



MWEA 2024 FALL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 4, 2024 — 1:00 PM
Virtual

Call to Order – Bruce S.

Attendance: Collette absent, Rickey late, Adam took a short leave, otherwise, the following were full there: Bruce Souder, Matt Waite, Rodney Lance, Rika Lashley, Robin Barnes

Old Business:

1. Review & Approve Spring Meeting Minutes: Rodney motioned to approve, Scott seconded – all were in favor – motion carried.

New Business:

1. Budget Report – Rika L.
 - a. Update –
 - i. Insurance stayed the same as last year;
 - ii. When accounting for immediately outstanding expenses, expenditures are about \$11K.
 - iii. Current checking balance is \$21,672; when accounting for immediate upcoming expenditures the balance will be about \$14,780.
 - b. Mutual Fund:
 - i. Need a reserve policy – ask if WEF has a reserve policy; money in the mutual fund also covers budget items that are not covered by the checking account balance. It is prudent to have one to two years of budget in reserve.
 - ii. Overall, Board members agreed to keep the mutual fund as is – Robin reported that the trajectory of gains and losses over the live of the mutual fund looks typical when compared to investments she tracks.
 - c. Annual Dues Report – same dues amounts as last year were reported to WEF in July.
 - d. Conference Report (financial) – Robin B.
 - i. There are currently about \$28,000 in the conference account to be broken out between the two orgs with MSAWWA having the pre-conference. A small amount will stay in the joint checking account. Not yet complete – will be complete for joint meeting. Preliminarily, it looks like income may be around \$10K, maybe a little less.
 - e. SYP budget – request will be made at the joint meeting. Do we have a ceiling amount we are willing/able to contribute? The SYP committee plans for calendar years. We have \$1,343 left in that line item through April. This FY, the line item was for \$2,500. We did not decide on a ceiling amount.
2. Operator Scholarship Promotion – Robin B.

- a. Do we need to update it? Let's make clear that materials are covered, attendance of special trainings, certification training, anything. Bruce will take a look and let us all know if anything needs to change.
 - b. Do we need to see about advertising this more? It is on the MRWS training calendar. We can check to see if there are links on the MWRS and DEQ websites. Have Craig Woolard include a link on the water school registration website.
3. Conference Report (non-financial) - Robin B.
- a. Hilton was most difficult experience so far; not customer oriented, just about making money; blamed by staff on new management; expensive – Robin cut back on food quantities without ill effect; Cavin and Collette on exhibitor committee – Cavin thought opportunity for exhibitor presentations was great and hopes to see that again; so far no input from others on that to committee members but Scott heard similar good messages from exhibitors.
 - b. Should we raise attendee fees in light of overall rising prices? To be considered at the joint Board meeting.
4. IRS Reinstatement as Non-Profit – Rika L.
- a. This is complete. Rika (the secretary/treasurer) will have to file tax returns every year to keep that status.
5. WEF Delegate Report – Scott B.
- a. WEF attendance: Scott attended House of Delegates (HOD) sessions on Saturday – there was a lot of sharing from different MAs.
 - b. One second most discussed topic was workforce development – other MAs are developing recruiting tools. Many states use DEI as a recruitment tool – doesn't apply too well here.
 - c. The most discussed topic was PFAS, especially with respect to biosolids. Sounds like EPA will leave biosolids limits to states, maybe provide recommendations to states. EPA is scheduled to have something coming out by December 2024.
 - i. Tiered approach used by Michigan based on concentration found in sludge could be an example for how to approach things; depends also on presence of industry, etc.
 - ii. Maine has a legacy of papermill sludge on the land together with biosolids that had high PFAS concentrations. In Texas, certified biosolids fertilizer was banned (Synagro case).
 - d. Scott joined the HOD Workforce Committee – he is learning about some programs in the country that are having success attracting and keeping operators – they tend to be in areas where operators get paid better than here.
 - e. WEF is working on national outreach to include advocacy to the public about the value of treatment, workforce, etc.; rollout in 2 years.
 - f. Scott joined the WEF Government Affairs committee – again workforce and PFAS dominated the discussion.
6. MWEA Committee Reports:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Board Oversight</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
Beneficial Reuse Will meet Nov. 15 to check in with each other and talk about future goals and look at results of survey from the joint conference, distribute that survey electronically to a larger audience and present results at next conference.	Rickey Schultz	Alex Ciessau

