

# MGWA MINUTES

Minnesota Ground Water Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Regular monthly meeting

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

**Location:**

- Meeting was called to order at 11:37 AM. The meeting was held as an online Zoom Meeting

**Attendance:**

- Julia Steenberg, Past-President; Tony Runkel, President; Jeré Mohr, President-Elect; Vanessa Baratta, Treasurer; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Sean Hunt, Management; Jennie Leete, Management; Cathy Udem, Education Committee

**Agenda:**

- Cathy Udem from the Education will join at noon and will provide an update.

**Past Minutes:**

- Approved.

**Reports:**

**Treasurer:**

- Baratta said that as of yesterday, total income is \$33,143.41, net income is \$21,832.33 total assets are \$114,292.94. Baratta noted that final numbers from last year were submitted so a report on last year can be prepared.

**Management (WRI):**

- Hunt said that the main activities were the conference. There are 437 members currently and Hunt has placed an updated summary report on the Google Drive. Hunt notes that there are very few renewals for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- Hunt said that Runkel sent a note on the website. Hunt said there is a certain module that's causing an error on the website that has caused the website to go down. Hunt will let Ole Olmanson know there is a problem. Hunt said only the web part of the webpage is down - he is still able to access files and online orders.
- Leete was wondering about speaker gifts from the spring meeting and notes that we have not done this yet. Runkel said this is on him and wanted to discuss it. Leete said that she just needs to know if the speakers want a padfolio or an MGWA bag and will send it. Runkel will email the speakers. Steenberg notes that Runkel will need to ask for the mailing address for the gifts to be delivered.
- Runkel said that Crystal Ng, one of the speakers, emailed ahead of the last meeting regarding membership. Runkel said that the path Crystal Ng followed ended up on a page requiring mailing a check or stopping in the MGWA office to become a member. Runkel

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asked if there was a way to clarify the path to become a member. Hunt notes there is a place that links to a paper membership form - Runkel notes that this is the path Crystal Ng must have taken. Hunt notes there are no walk-in hours at the MGWA Office. Steenberg said that we might want to update this once the website is back up.

### Newsletter:

- No Newsletter members were in attendance.

### Foundation:

- Steenberg said there are no Foundation updates and the Foundation will not meet until noon.

### Education Committee:

- Runkel said that Jeff Stoner called Runkel about the possibility of MGWA offering hats. Runkel said that Jeff Stoner's line of questioning was for MNWOO volunteers so they were identified as "official" when collecting samples.
- Runkel said that Jeff Stoner said it would be nice if the volunteers could get them for free but members could purchase them as well.
- Leete will investigate this and notes it's the easiest apparel item to produce as there are no sizes.
- Udem said she is not sure off the top of her head how many volunteers there are for MNWOO. Udem notes that there are MGWA members working on the MNWOO process but there are non-members as well. Udem noted that there were 14 members at one point but there may be up to 20 now.
- Udem said that MNWOO participated in the first water clinic in southeast Minnesota. Udem said there were 9 volunteers and 300 water samples. Udem said it was ultimately successful but they may need to update their number of volunteers - 300 water samples are a lot to process by 9 people.
- Udem said a lot of the discussion was about "lessons learned" and documenting outreach. Udem said that there will be a variety of factsheets and tools that could be implemented in other places.
- Udem said there will be another clinic in the central area of Minnesota and that this will be a little different target for who and what from the water samples. Udem said that the volunteers were surprised by the containers the water samples were submitted in and that there could be improvements in communicating how to transport their sample.
- Udem said there will be more guidance and updates by the end of the summer.
- Udem provided an update on the science teaching standards. Udem noted that the group has an acronym but does not remember what they are. Udem said that it would be useful to come up with a fact sheet or document to put on the website to offer up as a marketing tool and resource for the teachers. The workshops this summer will be all digital so Udem said that an idea was to create an MGWA business card with contacts, logo, and directions to the website. This link could include information about membership/expertise/resources/tools and other things that teachers would be looking for in helping to teach new science standards about groundwater. Udem asked what the board's thoughts were about this. In addition, Udem mentioned there are questions about how to create list of experts to speak to classes or teachers
- Udem said the Education Committee suggested that MGWA offered an ethics class for another avenue of training. Udem listed out options and arenas for offering an ethics session. Udem said that they would be interested in assisting putting a training together and attending it.

