

MGWA MINUTES

Minnesota Ground Water Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Regular monthly meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Location:

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

Attendance:

- Tony Runkel, Past-President; Jeré Mohr, President; Sandeep Burman, President-Elect; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Vanessa Baratta, Treasurer; Sheri Kroening, Newsletter; Sean Hunt, Management

Agenda:

- No changes to agenda.

Past Minutes:

- No changes to previous minutes, Mohr moved to approve the minutes, Baratta seconded the motion. Minutes approved.

Reports:

Treasurer:

- Baratta said that total income is \$13,161.01, net income is \$12,704.13, total assets are \$114,219.44. Baratta noted that total income is all dues at this point and that none of the expenses for Hunt or Leete have been included yet.
- Baratta said that she will be providing the past two years worth of numbers to Kroening for publication in the newsletter.
- Baratta passes along a message from Leete that the taxes may be filed electronically in the future.

Management (WRI):

- Hunt said that information updates to the website can be accomplished by letting Hunt know what needs to be updated. Hunt also clarified with Runkel that certificates for previous presidents should be signed by the current president.
- Hunt said that we currently have 300 members and memberships have dropped off. Hunt has printed 366 renewal notices and will include these mailings with the conference notices.

Newsletter:

- Kroening notes that the team met last week and they are working on finalizing the rest of the posts. Kroening said the pending posts include information about the DEI program, new MPCA commissioner, and Jeff Stoner's water well information.
- Email will be sent out in the next week or two with new articles.

Foundation Committee:

- Runkel attended the Foundation Committee last week. Runkel notes the Foundation Committee will be giving out five scholarships this year. Runkel said there was a moving

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letter from one of the applicants that lead the Committee to discuss what criteria will be considered in awarding scholarships.

- Runkel said the Committee will meet with the DEI Committee moving forward. There may be an additional DEI scholarship awarded in the future.
- Runkel said there are always business updates from the Foundaton during the conference. Runkel asked Mohr if he woud be amenable to having the winners of the scholarships give a quick message during the meeting. Mohr said this is a great idea.
- Kroening asked Runkel if the scholarship winner should be published in the newsletter. Runkel said yes and told Kroening to ask Steenberg for more information.
- Hunt notes that there is an expectation that the scholarship winners will be invited to the conference.
- Baratta makes a motion to invite the scholarship winners to attend the conference free of charge; Runkel seconds. All in favor, none opposed; motion passed.

Education Committee:

- Runkel attended the Education Committee meeting a week or so ago. Runkel said the Education Committee would like to present at the conference about a letter they are developing. Runkel asked Mohr if they have reached out to him and Mohr said they have not.
- Runkel provides clarification on the letter, which isa letter that will go to the Education Subcommittee in the legislature. This letter urges support for stronger science standards in K-12 education, in particular in groundwater standards. Runkel said that it may be worthwhile to poll membership or collect comments about the letter at the next conference.
- Runkel said that someone from the Education Committee will attend a Board meeting with a draft of the letter for the Board to review.
- Mohr had discussed this with an Education Committee member in the past but has not heard from them recently.
- Runkel asks Hunt if there has been anything like this in the past where the Board endorses or provides a letter on official letterhead. Hunt said he is not aware but it is possible that we can take a position on something like this if desired.

White Paper Committee:

- Mohr said there is nothing new since our last discussion and the Groundwater Protection Act is in review. Mohr said that Crisman will reach out when the paper is ready for additional review. Mohr also said that he will bring up the next white paper, as presented by Trost during the last meeting, at the conference.
- Mohr notes that while it might be out of their hands it would be nice to be able to present the Groundwater Protection Act white paper at the conference.

Spring Conference Planning:

- Mohr said the speaker list is coming together. As of this morning, there were nine committed speakers and a tenth speaker may have just confirmed during this board meeting
- Mohr provided Hunt with the titles and names of the nine confirmed speakers yesterday. Mohr asked Hunt to let him know if there is anything else necessary to start work on the website and brochure.
- Hunt is working on updating the brochure and website, printing the brochures, mailing the brochures, emailing the mailing list when the website is updated, and making sure the

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registration process is working on the websites. Hunt notes that there are a lot of pieces to get ready for this.

