

Minnesota Ground Water Association (MGWA)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: May 19, 2026

Time: 11:33 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)

MGWA Support Present

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

1. Call to Order & Introductions

President Jared Trost called the meeting to order at 11:33 AM.

2. Agenda Review

No objections were raised; agenda was approved as amended.

3. Approval of April 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion: Michael Ginsbach moved to approve the April minutes

Second: Amanda Yourd

Vote: Motion carried unanimously

4. Review Staff Report Outs

Executive Director – Elizabeth

- A one-page membership promotional handout
- Updated booth and outreach materials for future conferences/events

The board discussed participation in several outreach events:

- AIPG National Conference (Duluth)

- Rural Water Association events
- DEED Brownfields and Beyond Conference

Consensus:

- The board favored participating in the lower-cost Rural Water Association events and the Brownfields conference.
- The board expressed reservations about the \$700 cost for the AIPG National Conference booth.
- Elizabeth will coordinate with the Minnesota AIPG chapter to explore joint networking opportunities.

Elizabeth also emphasized the importance of securing Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 conference venues earlier to reduce planning pressure.

Business Manager – Seth Nesselhuf

- Uploading conference presentations, videos, and audio to the MGWA website
- Processing and updating new memberships in GiveCloud
- Updating email and newsletter databases
- Continuing migration of financial operations to Sunrise
- Planning purchase of approximately \$40,000 in CDs
- Filing tax extensions for both the Association and Foundation through November
- Prioritizing selection of a venue for the Fall Conference

Seth expressed strong interest in using the American Swedish Institute as the Fall Conference venue, noting comparable pricing to the Heritage Center and positive venue aesthetics.

Board members thanked Seth for his leadership and operational support during the Spring Conference.

5. Spring Conference Debrief

Financial Summary

Seth and Nick presented conference financials

Highlights:

- Approximately 40 more attendees than the prior conference
- Total conference expenses: just under \$40,000
- Total conference income: approximately \$55,000
- Net revenue: approximately \$15,000

Additional observations:

- Registration income included approximately \$8,000 in new member fees
- Sponsorship revenue increased to approximately \$2,700
- Student participation remained financially neutral but highly valuable to conference quality

The board discussed the importance of establishing clearer annual financial goals moving forward.

Conference Evaluation Feedback

Conference evaluations were overwhelmingly positive.

Strengths Identified:

- Strong student participation
- High networking value during lunch
- Venue familiarity and ease of parking
- Food quality, particularly the taco bar lunch
- Overall organization and atmosphere

Areas for Improvement:

- Afternoon sessions felt long and difficult for attendees to stay engaged
- Some speakers were difficult to hear or visually follow
- Lighting and slide readability issues
- Desire for improved speaker preparation and presentation support

The board discussed:

- Adding more movement/networking opportunities during afternoon sessions
- Conducting speaker preparation meetings prior to conferences
- Providing presenters with presentation best practices and expectations

6. Discussion of Ethics Presentation

Board members discussed attendee feedback regarding the ethics presentation focused on mining.

Discussion Points:

- Several attendees, particularly from MPCA and DNR, expressed concerns regarding the history of the ethics speaker.

Board members acknowledged:

- The importance of maintaining diversity of perspectives within MGWA programming

- The need for transparency and clearer framing for potentially sensitive topics
- Opportunities for more interactive panel-style discussions in future conferences

The board emphasized that constructive dialogue and exposure to differing perspectives remain valuable goals for MGWA events.

7. Speaker Recognition & Follow-Up

The board discussed improving speaker appreciation and follow-up practices.

Ideas included:

- Providing speaker gifts or MGWA merchandise
- Sending thank-you notes and presentation links after the conference
- Sharing professional photos speakers can use for social media or organizational newsletters

8. Fall Conference Planning

The board reviewed a preliminary planning timeline for the Fall 2026 conference.

Venue Discussion

Seth shared details about the American Swedish Institute as a possible venue:

- Comparable pricing to the Heritage Center
- Strong catering and event reputation
- Parking availability
- Capacity estimated around 200 attendees
- Potential integration of happy hour and museum access into the event experience

The board discussed the importance of:

- Finalizing conference dates and themes earlier
- Releasing the call for abstracts by mid-June
- Finalizing Spring 2027 venue and planning details earlier than prior years

Board members also discussed maintaining MGWA's single-track conference format while improving speaker quality and attendee engagement.

9. Committee and Project Updates

White Paper Update – Michael G

- Survey interpretations and conclusions are being revised
- Portions of the report were restructured after internal review
- The group identified concerns regarding how survey results were previously interpreted

- An updated version is expected later this summer

Marketing & Outreach – Seth in Kayla’s stead

- “Meet the Board” promotional content
- Additional social media posts highlighting the Spring Conference
- Continued membership outreach and website updates

Newsletter - Sherri

- The board opted to hold the previously planned spring-themed newsletter and instead issue a June newsletter.
- Upcoming content may include:
 - Scholarship recipient announcements
 - Field camp award application reminders
 - Fall conference updates
 - DNR County Atlas content

Sherri noted she would be on vacation later in June, so materials should be submitted early in the month.

10. Additional Conference Planning Discussion

The board discussed:

- Earlier conference abstract solicitation
- Improving speaker logistics and communication
- Better alignment of conference pacing throughout the day
- Continuing to build MGWA visibility and professional reputation through venue selection and outreach activities

The board also reflected positively on the value of MGWA conferences as single-track events where attendees share a common experience and discussion base.

11. Adjournment

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

To Do:

Seth Nesselhuf

- Upload Spring Conference presentations, audio, and video files to the MGWA website.
Complete

- Continue membership processing and database cleanup in GiveCloud. Complete
 - Continue migration of financial systems to Sunrise
 - Purchase approximately \$40,000 in CDs/investment products
 - File tax extensions for both MGWA and Foundation through November. Complete
 - Finalize and secure Fall 2026 conference venue
 - Develop and release Fall Conference call for abstracts by mid-June
 - Continue posting conference follow-up content and speaker materials online
 - Coordinate future speaker preparation expectations and presentation guidance materials
 - Submit newsletter materials to Sherri early in June
-

Elizabeth Kluesner

- Develop one-page MGWA membership promotional handout – almost complete
 - Update booth and outreach materials for conferences/events
 - Coordinate with Minnesota AIPG regarding potential shared networking opportunities
 - Explore participation logistics for:
 - Rural Water Association events
 - Brownfields & Beyond Conference
 - Continue outreach and membership recruitment efforts
 - Take over speaker prep duties for the fall conference
-

Michael Ginsbach

- Continue revisions and restructuring of the white paper project
 - Review survey interpretation language and conclusions
 - Prepare updated white paper draft for later summer review
-

Sherri Kroening

- Prepare June MGWA newsletter
 - Coordinate collection of newsletter content submissions early in June
-

All Board Members

- Send Kayla your “Meet the Board” info. That means YOU MICHAEL!