

# MGWA MINUTES

Minnesota Ground Water Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Special meeting

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020**

**Location:**

- Meeting was called to order at 12:02 PM. The meeting was held as an online Zoom Meeting

**Attendance:**

- Kate Pound, Past-President; Julia Steenberg, President; Tony Runkel, President-Elect; Vanessa Baratta, Treasurer; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Sean Hunt, Management; Jennie Leete, Management
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**Conference Planning:**

- Steenberg has a question about the cost for attending a virtual conference. Hunt mentions that costs are going to be different for an online versus an in-person meeting. There would be no facility rental fees or charges for food or beverage. Hunt mentions that the online conference fees would depend on how the conference is held.
- Hunt mentions the lower the price is, the lower the cost is to process a small fee and there becomes a point where it is not worth the cost to charge a fee.
- Pound says that there is something psychological about paying a fee, especially regarding attendance - a small fee can make people more likely to commit to attending. Both Pound and Hunt say that attendance may be harder to count without a fee.
- Baratta proposes that if a fee is charged there should be scaling like before regarding membership status. This can make sure membership numbers don't drop off, as discounts on the conference are a major perk of the conference.
- Leete mentions that there is a policy that MGWA will charge a certain rate and how they will be proportioned. A student will have to pay half of what the meeting costs are. A professional is supposed to pay as much as dues. This was done so that people would be encouraged to pay their dues. Leete mentions that there has always been \$50 added to the membership fee so that paying the membership fee and conference attendance is less than a non-member attending the conference.
- Steenberg mentions that her overall objective is to raise some money for MGWA. She asks how much of her ticket goes to paying for the conference and how much is profit for MGWA. Leete mentions that once they break even (minimum for room and refreshment services and \$7000 for a conference) it's about \$75 per attendee.
- Hunt mentions that the complete meeting plan includes the costs with some extras.
- Steenberg asks how much money is deposited into the bank account after a conference. Leete mentions \$25,000 to \$30,000. Baratta mentions the fall net income was \$12,000.
- Steenberg says the things to think about are the schedule, how to engage conference attendees, the cost aspect, and the details of how the conference will be run (including platform).

**Schedule**

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- If the conference topic is kept the same as the proposed spring conference, 7 talks were before lunch and 4 talks were after lunch.
- Steenberg asks if it would be good to keep the same schedule as the in-person conference for a virtual conference would be good.
- Baratta mentions that it might be nice to split the conference into two days, as one day is a lot of screen time. Hunt says that an article he was reading says breaking up a full day conference into two days is a good option. Steenberg agrees that a full day might be a bit daunting.
- Steenberg mentions that there should be no additional costs for a multiple day conference, as the software is on a monthly fee.
- Pound says that one of the challenges of having the conference virtually is trying to create the in-person presence in a virtual meeting. Pound says that instead of breaks, could be another version of the trivia.
- Steenberg mentions that in terms of engagement it's easy to shy away from breakout groups but the more that can be done the better.
- Ginsbach mentions that a Q&A session or poster session might be more engaging than trivia during the middle of the conference.
- Pound said that there were two ways to ask a questions: they could send a question via the chat, which would then be asked by the moderator (and the moderator would unmute the question asker and the presenter to discuss); the other way would be the question asker would put their hand up and the moderator would unmute the question asker.
- Hunt asked if there were any problems with having too many people asking questions. Pound says yes and that was why it was important to have multiple moderators.
- Baratta asks how many people were in the sessions. Pound says that there were about 50 people in the session.
- Baratta noted that an issue with a shortened day with concurrent sessions might impact professional development hours. Steenberg says that a two day window seems appealing - having the talks in the morning and the afternoon filled with other events that might not normally be possible during a regular session.
- Hunt mentions that pre-recorded video talks could be posted on a website. Steenberg says that this could impact the cost benefit. Leete mentions that putting the videos behind a password might be beneficial. Steenberg also mentions that any more interactive afternoon sessions might be a draw to attend the conference.
- Runkel mentions that the professional seminars he's attended lately have been much more expensive than \$50.

### Platform

- Runkel said that technologically recording a talk is relatively easy. Hunt says there's an option in PowerPoint to record slideshow. Baratta mentions that she has used it and it's very easy. Hunt mentions that it embeds everything into the PowerPoint. Sean says that he could help guide someone using this. Runkel mentions that he gave a presentation using Zoom and it was easy to use.
- Baratta asks if we know which type of software will be used.
- Steenberg mentioned there is GoToWebinar (including Confex) which has a monthly fee associated with it. Prices are approximately \$300 a month for a 500 person conference. Zoom could also be an option. Steenberg mentions that the University of Minnesota has options for video conferences. Steenberg says that she will look into these options.

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- Leete says that Steenberg should make sure to mention that the meeting will be used as a fundraiser event. Hunt mentions that Zoom has an option for 500 users at \$65 a month per host.
- Steenberg mentions that the Zoom meeting says that audio privileges may only be for the co-hosts - she will look into this more. Baratta mentions this might be okay if attendees can be rapidly made co-hosts to allow their audio.
- Steenberg's next plan of attack is to get in contact with the speakers to let her know if they can or want to be part of a virtual conference. The Board also has to determine if the meeting will be one or two days. The original date for the conference was November 12 but Hunt mentions that we are able to pick any day now that there is no conference venue registration. The Board discussed a two day event being on Thursday, November 12 and Friday, November 13.
- Pound says that the presenters could have a pre-recorded presentation but would still need to be present for the Q&A.
- Steenberg asked how long each presentation should be. The scheduled talks were 20 to 45 minutes long for the in-person conference. Steenberg will talk to the presenters to determine how long they would want to talk.

### **Letter of Support**

- Runkel and Steenberg asked if MGWA could give a support letter for Peter Kang's proposal that includes an outreach proposal. The outreach proposal includes bringing state agencies, academic groups, and industry together to better communicate about fractured rock hydrogeology.
- Pound says that this could be voted on by the board but the president has jurisdiction to do things like this. Steenberg says she will give Kang the letter of support.

**Meeting Adjourned at 1:12 pm.**