

## **Minnesota Ground Water Association (MGWA)**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** February 17, 2026

**Time:** 11:34 AM – approx. 1:02 PM

**Location:** Virtual Meeting

### **Board Members Present**

Jared Trost (President), Amanda Yourd (Vice President), Nick Budde (Treasurer), Cathy Udem (Event Coordinator), Michael Ginsbach (Committee Coordinator), Kayla Nelson (Marketing Coordinator)

### **MGWA Support Present**

Seth Nesselhuf (Business Manager), Elizabeth Kluesner (Executive Director), Sharon Kroening (Newsletter Editor)

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### **1. Call to Order & Introductions**

President Jared Trost called the meeting to order at 11:34 AM.

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### **2. Agenda Review**

**No objections were raised; agenda was approved as amended.**

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### **3. Approval of January 2026 Board Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** Nick Budde moved to approve the January minutes

**Second:** Kayla Nelson

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously

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### **4. Spring 2026 Conference Planning**

**Date:** April 23, 2026

#### **Heritage Center at Brooklyn Center**

The Board confirmed the change in venue due to planned road construction and access concerns at the previously considered site. The new location provides a known and reliable option given the compressed planning timeline.

## A. Conference Timeline

Jared shared a draft planning timeline for review. Feedback included:

- Add planning and promotion of a **Spring Happy Hour Social** to be held after the conference.
- Elizabeth Kluesner and Cathy Udem will explore venue options near the Earle Brown Heritage Center. The group agreed proximity is important to retain attendance.

## B. Registration Gifts

Pollinator packets were discussed as potential registration gifts. Michael Ginsbach will follow up internally regarding availability.

## C. Catering

Menu finalization may occur closer to the event date to accommodate dietary restrictions and registration numbers.

## Conference Program Structure

The proposed schedule includes:

- Morning and afternoon platform presentations (7–8 total speakers)
- Lightning talks prior to each poster session
- Poster displays available throughout the day, with designated presentation times
- One-hour ethics session (to meet continuing education requirements)

The Board discussed whether to include an ethics session at the spring conference.

Key points:

- Ethics credit is required once every two years for licensure.
- MGWA has recently offered ethics sessions at both spring and fall conferences.
- Some members value the convenience of earning credit at MGWA events, particularly state agency staff with limited training budgets.
- Alternative options exist, including offerings from the National Ground Water Association.

**Consensus:** The Board will pursue securing an ethics speaker for the spring conference but recognizes a contingency plan exists if one cannot be confirmed.

Amanda Yourd will contact Gene Coleman (DNR) as a potential ethics presenter. Elizabeth Kluesner will contact alternate candidates if needed.

The Board discussed the purpose and format of the keynote presentation, including whether it should:

- Serve as a policy/legislative update,
- Highlight career pathways and workforce trends,
- Act as a featured draw to increase attendance.

A potential keynote speaker discussed was Tony Runkle, who plans to retire in September. The Board considered the opportunity for a reflective presentation connecting groundwater age-dating work, career trajectory, workforce transitions, and future directions in hydrogeology.

No formal decision was made; Jared will further consider and follow up.

## **5. Student Engagement**

- Chloe Fandel (Carleton College) plans to bring approximately 20 students as a class field trip.
- Posters are anticipated from Carleton and Bemidji State University.
- Outreach to additional academic contacts will continue.
- The Board emphasized proactive promotion to academic programs following the date and venue change.

## **6. Marketing Promotion**

Seth Nesselhuf reported that:

- A conference announcement email blast will be sent to approximately 850 contacts.
- Weekly promotional messaging will begin immediately.
- Board members are encouraged to personally distribute the Call for Abstracts to potential speakers.
- Confirmed speakers will be highlighted in marketing materials to drive registration.

## **7. Membership Update**

**Seth Nesselhuf provided a membership update:**

- **Total members to date: 105 (67 pro, 34 retired, 4 sustaining, 0 students)**

Membership numbers were characterized as a strong start to the year.

The board noted that the prior membership cycle covered 18 months due to the transition from a July–June cycle to a calendar-year cycle.

### **8. Banking Transaction Update**

The board discussed the transition to Sunrise Bank.

- Authorized signers will be Nick Budde and Seth Nesselhuf.
- The organization (MGWA) will be the primary account holder rather than an individual.
- The change removes personal liability ties to prior banking arrangements.
- A future board vote will be required to authorize investment of reserve funds (e.g., CDs) once the transition is complete.

**No board action was required at this time.**

### **9. Website & Email Updates**

- Board contact information list is maintained in the Board Meetings folder.
- Website updates will utilize MGWA email addresses rather than personal emails to ensure continuity and professionalism.
- Sharing permissions for documents were discussed for members without MGWA email accounts.
- Migration to Chrome/OneDrive is ongoing and expected to be smooth.

### **11. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at approximately **1:02 PM**.

#### **To Do:**

- **Jared Trost**
  - Continue outreach to potential keynote speakers (including consideration of Tony Runkle).
  - Assist with identifying additional ethics speaker options if needed.
  - Follow up with Bemidji State contacts regarding date/venue change.
- **Amanda Yourd**
  - Contact Gene Coleman regarding serving as ethics presenter (cc Elizabeth).
  - Coordinate academic outreach; track contacts in shared spreadsheet.
- **Elizabeth Kluesner**
  - Contact alternate ethics speaker(s) if primary outreach is unsuccessful.

- Explore and coordinate spring social/happy hour venue options with Cathy Udem.
- Include MGWA spring conference promotional materials at Minnesota Brownfields May 5 event.
- **Board (All Members)**
  - Personally distribute Call for Abstracts to potential speakers.
  - Review submitted abstracts prior to March 17 meeting for board vote.

## Student Outreach

- **Amanda Yourd & Jared Trost**
  - Continue outreach to universities and faculty.
  - Update shared college/university contact spreadsheet to avoid duplicate outreach.
- **All Board Members**
  - Encourage student participation and poster submissions.

## Marketing & Promotion

- **Seth Nesselhuf**
  - Send conference email blast announcing date, venue, and Call for Abstracts.
  - Launch weekly promotional communications.
  - Highlight confirmed speakers in future marketing materials.
- **All Board Members**
  - Test registration and abstract submission forms; report issues to Seth.

## Conference Planning Process Improvements

- **Board**
  - Establish earlier planning timeline for future conferences (target: finalize spring venue/date well in advance of event).
  - Determine Fall 2026 conference date (target window: November 17–19).
  - Develop fall conference theme ideas (e.g., “wicked problems” concept).

# Organizational Operations

## Banking & Finance

- **Seth Nesselhuf & Elizabeth Kluesner**
  - Finalize Sunrise banking transition.
  - Prepare CD/investment options proposal for board review (target: next meeting).
- **Nick Budde (Treasurer) & Seth Nesselhuf**
  - Serve as authorized check signers on new account.

## Board Administration

- **Board Members**
  - Send contact information to Elizabeth for internal board directory.
- **Elizabeth Kluesner**
  - Compile and distribute updated board contact list.
- **Seth Nesselhuf**
  - Update website board contact information (using MGWA emails).

## Bylaws Update

- **Elizabeth Kluesner**
  - Circulate revised bylaws draft to board.
  - Set deadline for written comments (one week prior to March meeting).
- **Board**
  - Review draft bylaws.
  - Prepare for vote at March meeting.