- Hunt asked if we will keep all of the parameters for the conference the same as the past conference (ie timing of things). Mohr confirmed that this is the case.
- Hunt said that the deliverables provided on the day of the conference are agenda, speaker abstracts, speaker biographies, and conference evaluation form.
- Mohr said he will be working the next week or two to finalize things such as the order of speakers and timings of everything. Mohr asks where he could find examples of the abstracts and bios; Hunt said they are on the Google Drive and on the website.
- Hunt asks if it would be possible to use the MGS's Zoom account again to host the conference as has been done in the past.
- Mohr said that as a backup it may be possible to use Barr's Microsoft Teams account to host the conference.
- Runkel will check and confirm that it will be possible to use the MGS's Zoom account to host the meeting.
- Mohr asks if there are volunteers to help with questions and answers. Baratta confirms that she is.
- Baratta asks if Mohr is comfortable with having the next monthly meeting a week before the conference. Mohr confirms that we can use that meeting as a dry run and that should be good.
- Hunt notes that he will be out of state for the first part of April but may be back on the day of the next meeting. Mohr notes that the next meeting is on April 19 and Hunt said he will be back on April 12.
- Mohr said that he expects most of the speakers will be live but there may be some recorded speeches. In particular, Mohr notes that a presentation from Seaberg from DNR will be pre-recorded as this is a longer talk and he is not able to attend the conference.
- Mohr asks if there is any way to include the networking piecen of the meetings. Mohr suggests that we could potentially use breakout rooms over the lunch period to bring in more human interaction to the meeting. Mohr and Runkel are not sure how to run breakout rooms. Runkel has participated in a number of breakout rooms and but notes that it has been somewhat of a mixed bag in his experience. Runkel notes that there's no harm in it.
- Baratta said that it may be difficult to have an opt-in or opt-out for the breakout rooms and it might end up in a situation where the breakout rooms may be empty or not well attended.
- Runkel thinks Zoom may ask if you want to join a breakout room or not and that could help make sure that people who don't want to attend the breakout room do not join.
- Kroening brings up an ice breaker from a recent trivia event where a picture was put on the screen and asked attendees to write what they saw. She notes that this was a good way to get people talking.
- Baratta suggests that having a couple prompts, such as crazy field work experiences, may help improve conversations. Kroening agrees and suggests such prompts as what items have you lost down a well or if you have been in an accident with a field vehicle.
- Baratta said that it would be good to see how much work it would be to facilitate the breakout group with prompts. Kroening said she has seen other situations where attendees have been randomly assigned or where the attendees could choose specific

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topics that interest them. Mohr said he leans towards randomized groups to keep the size of the groups more even.

- Mohr asks who would know the most about Zoom to find out if these are possible; Baratta suggests leaning on Runkel or if Runkel could reach out to Steenberg. Runkel said he could work with Steenberg to attempt this.
- Mohr said that if there is an easy way to do it he is in favor of trying it. Runkel will reach out to Steenberg and Retzler to attempt this. Baratta said she will be able to help as someone outside of the Zoom environment.
- Runkel asks if there is a hole in the seven provinces of Minnesota for the conference. Mohr said he does not have much for south central Minnesota but does have a southwest Minnesota speaker. Runkel asks if Mohr needs any help lining up speakers.
- Mohr shared the current list of speakers for the spring conference. Mohr notes we have pretty good coverage from across the state. Baratta said that her contact from the state of South Dakota did not respond.
- Hunt said he may have an idea for the south central topic - there is a planning group for users of the Mt Simon aquifer in the Mankato area. Hunt will get some names for Mohr to reach out to.
- Runkel asks Mohr if there is room for another presentation. Mohr thinks so but will evaluate the agenda.
- Runkel said that he found a discussion about Mankato's blending of groundwater and surface water related to the Mt Simon, nitrate, and potentially radium. Runkel said that a member of Burman's group at MDH may be a good contact for topics related to Mankato.
- Mohr said he will work on getting the timing figured out and will let the group know if there is room for another talk.
- Burman said if there is a need for south central or Mankato topics he would be able to provide it as Mankato has a municipal supply with a Ranney collector well. Burman said that if there is room or if another topic falls through he will be able to see if he can find a speaker on the Mankato public water supply.

Social Committee:

- Baratta notes that the social coordinator has left the MGS and asks if there is anything moving forward to replace that position. Runkel said he will give it some thought. Runkel notes that a precious social coordinator was not able to find someone to take over the position.
- Mohr asked Kroening if there was a post in the newsletter about this. Kroening confirmed that it was posted on the news blog.
- Baratta said that an event usually occurs shortly after the spring conference so it is good timing to have this discussion. She asks if it would be good to start planning for a happy hour in May.
- Runkel agrees it is a good idea but it is difficult to find someone for this position

Future Board Meeting:

- Mohr said that the virtual board meeting works but it would be good to have at least one in-person board meeting this year.
- Baratta asks if this would be in the Twin Cities or if it would be somewhere else. Mohr notes that it would be when he is in the metro.

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- Baratta suggests watching the calendar to see if an existing board meeting spot could work for an in-person meeting. Mohr will evaluate his schedule and propose a date for an in-person board meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:30 PM.

Action Items:

- None at this time.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 11:30 am on Teams.