

Minnesota Ground Water Association (MGWA)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: March 16, 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), Nick Evans.

MGWA Support Present

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

1. Call to Order & Introductions

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

2. Agenda Review

No objections were raised; agenda was approved as amended.

3. Approval of February 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion: Nick Budde moved to approve the February minutes

Second: Michael

Vote: Motion carried unanimously

4. Review Staff Report Outs

Executive Director – Elizabeth

- Secured **George Hudak** as the ethics speaker for the Spring Conference.
- Conducted outreach to private sector firms to increase abstract submissions.
- Monitored legislative activity related to groundwater, including a March 10 hearing.

- Attended MGWA Foundation Board meeting to strengthen coordination and engagement.
- Ongoing work:
 - Identifying Fall Conference venue and theme (pending Board input).
 - Transitioned banking from Wells Fargo to Sunrise Bank; investment options forthcoming.
 - Incorporated Board feedback into **bylaws updates** and **code of conduct revisions**.

Business Manager – Seth Nesselhuf

- Significant progress on **Spring Conference planning**, including:
 - Abstract collection and organization
 - Speaker coordination (bios, headshots, materials)
- Initiated **targeted membership and conference outreach** using improved directory tracking.
- Continued collaboration with the MGWA Foundation to improve alignment and structure.
- Completed website updates and database cleanup.
- Began **tax preparation** (due May 15), with consideration of third-party review.
- Ongoing transition of organizational files to OneDrive/OneNote.

5. Spring Conference

Abstract Review Process

- Approximately **11–12 abstracts received** for ~8 presentation slots.
- Board agreed to:
 - Rank abstracts using a **1–5 scoring system** (1 = strongest).
 - Final agenda to be developed by Jared and Amanda.

Timeline

- Final agenda targeted for completion by **Monday following rankings**.
- Early bird registration deadline: **April 1**.

Conference Updates

- ~20 registrants to date; strong student participation.
- Promotion to increase following agenda finalization.

Marketing & Promotion

- Increased social media promotion planned once speakers are finalized.
- Focus on highlighting individual speakers and ethics session.

Swag & Materials

- **Seed packets** selected as primary giveaway (provided by EQB).
- MGWA-branded sticker with QR code approved for inclusion.
- Additional materials:
 - Non-branded notepads
 - Existing MGWA pens for attendees

Sponsorships

- Sponsorship outreach ongoing (~30 companies contacted).
- One confirmed sponsor:
 - **AECOM** – \$200 contribution for Happy Hour.
- Board approved a **sponsorship deadline of April 10.**

Merchandise

- Existing inventory (including hats) remains sufficient.
- Decision made to **sell through current inventory** before reordering.

Conference Technology

- Decision to limit excessive QR code usage to avoid “QR fatigue.”
- Approved:
 - QR code at tables for **Fall 2026 theme voting**
 - Results to be announced at conference end

Student & Attendee Engagement

- Discussion of:
 - Interactive Q&A tools (not yet adopted)
 - Incentivized surveys (e.g., drink ticket tie-ins)
- Continued focus on improving engagement strategies.

6. Fall Conference Planning

- Board to develop **3–5 potential conference themes**
- Amanda to share spreadsheet for collecting ideas
- Goal:
 - Finalize themes at next meeting
 - Prepare materials for conference voting

7. Membership Update

- Membership trends:
 - +35 professional members since last month
 - 95 current professional members (311 prior year total)
 - 35 retired members (already matching prior year total)
 - 0 student members (identified as an issue to address)
 - 4 sustaining members
- Plan to increase membership through targeted outreach and conference engagement

8. Investment Strategy (CDs)

- Board approved moving reserve funds into CDs:

Motion:

- Invest \$40,000 into a 6-month CD at ~3.75%
- Invest an additional \$40,000 in a second CD in 3 months
- Moved by: Nick Budde
- Seconded by: Michael Ginsbach
- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously

9. Bylaws Update

- Board reviewed revised bylaws incorporating prior feedback
- Key updates:
 - Standardization of “groundwater” usage (one word except legal name)
 - Removal of placeholder section referencing MGWA Foundation
 - Clarification of Executive Director liaison role

Motion: Approve bylaws with noted revisions

- Moved by: Kayla Nelson
- Seconded by: Nick Budde / Nick Evans
- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously
- Final version to be prepared and published

10. Code of Conduct

- Discussion deferred due to time constraints
- To be revisited at next meeting

11. Board Updates and Announcements

- **Kayla Nelson**
 - Requested board members submit photos and responses for “Meet the Board” feature

- **Sharon Kroening**
 - March newsletter in progress
 - Will include conference information once agenda is finalized
- **Michael Ginsbach**
 - No update on white paper (group has not yet convened)
- **General**
 - Goal to finalize and announce summer event at Spring Conference

11. Adjournment

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

To Do:

Seth/Elizabeth/Kayla

- Publish finalized agenda for promotion
- Launch speaker-focused social media campaign
- Highlight ethics speaker first

Seth

- Continue targeted email outreach (members + past attendees) - Ongoing
- Track sponsor commitments - Complete
- Coordinate AECOM Happy Hour sponsorship logistics - Ongoing
- Create MGWA stickers and apply to seed packets – Ordered and received
- Order seed packets – Ordered
- Purchase non-branded notepads – Ordered and received
- MGWA pens – need to go to storage locker
- Create QR code for fall theme voting
- Ensure Sunrise bank account set up - Complete

Elizabeth

- Follow up individually with ~30 companies
- Execute CD investments:
 - \$40K immediately (6-month CD)
 - \$40K in ~3 months
- Finalize updated bylaws
 - Standardize “groundwater” usage

- Remove foundation placeholder section
- Send clean version to Seth for website posting

Amanda Yourd & Nick Evans

- Finalize networking format and logistics:
 - Student seating distribution plan
 - Icebreaker question sheet
 - Communication plan to attendees
- Improve survey participation strategy
 - Table based QR codes
 - Optional incentives (drink tickets)

Everyone

- Submit theme ideas
- Look at proposed Code of Conduct to be voted on in April meeting
- Submit “Meet the Board” info to Kayla by April.
- Identify and finalize summer event to be announced at conference

Jared

- Include voting + results announcement in conference agenda
- Provide President’s letter to Sherri for newsletter

Sharon

- Finalize and send March newsletter

Kayla

- Collect “Meet the Board” info