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Minnesota Ground Water Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Regular monthly meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Location:

- Meeting was called to order at 11:35 AM. The meeting was held as an online Teams meeting.

Attendance:

- Jeré Mohr, Past-President; Sandeep Burman, President; Rebecca Higgins, President-Elect; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Eric Bunge, Treasurer; Sherri Kroening, Newsletter; Sean Hunt, Management; Jennie Leete, Management

Agenda:

- No changes.

Review of Operations Manual:

- Question to Hunt: Are there particular areas of the manual to draw attention to? Good to go over overall responsibilities of each board member position - keep as a to do item.
- Burman is having trouble accessing the operations manual in Google Drive. Hunt will set up refreshed access. Review leadership responsibilities section of manual.
- Bunge suggested updating Current Roles and Standing Committees within the MGWA section would be an appropriate task to accomplish today. The board proceeds to collaborate on the document by updating the names and specifying their professional organization.
- Kroening asks if the advertising coordinator role is going away.
- Higgins asks if the fact that she is on both the Board and on the white paper committee is a conflict? Sean - No, the only limitation should be availability. Sandeep - For most committees, we have a liaison that reports to the board. Should we designate a point of contact on the board to stay in touch with the committees? Request quarterly updates/reports from each committee to the board? Sandeep could check in with committee leads before board meetings each month as a best practice. Eric - Committee leads are good about reaching out to the board if they have business to bring to the board. State Mapping Advisory Committee - John Clark is listed in this role - would be good to check in with John for an update. Sandeep will discuss this role with Tony and consider a future agenda item to discuss the relationship between MGWA and MGS on mapping.
- Higgins and Burman suggest that the review of the operations manual should be an on-going topic of discussion. Burman said that the Board reviewed the section on Responsibilities of the Board of Directors for the March meeting.

Strategies on Increasing Membership:

- Burman notes that this may be a standing action item going forward and suggests that while some of the drops were COVID-related it is a good time to revisit this issue now to ensure that we continue to try and improve the membership numbers.

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- Higgins states that there would be some value in focusing on early career professionals given the unique situations that have been involved in the past few years and that this is a topic of interest in other groups that she is involved with, such as ITRC. Kroening notes that it seems like a lot of members join only to get a discount on the conference.
- Burman echoes that focus on early career professionals is important in other groups that he is involved in and notes that as part of recruiting and training MDH provides an introduction to these groups. Burman said that as new employees appreciate the information about the professional groups as they might not be aware of them prior to joining MDH, especially as incoming staff who are virtual-only come on board.
- In addition to early career professionals, Burman suggests that the Board could focus on previous members who may have dropped their membership during COVID. Burman also suggests drafting a fact sheet to inform employers about the benefits of MGWA membership.
- Bunge suggests reaching out to groups at universities to get interest in MGWA even before they are professionals. Higgins agrees and asks what sort of networking opportunities are out there as it stands now. Bunge notes that this would be a good idea for a social coordinator.
- Kroening suggests including information about the benefits of membership to the universities when the board shares the information about the scholarships. Burman said that there is a real hunger from both undergrad and graduate staff at the University of Minnesota to learn about the professional world. Burman said that there is an advisory board meeting that he will attend for the U of M and will bring up this topic with that group. Burman said that it might be good for board members to reach out to their alma maters to try and encourage interest.
- Higgins asks if there are any Listservers or email lists for students at universities for all of the hydrologists and geologists. Higgins also suggests that it might be good to follow up and survey our membership to see how they prefer to be contacted and which ways they would like to engage. She suggests that a listening session or a live survey at an in-person meeting might be beneficial to get the membership's perspective on how to engage the current members and find a way to increase the membership. Higgins notes that many of the younger generations (early career professionals and students) have differing experiences and preferred methods of communication and that reaching out to them would be beneficial. Higgins noted that the field opportunities were really interesting to newer members.
- Bunge suggests trying to get contact information for the presidents of the clubs at the universities to try to get the ball rolling about reaching out to these groups and trying to figure out how to improve membership.
- Kroening reminded the board that at previous in-person meetings there was a mentorship lunch and that starting these events back up again might provide an opportunity to get this feedback.
- Higgins notes that there have been many changes to the industry in recent years, including acquisitions of consulting firms, and that how hydrology looks today might be much different than how it looked in the past.
- Burman suggests that it would be worthwhile to flesh out some of these ideas during the next meeting - perhaps a more concrete plan to connect to the university groups and development of a survey to the current memberships. Burman also suggests that it might

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be interesting to invite some university staff as representative stakeholders to get their perspective and insight.

