



American Water Works Association Pacific Northwest Section

2021 Fall Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2021

Online via Zoom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. via Zoom by Chair John Roth. Also present: Chair Elect Michelle Cheek, Past Chair Ronda Farmer, Trustees Nick Belmont, Cheryl Capron, Tyler Clary, Jamie Porter, Doug Schlepp, AWWA Director Randy Black, Treasurer Jason Canady, and Executive Director Kyle Kihs. Trustee Karen Kelley was excused.

Chair's Report

- Chair Roth reviewed issues discussed at the Fall training including
 - Difficulty of attracting new engaged volunteers.
 - Importance of emphasizing benefits of membership to employers and younger, newer employees.
 - Emphasis on career development – technical education, operator courses, tech content and network of subject matter experts.
- Emphasized the valuable time Section leaders spent with Board Liaisons and Trustees.
- In spite of COVID circumstances, many worthwhile events were held during the summer.
- In-person conference is scheduled for 2022 in Tacoma.

Association Director's Report

- Association continues to emphasize membership and renewing members, stressing that Sections should follow up with members who haven't renewed as well as participate in the "Members get Members" campaign.
- Currently membership is 48,593 with the goal of reaching 50,000 members.
- Good fiscal management means AWWA is on pace for 2021 budget with solid financial health.
- First ever Source Water Protection Week held Sept. 26 – Oct 1 to raise awareness about the importance of protecting drinking water sources.
- Survey results indicate the water industry is at its highest level of optimism in many years despite challenges. Good information in State of the Water Industry report that can be used to communicate the value of water to customers.
- Association moved forward with in-person as well as virtual meeting options. Board of Directors and Executive Committee will meet October 25-31 in Denver. Meeting to

include reports from six councils: Public Affairs; Technical and Education; Manufacturers/Associates; Water Utility; International, and Standards.

- ACE Scheduled June 12-15, 2022, in San Antonio.
- Water Quality Technology Conference (in person) scheduled for November 7 in Tacoma.
- RMSO (regional) meeting was held Aug 21 and 22 with 5 trustees attending from PNWS. Discussion topics included:
 - Risk Communication Guide to water utilities equips utilities with responses and strategies to make it easier to communicate during a crisis.
 - Reinforced how fortunate we are to have active WUCs in our Section.
 - Reviewed seven core principles established in 2020 as guidance until 2025; discussed ways to share with members.
 - Extended discussion about changes and additions coming through the Diversity and Membership Committees. Guidelines for diversity awards being updated.
 - Strategies to diversify revenue and develop income streams.
 - Tour of hydro-electric plant.
 - Recruiting and mentoring volunteers; combatting volunteer fatigue; how to create continuity and keep historical knowledge.
 - AWWA has site for sections with member engagement guide.
 - Opportunity for awards; need to recognize outstanding achievements and people in our Section.
 - Engaging operators and small systems; seeking more representation on Section boards.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jason Canady noted the overall adjusted income is 81% of budget; a concern is conference income is only 47% of budgeted with only one virtual session remaining. Budgeted committee incomes are also lagging and could leave a \$45,000 shortfall. The Leadership Conference was cancelled so incurred no income or expense.

Expenses are lower than expected and currently the ending fund balance will increase if the trends continue. Altogether the fiscal picture looks solid and it is recommended that the current level of caution in spending be continued.

Request that liaisons reach out Committees that committed to earning resources to see if they will be able to meet those goals; if not, contact Canady as this will help with planning.

Southern OR Subsection Short School Update Jason Canady

- Final report is being wrapped up. A total of 62 students participated, with registration skyrocketing in the last three days. There were a few issues with technology, but numbers show there is probably an option for some sort of hybrid training. Anticipated profit is \$12,000.
- Noted importance of CEUs to encourage attendance and advantage of offering CEUs that will be accepted by all three states.

Motion: Black moved for approval of the Spring Trustee meeting minutes. Second by Capron. Motion carried unanimously.

2022 Tacoma Conference

Tacoma Convention Center and hotels have been reserved. Conference is scheduled for last week in April. Registration opens January 4.

- Jill Hoyenga mentioned that several abstracts have been received for 2022, and vendors are starting to inquire about opportunities.

Conference Program

Jill Hoyenga provided a quick update on the Quarterly Virtual Trainings

- Attendance for quarterly virtual trainings was adequate but revenue has not been up to expectations.
- Most attendees were from Oregon and Washington, may need to improve outreach, particularly to Idaho.
- When last virtual training is completed this month, the Program Committee website will be updated to reflect the 2022 conference.

DeEtta Fosbury recognized Jeremey Djajadi for his work as IT behind the scenes of virtual meetings.

