



American Water Works Association Pacific Northwest Section

Board Planning Meeting Notes Anderson School – Bothell, Washington Thursday & Friday, July 11 and 12, 2019

Attendees: Chair James Dean, Chair Elect Ronda Farmer, Past Chair Mel Damewood, Trustees Michelle Cheek, Suzanne De Lorenzo, Dave England, Crystal Jensen, Alex Mofidi, Dan Sleeth, AWWA Director Randy Black, AWWA Executive Committee Member/MAC Chair Kristin Kihs, Executive Director Kyle Kihs, Facilitator Eric Kountz

Executive Director Kihs welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and introduced Facilitator Erick Kountz who began by leading an exercise regarding the positive and negative qualities of inspirational leaders. After discussion, the following positive traits of inspirational leaders were identified:

Positive	Servant	Takes the lead when needed
Supportive	Action Not Words	Empathetic
Embraces New Ideas	Sees strengths & weaknesses	Values Feedback
Great vision	Admits Mistakes	Encouraging
Shares Passion	Bold	Employee Engagement
Inclusive	Enthusiastic	Inspirational
Open Minded	Trustworthy & Trusting	Great Listener

Trustees and their Divisions – keeping engaged

- Accountability
 - Be active in your communication with volunteers – give them deadlines; but have some flexibility with due dates – sometimes the most talented people have the most on their plates.
 - People may be “waiting to bloom”.
 - Assign things if some are afraid to volunteer; tasks will be easier if the steps are spelled out – don’t be afraid to give detailed instructions.
 - Not everyone has a passion for the committee and committees fail without a passionate leader. Show some discernment about who you ask – draw out the passion and tap into ego in a positive way.
 - Some are more difficult to motivate – try to find something they can succeed at.
 - Know who you are working with, form personal relationships within your committees and find ways for personal contact.
 - Foster an attachment to the whole organization, not just the committee.
 - Step out of the way when needed.

- Understand employer support limitations – some may want to help but are not allowed the time.
- Don't expect all conversations to be comfortable

Transitioning into Division culture (a possible need for fewer leaders) - What are the issues and challenges?

- Finding impassioned volunteers.
- Division chairs or committee chairs? Need a full roster of officers for each committee?
- Currently committees are asked to do 2-3 trainings a year; a division has more resources and may be less intimidating for people who want to get involved.
- Currently being an officer is the primary way to volunteer; there should be opportunities to volunteer in other ways.
- WUCs and WARNs should remain dedicated, outside division structure.
- Some committee autonomy might still be good – elimination of committee officers may keep people from coming up the ranks and result in fewer leaders that have more to do.
- Potential structure might include committee “leads” within division structure.
- This is a culture change in the way people look at leadership and their commitment level. Some committees will have concerns – it is important to weigh the pros and cons so we can explain how this will benefit the organization.
- Delegation is important.
- Will committees think their responsibility for trainings is less because it is the concern of the division?
- Working as a group may have fewer but larger, better attended trainings.
- If it isn't necessary to have so many leaders, we may get more volunteers – possibly create more micro volunteer positions.

Communication and organization

- Need time and patience in planning and communication; should take a year or so presenting the concept and training before the plan is put into place.
- Engage committee feedback at the Fall meeting; have work sessions at Board meetings to gather feedback.
- Transparency is vital. Members must understand and expect their comments to be weighed carefully.
- Committees still need autonomy to do what they need to do.
- Who is division leader – the trustee? Or another layer between trustee/division/committee? (Might be counterproductive to have another person between trustee and committees.)
- Expectations of trustee, potential division lead (what would be the difference)?
- More accountability will be put on trustees.
- Need to provide training for the purpose of training and being the trusted source for water professionals. With goal of good training, money will follow.
- Don't talk about it forever (“No camping”)
- Solve issues, brand it and roll it out.
- Define roles and responsibilities – must be top down and Trustees must be on board.