- Higgins notes that it would have been great to have information as an early career professional on all of the various professional organizations that exist, including a particular focus on MGWA to increase our membership. Burman says that this could be something that could be built into a presentation or orientation. He notes that the state agencies do this for the associations and groups that the state agencies are part of.

Spring Conference Planning:

- Burman will circle back with Tony Runkel to ensure that the MGS's Zoom account will be accessible for the meeting. Burman said that he put out a call for presentations and systems prior to leaving the country and has a lot of interest. He notes that he could potentially have enough potential presentations for multiple meetings.
- Burman asks Hunt what the next steps should be and what sort of timeframe is required to ensure that the meeting keeps on track. Hunt said that the skeleton of the website is up and the save the date email has been sent. Hunt said the next pieces needed are specific speakers and talk titles. Once those are submitted, there is enough information to release more information about what they are trying to do. He notes that this would be good to send out about two months before the conference starts. With a date of April 28th, the notice should be sent by the end of the month.
- Hunt said the costs are projected to be \$60 for members, \$80 for non-members, and \$20 for retired members and students.
- Burman said that he will try to get the information to Hunt as soon as possible to ensure that the agenda can be completed soon. Burman notes that he is meeting with a few prospective speakers later this week and is focused on having a mix of speakers. He said that he is hoping to have a wide geographic distribution of speakers and have a mix of both operators, state staff, and other people who work on specific systems.
- Burman and Hunt that once about half of the speakers are identified and that the general topics are agreed upon there can be an update sent to the membership and that the final details can be filled in as soon as they are available.
- Burman asks Hunt what else needs to be done to keep things on track. Hunt notes that the agenda will need to be sent out but cannot be sent until the talks are finalized. Hunt said that for the virtual meetings he usually emails everyone the link to the conference about a week prior to the meeting to ensure that the meeting does not get lost. Hunt will keep updates on the Google Drive so Board members can keep track of how things are progressing.
- Mohr suggests that a practice meeting should be scheduled prior to the actual conference and suggests that it be after the next board meeting. Burman asks if it was just with the Board members and Mohr confirmed that this was the case.

Reports:

Treasurer:

- Bunge said for 2022 the total income was \$65,543.89, net income was \$8,098.64, and total assets were \$112,763.92. The balance sheet as of today has total assets at \$122,117.69.

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- Burman asks if this is typical. Leete confirmed that aside from low membership it is.

Management (WRI):

- Hunt said that it has been relatively quiet aside from the save-the-date email and making minor website updates as needed. Hunt said there are about 50 more members since last time and that while the graph is still dipping down, it is less steep than last time.
- Leete said that much of the work that needs to be done prior to doing taxes is complete. She notes that she and Hunt have added their final bills to the books for 2022.
- Higgins asks when the last time the website was refreshed. Hunt said that it was 2015 or 2016 and will check. Leete said that a consultant was hired to move the website into Wordpress.
- Higgins asked if there have been any discussions about the potential of refreshing the website to try and keep current and improve the membership. She notes that people have different expectations for a website than they did ten years ago.
- Leete said that previous revisions have been driven by specific events such as hiding the member directories and moving the newsletter from a newsletter format to the web format. Higgins suggests that refreshing the look might be beneficial to encourage new members. Leete suggests that a website redesign would need to offer something new as part of a redesign.

Newsletter:

- Kroening said the newsletter team met last week and will continue to get the materials ready for the March newsletter release. Kroening said that the newsletter team will have to decide how to archive the posts and this could be a good discussion of the website.

White Paper Committee:

- No updates.

Education Committee:

- No updates.

Foundation:

- Mohr reported the Foundation has not yet met in 2023 but will be meeting on March 8th. Mohr plans to attend and will provide an update after.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:00 pm.

Action Items:

- Burman will follow up with Runkel regarding the Zoom account for the spring conference.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be held on March 21, 2023 at 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on Teams.