E&T Fund Bob Willis and Jeff Lundt

- Current values: Dedicated Fund \$433,358 (YTD increase of \$18,889); Undedicated Fund \$343,559 (YTD increase of \$18,219); Retained Earnings \$888,552 (YTD increase \$399,113). Fund totals: \$1,665,469 (YTD increase \$436,213).
- Donations \$37,000, slightly less than normal but may get to the usual average of \$40,000 by year's end.
- 2021 Scholarships authorized at \$50,776 (minimum and retained earnings distribution) with \$41,231 used to date. Noted that Scholarship Committee issues scholarships and E&T transfers funds.
- Operator scholarships for Short Schools
 - Allocated 150 scholarships at \$150 each (\$12,000) but only 36 people applied.
 - Have not yet submitted to AWWA for reimbursement.
 - Now offered to Southern Oregon Subsection in addition to NW Washington.
 - Represents an important step to allow E&T Fund to put money directly into the hands of Operators to get needed certification training. Funds went to both water and wastewater operators.
 - Hope for a stronger showing next year; speculation that there was such a drought of training, municipalities were able to pay for the minimal training that was offered.
 - Likely that AWWA will expand the program to other Sections after PNW pioneered the project.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Esther Chang noted she had presented a report yesterday and would like feedback from the Board.

- Roth said the survey provided great feedback although it is not a large cross-section and since anonymous not strictly scientific. He noted success of the Diversity and Inclusiveness Summit.
- Black commented that D&I is one of the top priorities for AWWA so hoping to continue engagement and make sure needed tools are provided. It is important to have an environment where everyone knows they are welcome.
- Farmer agreed and noted that Jenn Minton, member of the AWWA Diversity and Inclusion Committee, is present at this meeting. December 1 is a meeting placeholder for the Association D&I Committee
- Minton emphasized how important D&I is at AWWA level and that the D&I Committee reports directly to the AWWA Board. She thanked Ms. Chang for her efforts.
- Chris Young commented that one goal of the survey is to evaluate what is going on now so that changes can be created. He added that at this point there has not been enough participation to really target what institutional changes are needed.
- Young asked the Board to consider whether the D&I should be a stand-alone committee rather than a subcommittee under the umbrella of the Membership Committee to maximize the committee's impact. Roth noted the Board will consider and give feedback.

Membership Update

- **Chris Young** stated the Section has 150 members fewer than at the peak in 2019 but added that is not bad considering the circumstances. He noted the importance of retaining current members and that in-person meetings are the best place to recruit.
- Committee prioritizes supporting subcommittees with virtual membership program and some meet and greets. Excited about the Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, which should get more traction when things open back up.
- Roadblock this past year has been time, which is short, with a three-person committee. They must prioritize what they can do in the time available.
- Two goals: Retention and New Members
 - Retention – being more collaborative with Subsections, engaging members and allow subsections to share among themselves.
 - New – looking to prepare for conference and hoping for a physical presence.

2022 Budget Overview Michelle Cheek

- Overview of the draft budget shows projected income of \$635,500 with expenses of \$591,317 for a net gain of \$44,183. The budget was presented to the Board on September 23 with request to share with members.
- Largest sources of income are anticipated to be the AWWA allotment and the Section conference.
- Most notable change is elimination of most travel expenses to ACE for competitors etc. Cheek noted the Board still wishes to support travel but needs to hold and reevaluate the 2022 financial picture. Estimating conference income in 2022 as similar to past years may be optimistic. The hope is to ultimately restore travel funds.

- Canady noted that inclusion of the travel expenses would have a negative balance if conference income comes in as predicted. Excluding it at this time provides more flexibility for the year.

Member Comments

Chris Young asked the Board to consider that spending on items such as travel may result in an increase in membership, which would increase revenue over time. This may be more important than adopting a balanced budget.

Roth noted the Board wants to support travel but did not want to include and then have to remove it; want to do everything we can responsibly to provide value to the membership.

Black stated conference sign-ups will be closely monitored but given the uncertainty, it is prudent at this time to hold on supporting travel expenses.

Porter added that the Board had to consider the end of the Paycheck Protection program as well as a potential for significant losses in 2022 and felt it prudent to be conservative and cut some expenses up front.

Capron agreed that return on investment was a valid point and supports putting the travel budget at the top of the list if the Board finds more revenues are available.

Young noted that the YP Committee needs support, and this might be an incentive to get people involved.

In answer to Dan Kegley's questions regarding conference scholarships and Trustee meeting costs in the budget, Belmont stated scholarships are included in the budget and Farmer noted that much of the expense attributed to Trustee meetings represents deposits for future venues with contractual dates. She added that the Executive Director has done an excellent job of renegotiating many of these contracts.

Motion: 2022 Budget Approval

Motion: Porter moved for approval of the 2022 budget as presented. Second by Clary. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Roth asked if there were any other comments from attendees.

Bob Cunningham and Lacy Goeres-Priest both supported allocating funds for competitor travel when possible and thanked the Board for their work and for providing training opportunities.

Belmont noted the Board had also discussed the impact of employer restrictions on travel which may limit the ability of members to attend conferences even if travel is funded.

Brief discussion ensued regarding publishing the budget on the website. Cheek and Kihs agreed that the Trustees wish to be transparent but there are some security concerns about posting on the site where it may be accessed by anyone. Suggestion that a budget request link be created so Kihs can provide the budget to legitimate requestors will be considered.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:48 (Motion to adjourn by Black, second by Schlepp)