with the work group.
- Crisman said the House review process will be followed for this historical review. How the forward-looking review will progress is undetermined - focus is mostly on climate change. The outcome of the forward review will be to study in this white paper or to push out recommendations for other white paper topics to study.
- Crisman says the topics pool is limited right now - only four topics. They tend to be either too narrow or too broad.
- Crisman notes that the GW Protection Act is a significant piece of legislation and the group has been reluctant to narrow down the 10 Articles or focus on specific portions of the Act. Crisman says that he will be focused on making sure that the process continues to move smoothly and does not get stuck in any rabbit holes.
- Pound said her review identified those similar issues, such if this was too broad of a topic. She notes that she likes it because of threading the needle in the review and will provide her specific comments.
- Crisman said that this paper is most akin to the drain tile report and that group needed to work through some difficult issues. Pound said she would be comfortable to have a statement about making sure this report is apolitical.
- Pound and Crisman discussed if the expertise on the work group will drive the report. Work group is made up of three retirees who will likely focus on historic review and three non-retired members will focus on the future. An objective will be added about working within the group's collective expertise. Pound asks what data will be used for the climate change portion and stresses that the data choices should be absolutely clear. Crisman said the climate office is comfortable with saying that there are wetter conditions and warmer winters, and that this is the focus of the Scope document.

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- Crisman said there was some talk about bringing in a retired climatologist to investigate further trends. Any change of scope would be based on clear trends with good probability. The objective is to identify those trends certain for Minnesota and have an impact on groundwater.
- Pound has a comment about what needs to be done in terms of communicating with the public and legislature. This will also help the Education Committee.
- Crisman wrote a new document to launch work groups covering administrative details and outputs, including Education's needs. A white paper is just one output of a workgroup - also needs a PowerPoint for a technical audience and a PowerPoint for a general Minnesota. The white paper audience is for legislators, NGOs in the water space, and agency management. The work group is considering if a communication plan would be valuable at the end of the project.
- Pound had a comment about a timeline and said it would be good to have a more detailed timeline. This is helpful for the workgroup. Pound asks if it is beneficial to be specific in comments; Crisman said yes and he will add an executive summary at the beginning of the document and incorporate other comments. Kroening and Baratta mentions this could be helpful to keep focus.
- There is a steps document for white paper development that says the board has to approve the document.
- Baratta moves to move the document to the scoping phase with edits; Pound seconds. All voting members vote in favor.
- Steenberg said the next step might be going on to a timeline; Pound says that it might be good to have a statement about what is in and what is out. Crisman will send a summary of the act to MGWA board members. White Paper Committee will meet in early March to discuss the Spring Conference presentation: chloride White Paper, groundwater protection act white paper, and see what new topics are going to be brought up.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:10 PM.

Action Items:

- Pound will work on getting operations manual into Google Drive.
- Baratta will work on edits to the operations manual.
- Baratta will look into combining financials and membership reports..
- Steenberg will attend March meeting for educational committee.
- Ginsbach will reach out to MPCA employees about east metro water supply plan presentation for spring conference.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, March 17, 2020, 11:30am-1:00pm at Fresh Grounds Café, 1362 West 7th Street, St. Paul, MN