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- Steenberg said this conversation stemmed from the DEI Committee meeting last month. Steenberg said it would be a great way to raise money for the DEI Committee. Steenberg said that this sounded like a good approach. Steenberg said MGWA gets a number of emails each year inquiring about ethics training. Steenberg said that this winter or early next spring would be a good time to offer this training to the MGWA members. Steenberg said that she is hoping the DEI Committee leads the charge on this. Udem said that this has the Education Committee's support. Udem said that because renewal for professional licensure is next June the proposed training schedule of winter or spring is good.
- Udem said there might be a chance to draw in more membership other than members looking for professional credits by gearing a training towards water or groundwater by looking at a bigger, broader topic.
- Runkel said he liked having a link to resources for K-12 teachers to use and having a list of experts to draw on. Runkel suggested using the newsletter to solicit volunteers. Udem said that they could use a spreadsheet or some other method to list their expertise. Udem said that participation is not always guaranteed on surveys but direct requests get better responses. Udem asked what the insights could be to move from passive to active and giving something to the organization from the membership.
- Steenberg said that this is a great idea and puts in focus what the Education Committee is for. Steenberg said that maybe the Education Committee portion of the website could be better and perhaps it could relate to the portal idea - provide resources not just to the professionals in the field but also to the public. Steenberg said this is about getting members and people involved.
- Udem asked what the organization wants in regards and notes there are a lot of members who only want to get something from the organization and not give something to the organization. Udem asked if there was a way to regenerate the list of past members and suggests maybe creating a more outward thinking vibrant organization may help. Udem asked for any insight or questions that could be given to the Education Committee.
- Steenberg said that she it could be worthwhile to ask a teacher what they need. Mohr agreed - asking a teaching might help focus on what they would need.
- Baratta noted that there are a lot of retirements in the industry right now and it may be a pertinent time to reach out to membership to see who is able to help with topics such as this. Baratta asked if the groundwater models went through with Freshwater. Steenberg said no. Steenberg mentioned that there had been discussions about purchasing groundwater models - Baratta said that the company that produces these models is very difficult to get in contact with. Steenberg and Baratta said there were questions on the price of the models. Steenberg said that Kate Pound thought it would be good to purchase the model for MGWA to have on hand for teachers to borrow. Steenberg said that the idea with partnering with Freshwater would be to have Freshwater store and maintain the model and help with getting the model to teachers.
- Baratta noted that the portal might not be moving forward but there might be a new whitepaper similar to that moving forward. Baratta said that the end product might end up being similar to the portal.

### **Other Business:**

#### **Spring Conference Outcome and Planning for Fall Conference**

- Steenberg said that she will reduce the resolution on a video to upload to the website. Hunt notes that there have been errors from uploading videos related to file size.

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- Runkel said that he noticed Hunt had posted the survey and that it seemed like the conference went well. Runkel said there were a lot of nice comments and suggestions on future conference topics. Runkel wanted to thank everyone for their help on the conference.
- Runkel wanted to get comments on when the fall conference should be. Runkel asked what the constraints on the dates for the conference are. Hunt said it was availability based on the conference center. Runkel said that he is planning on an in-person conference and asked for input.
- Leete said that we might still have a possible booking - Hunt suggested to check in with the university. Leete said that we had to book a venue two years in advance but suggested we might not have any additional bookings after that. Runkel asked if he should follow up with the University of Minnesota as to their plans about a conference in November. Leete sent an email.
- Hunt said that there were a number of web links sent by the speakers and there were other web links in each talk. Hunt said there was a comment asking if this could be accumulated and stored on the website. Hunt said it would be good to ask the speakers what other resources could be shared.
- Steenberg said she hasn't seen GSA or other group emails about planning fall events in-person. Runkel said he was based on the University opening more recently but has not looked in to what other conferences are doing.
- Steenberg said that there were a number of positive comments about the virtual conference and asked about the potential for a hybrid meeting in the future. Steenberg asked about the path forward.
- Runkel said there was a feeling from folks outside the metro to have either a hybrid or alternating in-person and hybrid events.
- Leete said that alternating is much easier than hybrid. Baratta said that there could be an option to increase social options for virtual events in the future.
- Runkel said he has not committed to a topic in the fall. Runkel is considering southeast Minnesota and adjacent parts of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. Runkel is concerned that potential attendees may not want to attend due to the regional nature of the talk. Steenberg said there was some pushback on using location-specific terms in the title talk and suggested calling it "rural" or something similar. Steenberg said it gets brought up frequently.
- Mohr said that he would find it interesting even though he doesn't work in that same region and that he could find something applicable to his work.
- Leete said that North Central GSA in Cincinnati will be held in person in April 2022.

### Other Business:

- Runkel said that Jen McDonald is the new social coordinator.

### Meeting Adjourned: 12:45 PM.

### Action Items:

- None.

### Next Meeting:

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- The next meeting is potentially June 21. Runkel will check and let the Board know.