- Trustees change so someone in division leadership role needs to provide continuity; someone must have passion to inspire and keep it going.
- Will still have committees, this is more of a mindset and passing along the message. Current committee leaders are the ones who know and must still have a defined role – partly to get employer buy-in to support their involvement.
- Each committee can submit a leader and those leaders can run for division leader – have a term limit but the division leader is always someone who is coming up within the group.
- Start with Nominations Committee? Need to let trustees know expectations at nomination level – might not get your passion but you get leadership opportunities and management experience. (A “stretch” opportunity)
- Define new role of trustee and make sure they know what they are signing up for. Find people with vision, passion and goals and assess how they balance existing Board.
- Could engage past trustees and officers; some who already have an inside view can take on some of those roles
- Potentially do “exit interviews” when people leave positions. Ask what they think is going right or wrong.

Training

- 100 Trainings Section Wide in 2018
- Last year the committees and subsections stepped up the number of trainings and helped the Section’s financial situation.
- Are we where we want to be in terms of style, number and quality?
 - Stuck in a rut for style – primarily lecture format.
 - Want to provide CEUs while maintaining quality and offering education that is needed.
 - Based on survey comments, some trainings may be thrown together a bit haphazardly – good ideas not executed well.
 - Maybe too many repeat trainings - Washington does not give CEU credit for repeat training.
 - Look at attendance history.
 - In new division structure, number of trainings may drop but single trainings may be longer and more in depth.
 - Potential format – proctored webinar.
 - Difficult for Washington – still needs to be in classroom setting and must have at least 5 attendees. Oregon and Idaho not so strict.
 - Could be great for rural communities
 - Drawback – no face time, networking opportunities
 - Some topics like workplace harassment, soft skills are not considered relevant by states
 - Panel Discussions are becoming popular
 - Training in a Box – must be certified trainer. Consistency is there but instructors can get stale and tired.
 - Can we change out instructors, bring in experts, engage audience with interactive presentations?
 - Should we train people to effectively train – how do we train ourselves to train better?

- Fall training 2020 will combine committee and subsection leaders – want to allow them to be diverse in their presentations but provide blueprint and tools.
- Diversify training styles – everyone learns differently.
- Missing a huge side of the industry – “customer service” group – front office, financial, support staff

Philanthropy Advisory Council

- Role and objectives
 - Create oversight of all fundraising efforts.
 - Assist with all Section fundraising efforts; offer assistance and roadmap for planning efforts; calendar of fundraisers to help eliminate scheduling conflicts and duplicate efforts and avoid overlap.
 - Address donor fatigue by creating overall look at efforts for the year and keep “asks” somewhat contained.
 - Gatekeeping efforts – review and approve prior to website posting or e-newsletter.
 - PAC does not have ability or desire to deny events.
 - Provide guidelines that will help maximize volunteer time.
 - Find new and different vendors that may want to expand into a new area.
 - Form has been developed (“we want to know about your event”) including checkboxes for what might be needed, (logos, advertising methods, etc.)
- What can trustees do to support and bring awareness to this new committee
 - Committee would like address Board at Fall meeting to discuss different giving opportunities; potentially year-long sponsorship levels.
 - Help overcome perception that PAC will direct fundraising efforts to specific causes.
 - Potential for undesignated fundraising with PAC allocating distribution.
 - Help provide information about various efforts, including Water Equation.
 - Trustees need to clarify message to committees and subsections through electronic communication or speaking directly to groups.
 - Emphasize that no one will be told what they can or can’t do but that resources will be available so that there will be value added to all events.
 - Help members understand the Water Equation under AWWA umbrella – communicate in newsletter, direct e-mails.
 - Share perspectives with PAC leadership.
 - Event form has been sent to all section leaders and event coordinators; information has been e-mailed to subsection leaders.
 - Asking Trustees to communicate back to subsections and e-mail those not represented.

Committee Organization

- The Section currently supports 42 committees, a large number in comparison to other sections. It is time to review the effectiveness and viability of some committees.