Education MWEA preconference this year; good number of volunteers; working on theme, have a deadline, and seem to be on track.	Adam Marsh	David Carlson
Government Affairs Scott suggests that he can report to the Board of what he learns in the WEF committee and also on impactful legislation in the state. (One update is that discharger group will go to the legislature again with nutrient standards and permitting.) Do we want to do something more with the info Scott will be reporting, such as send it to the membership? Scott will reach out to the DEQ PFAS task force to let them know that biosolids generators would want to be at the table when regulation is developed – similar to the nutrient work group.	Scott Buecker	Vacant
Honors & Awards 6 people on committee – will meet on Nov. 22. Awards for the next conference are: 1. MWEA Small Systems Award 2. MWEA Stockholm Junior Water Prize 3. WEF Arthur Sidney Bedell Award 4. Lifetime Achievement 5. Donald G. Willems Scholarship 6. Todd Teegarden Award	Rodney Lance	Jeremy Perlinski
Grants for Teachers No requests have been made and otherwise nothing to report.	Rika Lashley	Amy Deitchler
Membership 132 total members – Robin will send report to Rika and Laura and they will send a bit more info to the Board.	Collette Anderson	Laura Gundlach
Pretreatment No action on this committee; previous signups included Julie Spencer, Ben Rigby – Bruce to check in with Ben Rigby	Bruce Souder	
Stockholm Junior Water Prize Not much to report at this time of year – the science fairs will be in the spring.	Matt Waite	Kristi Kline
Stormwater Steve Lipetsky and David Carlson were the only ones who signed up officially in spring 2024. Robin had asked them to put their heads together and see what they wanted to do.	Bruce Souder	Zach Magdol (?) –

7. Strategic and Long Range Planning – Rika L.

- a. Revisit one-pager with Collette and send to Board for final approval. We will send this to the membership.
- b. Long-Range Plan/Policies and Procedures – A portion of the Long Range Plan was incorporated into the Strategic Plan, the other portion will need to be turned into a Policies & Procedures document. Barb Coffman has volunteered to get a document started over the winter. Rika will help.

8. Updating By-Laws – Rika L. – The membership voted at the Spring membership meeting and approved the Bylaws. In August, the document was sent to Lance Manabe, Honolulu WEA and member of the WEF Constitution and Bylaws Subcommittee for review. If they suggest changes, we will make them and hopefully have that complete by the 2025 conference to be approved by the membership.

9. WEFMAX 202X? – Scott B.
 - a. WEF wants delegates to attend WEFMAXs but Scott did not find the Utah WEFMAX very beneficial; lots of MA story telling (some of it useful), team building, and treasure hunts; did learn some things about the Utah MA that was interesting (Utah offers hands-on practical training for operators at their conference and they now about half of their membership are operators; they also have a second more “academic” conference).
 - b. Scott suggests using the officer budget line item and put it toward the fly-in in Washington instead of WEFMAX attendance.
10. Nominees for Junior Trustee:
 - a. Please start thinking about candidates and start a conversation with them.
11. How can we make our conference relevant again? – Rika L. – This was tabled till this fall meeting to see if we want to communicate any ideas to the program committee.
 - a. Example would be having three short presentations/case studies in a row for a half hour followed by a panel discussion/Q&A.
 - b. Vendor presentations like we’ve had seem to be appreciated by vendors elsewhere too (says Scott).
12. Revival/Restructuring of Joint Exhibitor Committee Update –
 - a. Robin: the committee is not exactly revived, consisting only of Collette and Cavin. Also see conference feedback above.
13. Membership in Montana Non-Profit Association – Robin B. – It was decided to take this item off future agendas until Robin informs us of something interesting. MSAWWA is a member and Robin will track things.
14. Other Business: No other business

Adjourn: Scott motioned, Rodney seconded, motion carried.

Action Items:

Bruce: Check in with Ben Rigby on pretreatment committee

Look at operator scholarship application and let Board members know if anything should be updated.

Rika: Work with Barb Coffman on the policies and procedures document.

Contact Craig Woolard about advertising the operator scholarship on the water school registration webpage.

Check with Lynora Rogstad about having MRWS help us get the word out about the operator scholarships from MWEA and MSAWWA.

Matt: Check DEQ operator website to see if the operator scholarship shows up anywhere. If not, find out who to contact about adding a link to it.

Rickey: Contact WEF about guidance for amounts to keep in a reserve account.

Reach out to Dell Phipps (Kalispell), Drew Newfeld (sp? Havre), and others to see if the committee can be revived and workshops be put on again.

Scott: Report to the Board when impactful legislation is being considered in Montana.

Collette: Update the Strategic Plan one-pager and send to Board.