

# MGWA MINUTES

Minnesota Ground Water Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Special session

**Meeting Date: Friday, May 12, 2023**

**Location:**

- Meeting was called to order at 11:07 AM. The meeting was held as an online Teams meeting.

**Attendance:**

- Jere Mohr, Past President; Sandeep Burman, President; Rebecca Higgins, President-Elect; Michael Ginsbach, Secretary; Eric Bunge, Treasurer; Sean Hunt, Management; Sherri Kroening, Newsletter; Jeff Stoner, Minne

**Agenda:**

- Burman informed the group that this is a special meeting to discuss Stoner's request to represent the MGWA as an environmental organization on the Clean Water Council.

**Board Discussion with Jeff Stoner:**

- The board introduced themselves to Stoner, followed by Stoner introducing himself to the group.
- Stoner let the board that he does not have any affiliation with any group other than MGWA to use as an organizational representation for the Clean Water Council. Stoner notes that the CWC is an interesting group that has representatives from all state agencies who are non-voting members with the citizens being the voting members.
- Stoner notes that he is fully retired but has been involved with MGWA since the second year of the organization and continues to be involved with the education committee.
- Burman opens the discussion up to the board members to ask questions to Stoner.
- Higgins asked what the scope of the advisory position would be - what type of advice would it be? is it a consultation on what they need to know to make informed decisions?
  - Stoner confirmed what Higgins said. Stoner said there are two subcommittees - a budget and a policy subcommittee. Stoner said that CWC advises on millions of dollars of funding and covers the entirety of the state of Minnesota. Stoner said that this is a governor appointed position and will need to reach out to Governor Walz as part of the application process.
- Higgins asked that as Stoner is retired does he feel like he can accurately represent MGWA's interests on the CWC.

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- Stoner noted that he is on the Education Committee and feels very strongly about educating the people of Minnesota about water. Stoner said that the only potential conflict of interest he may have is anything related to the USGS, his past employer. He notes that MGWA does not do much advocacy aside from education, promotion, and having continuing education opportunities for groundwater professionals in Minnesota.
- Burman asked how Stoner would put in place some mechanism to get feedback from the Board or MGWA at-large for positions or questions from the CWC. Burman notes that Stoner is not serving as a mouthpiece for MGWA but is representing the group.
  - Stoner said that if he had questions about policy or other things that appear a bit “sticky” he would send an email to the MGWA president for input. Stoner said that he hopes the board would be able to react via email without having to wait for a full board meeting. Stoner asked if this was an acceptable answer.
  - Burman noted that he asked for his own information, as he attends the CWC meetings as part of his job requirements. Burman was interested as the MGWA membership is varied and was wondering how he could accurately represent the entire membership.
  - Stoner said that he represents himself as an experienced hydrogeologist in Minnesota. He notes that there is a balance between his representation and representing the MGWA.
- Bunge wanted to recognize the efforts Stoner has between the well testing efforts and involvement with MNWOO. Bunge asked if Stoner holds any formal position with MNWOO.
  - Stoner said that he has purposefully avoided joining MNWOO as they are an advocacy group and that the clinics would not be happening without them. Stoner said that he is not officially connected with MNWOO but does partner with them.
- Mohr said that this is a great opportunity for MGWA and is glad that Stoner is stepping up to join. Mohr echoes Burman’s comments about how to keep the Board informed on the CWC activities and how Jeff will represent MGWA’s interest. Mohr suggested having a standing board meeting topic for check-ins and ad-hoc meetings when necessary. He says this is a good thing for MGWA to support.
  - Stoner reiterated that the MGWA covers not only government agencies but also consultants and is appreciative Mohr is here to represent private industries.
- Burman asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hunt noted that Leete is in favor of getting some representation in this fashion. Hunt said that it is fine for MGWA to be an advocate for its intended purposes: education, scientific endeavors, and advocating for groundwater. Hunt notes that if there would be a bill in the legislature that would harm groundwater we could advocate against it and vice-versa for bills that would benefit groundwater.
  - Stoner clarifies the comment about advocacy is related to being a lobbyist.
- Burman does not see any questions and informs Stoner he is able to leave the meeting. Burman thanked Stoner for putting the letter together and appreciated him stepping up to represent the MGWA on the CWC.
- Burman said he will inform Stoner shortly after the decision has been made.

### Board Deliberations:

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- Burman thanks the Board for stepping up to discuss these additional MGWA-related items outside of the standard meetings and conference.
- Burman wants to make sure that the board got all of their comments and questions answered and if anyone has any outstanding questions or concerns.
- Higgins said that her questions were related to lobbyist positions and that she is happy to hear that someone who has a lot of longevity with the MGWA and the field as a whole is invaluable. She notes she is in favor of voting yes.
- Kroening noted that she is not a voting member but said that she has worked with Stoner for years and that he has a varied background and that it would be good to have a groundwater voice on the CWC.
- Burman agrees and notes that it has always been a struggle for the CWC to shift the conversation to groundwater. He notes that CWC is cognizant of that. Burman said that in the 12 years that the constitutional amendment that sends sales tax to the Clean Water Act Legacy Fund they've been focused on x amount of the percentage needs to go to groundwater and drinking water. He said that having a groundwater expert representing a groundwater organization will be helpful.
- Burman notes that even though there is conversation, having someone apply from MGWA is a big first step for future applications.
- Higgins motions to approve, Mohr seconds. All in favor, the motion passes to allow Stoner to apply to the CWC.
- Burman and Higgins asked who could draft the letter. Burman noted that he is busy and may not get to it before Sunday.
- Ginsbach offered to draft a letter to send to the Board for their review and approval. He will send this to the Board shortly after the meeting.
- Burman asked if it is appropriate to let Stoner know that the board approved but it may be a day or two prior to the formal letter being sent. Higgins is in favor of letting him know that the Board approved and that the letter is forthcoming.

**Meeting Adjourned: 11:38 am.**

### **Action Items:**

- Ginsbach will draft the formal approval letter for board review. After review and approval, Burman will send the letter to Burman.

### **Next Meeting:**

- The next meeting will be held on May 16 at 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on Teams.