Women in Leadership (Trustee – Crystal Jensen)

- Women in Leadership is not an official committee. A Personal Leadership Committee was previously on the books but was moved to inactive status. The new Leadership Symposium also needs a place in the organizational structure.
- Women in Leadership does an awesome job at the things they are doing; this is a resource the entire organization should tap into.
- Women in Leadership has a different liaison each year and has functioned more as an ad hoc committee.
- Suggestions include giving Women in Leadership a “home” by creating a Leadership Committee; possibly this could integrate with Utility Management as well.
- **Consensus: recommendation to reach out to Women in Leadership and discuss their goals and objectives. First step assign them to the Utility Operations Division and work it out from there.**

Public Officials (Trustee Mel Damewood)

- Has long been a “committee of one” – no conference track for public officials for several years
- Board still sees a need for some type of forum, conference tracks
- Washington Assoc. of Sewer and Water Districts may be interested in coordinating a track for public officials at the Section Conference.
- **Consensus to sunset the Public Officials Committee. Work with WASWD to provide conference training and have training coordinated through Utility Management Committee**

Small Systems – Trustee Dan Sleeth

- In spite of outreach, the committee has not gained traction. Small systems with 1 or 2 operators are just too small to provide time for committee engagement and training and are often not attached to a city.
- Encourage subsections to continue engaging small systems through subsection meetings, etc.
- Training needs can be fulfilled by WARN.
- **Consensus – sunset the Small Systems Committee, ask subsections to reach out and serve when possible.**

Safety – Trustee Dan Sleeth

- Safety has a strong place within the Section but a stand-alone committee has never gotten off the ground; given the types of training requests, Distribution Committee could take on this function.
- An unintended consequence would be that the safety training function goes away completely (although no safety training takes place now),
- If safety training is assigned to Distribution there is a better chance that trainings will take place.
- **Consensus – sunset Safety Committee and assign safety training function to Distribution Committee with that function identified in Rules of Procedure**

History Committee (Trustee – Suzanne DeLorenzo)

- Currently no committee members.
- Historically an early bird session has been held at conference, but the session was not of general interest and had few attendees.
- Most historical information is on the website and historical papers and artifacts have been dealt with making the committee obsolete.
- **Consensus to sunset History Committee**

MSC (Trustee – Dave England)

- One-person committee since 2010.
- Duties can be shifted to the conference planner and that process has started.
- Noted that at least one Trustee is always vendor/industry representative and can provide input regarding vendor needs and satisfaction as well as passing ideas along from other conferences.
- **Consensus to sunset MSC Committee, with duties to be assumed by conference planner.**

Staff will bring forward revisions to Rules of Procedure identified for the Fall meeting. The proposed changes will be communicated to appropriate committees by the Executive Director and Chair.

Leadership Symposium

- One motivation for the Symposium was to raise money in the Fall to improve cash flow.
- Symposiums now planned for Yakima in 2019 and Salem in 2020.
- Yakima event as 35 current registrations, hotel rooms are filled and 3 gold sponsors have committed.
- Issues going forward to 2020
 - Direction needed regarding subject matter for 2020 and beyond.
 - Could follow AWWA theme or develop another.
 - Subject matter experts are a draw, potentially general session with a keynote speaker in the morning and sessions in the afternoon.
 - Not all about cash influx but provision of relevant and necessary training.
 - Should this be a committee or assigned to Program Committee and staff driven?
 - Time is of the essence to choose symposium theme for 2020.
 - Did not opt for CEUs this year and if that is direction will need a lot of massaging from committee.
 - Where does this fit going forward – ad hoc, committee, staff, existing committee; time is too critical now to hand to a committee. If considered a conference, conferences have historically been under staff.

Consensus: change Leadership Symposium topics every year

Board assignment: Send theme ideas to Executive Director within a week (July 19), participate in Doodle poll to select theme

- **Consensus: Sunset Ad Hoc Leadership Symposium Committee and designate Symposium as a conference and thus a function of staff and Conference Program Committee pending assessment of the 2019 Symposium.**

Direct Executive Director to do preliminary work on 2021 Symposium but make no firm commitments until after the Yakima even has been completed.

The meeting was concluded for the day at 3:30

Friday, July 12

The meeting was convened at 8:30

Committee and Subsection Training – Changes being implemented

- Three Trustee Meetings a Year
- Last year of old format (committees or subsections only followed by Trustee Meeting)
- Winter 2020 Trustee Meeting – stand-alone – no training offered
 - Meeting In Vancouver – will be publicized and members are welcome to attend
- Fall 2020 Combined Subsection and Committee Training and Trustee Meeting at Sunriver
 - Group training and breakouts
 - Trustee Budget Meeting
- Winter meetings continue in Vancouver / Portland area

Section Conference Format Change

- Trustee meeting at end of conference rather than prior to conference.
- Expand excitement for awards – present to all attendees at lunch / not a banquet, use video and encourage excitement and awareness about awards.
- Members will be surveyed after conference, will try for a couple of years and assess.
- Potential for lunch motivational speaker will be explored.

2019 Fall Meeting What to Expect

- Budget Meeting
 - Finance Committee Presents Budget
 - Division budgets (not committee budgets) due by end of July to Budget Chair Pierre Kwan.
 - Executive Committee comments In August.
 - Entire Board – Comments via GoToMeeting mid-September come to consensus, confirm & approve.
 - Trustee Meeting October 10 for approval

- Trustees can still participate and comment but goal is to resolve issues so board is united at public vote.
 - Donation to E&T is no longer automatic, will be assessed after year end financials are in and board will decide at winter meeting whether and how much to donate
 - Debrief at Fall meeting on Leadership Symposium and board will review feedback
- Time will be allocated for committee meetings
- Members will be surprised about the changes and need to think of ways to prompt attendees that conference schedule is new.
 - Facilitators can give reminders
 - Monthly reminders in newsletter
 - Announcement at breakfast
 - Plenty of signage

Preparing for a new Trustee Meeting Format Effective Fall 2019

- Trustees will present written reports on their Divisions not committee officers
- Trustees will submit a Division report at Fall 2019 meeting. No individual Committee reports unless needed. Trustees may invite committee/division leaders to speak.
- Anyone may request to speak before the board by checking box on registration form.

AWWA Affiliation Agreement– *AWWA Director Randy Black*

- AWWA provides insurance umbrella and stipend for each Section; emphasizes non-profit status of sections and how tax-exempt organizations should work. There should be no conflict with AWWA rules and principles in order to be eligible.
- All Section board members should read and discuss the Affiliation Agreement to be sure the AWWA brand is not misused by a Section or a non-profit affiliated with a Section.
- PNWS Executive Director reviews all agreements.
- Copy of the Affiliation Agreement is on the website and a one-page synopsis is part of Subsection requirements annually. Subsection president must sign agreement.

AWWA Positions

- Open positions this year are include Treasurer, Director at Large, Service Provider Director at Large, 3 Vice President positions (AWWA Directors can apply). Applications due August 15.
- Damewood will solicit interest among members; Trustees are asked to forward any suggestions to him.

Regional Meeting of Section Officers Tucson, Arizona Oct. 31 – Nov. 2

- Ronda Farmer, Randy Black, Dan Sleeth, Dave England, Michelle Cheek and James Dean will attend.
- Dan Sleeth, Dave England and Michelle Cheek will coordinate a presentation on the Leadership Symposium for the meeting.

Conclusion

Section Chair Dean thanked everyone for a productive planning meeting and asked Trustees to reach out to him if they need anything.

The meeting ended at 10 a.m.

Summary of consensus items

- **Consensus: reach out to Women in Leadership and discuss their goals and objectives. First step may be assigning them to a Division and work it out from there.**
- **Consensus to sunset the Public Officials Committee. Work with WASWD to provide conference training and have training coordinated through Utility Management Committee**
- **Consensus – sunset the Small Systems Committee, ask subsections to reach out and serve when possible.**
- **Consensus to sunset History Committee**
- **Consensus to sunset MSC Committee, with duties to be assumed by conference planner.**
- **Consensus: change Leadership Symposium topics every year.**
- **Consensus: Sunset Ad Hoc Leadership Symposium Committee and designate Symposium as a conference and thus a function of staff and Conference Program Committee pending assessment of the 2019 Symposium.**
- **Staff will bring forward necessary revisions to Rules of Procedure as identified to the Fall meeting. The proposed changes will be communicated to appropriate committees by the Executive Director and Chair.**
- **Direct Executive Director to do preliminary work on 2021 Leadership Symposium but make no firm commitments until after the Yakima event has been completed.**