



American Water Works Association Pacific Northwest Section

2022 FALL Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Sunriver Resort – Homestead Room

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Michelle Cheek. Also present: Chair Elect Dan Sleeth, Past Chair John Roth, Trustees Libby Barg Bakke, Nick Belmont, Joel Cary, Tyler Clary, Jamie Porter, and Tonya Reiss, Treasurer Jason Canady, and Executive Director Kyle Kihs. AWWA Director James Dean was excused.

Chair's Report – Michelle Cheek

- June ACE meeting: there was no Section reception this year. Planning one next year as well as resuming Section entries in national competitions.
- Section members awarded on the national stage were Corianne Burnett (John Lechner Award presented by Kristin Kihs) and Melinda Friedman (AP Black Research Award).
- Section summer workshop in Denver.
- Regional Meeting of Section Officers.
- Networking Diversity: a brief survey regarding alternative activities was provided to members for their input. Responses favored Bingo, putt putt golf, and fishing and cornhole tournaments. These may be good winter alternatives to golf, and subsections are encouraged to incorporate these and other new activities into networking and fundraising events.

Association Director's Report

Director James Dean was unable to be present.

Treasurers Report – Jason Canady

- August financials include all conference expenses.
- Conference income was slightly below predictions but that and the AWWA allotment are both in the 90th percentile.
- Expenses are running behind budget predictions.
- On track for doing better than the projected \$45,000 end of year fund balance.

Approval of Spring Meeting Minutes

Motion: Sleeth moved for approval of the Spring Trustees meeting minutes. Reiss seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Strategic Plan Update for Diversity and Inclusion

The Chair reported that at the summer board planning session, changes in the mission statement were discussed and the following change was proposed:

~~Foster~~ Advance a diverse and inclusive network of professionals to provide opportunities and leadership to the water industry in the Pacific Northwest.

Motion: Cary moved to approve the strategic plan update as reported. Belmont seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Membership and Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee - Joanie Stultz

- New Committee Chair is Gina Hortillosa.
- This year's survey had 130 responses (up from 31 last year).
- Trustees are welcome to attend committee meetings virtually.
- Takeaways from the survey:
 - Still work to do in terms of being representative although most strongly agreed the organization strives to be inclusive.
 - Could improve representation of different job functions of the industry, now heavy on engineering representation.
 - Mostly positive feedback but we have room to improve.
 - Importance of connecting and socializing at events with people you don't know.
 - More inclusive recruitment, make DNI part of mission, focused outreach on job training and mentorship for diverse groups.
 - Panel discussion on recruitment and retention planned for Conference.

2022 Tacoma Conference Survey Results

Executive Director Kihs reported on the post-conference survey results.

- 140 responses (800 attendees).
- Positive about more CEUs.
- 82% of respondents went to the vendor hall.
- Awards luncheon (rather than at evening banquet) very well received.
- Smartphone app not adapting to needs (already contracting with new vendor).

2023 Conference Program Jill Hoyenga

- All conference tracks are full and at least two pre-cons planned.
- Committee chairs will be contacted before first attempt at the shareable spreadsheet.
- Division-based model is working very well and producing a strong program.

2023 Conference Pat Everham

- Conference planning is well underway; golf course is locked in, and hotels are contracted.

E&T Fund Bob Willis and Jeff Lundt

- Because of the drop in the market since January 1, the fund has lost \$450,000 but still has over \$500,000. Scholarships this year totaled \$53,000 and in 2023 the amount will be approximately \$47,000.
- Subsections continue to support their dedicated funds and a new bequest has been received.
- Small scholarships for operators program will be expanded more aggressively. AWWA's policy does not pay for operators to attend ACE competitions but it is allowable to pay for their registration fees as a scholarship contribution. (AWWA Water Equation matching funds).
- Scholarship application numbers are ballooning, with about 120 operator scholarships in addition to ACE registrations. There is concern that the committee will need more members to get the large amount of paperwork done. It was suggested that the Board create a separate committee to deal with operator scholarships, preferably 3-4 people including someone with administrative help. The group could brainstorm more ways for us to get money to operators, focus on short schools and workshops and getting material from AWWA to help study for exams.
- Suggested that the Trustee Liaison work with E&T on the scholarship issues.

Division Reports

Utility Operations Tonya Reiss

- Not having competitions has made keeping Subsection Advisory Council members a challenge; however, all vacancies have been filled including the secretary position.
- Regular conference calls have fostered collaboration, sharing of ideas has created momentum for subsections.
- Distribution working to revitalize committee. Have a strong Spring Conference technical session and proposing a rotation of 4-5 topics so they will be available regularly to newer members as well as developing new trainings.
- Looking at creating a Distribution System information clearinghouse on their webpage.
- Would like resource guide for operators and organizations.
- Working on engineering awards, trying to get more applications.

Water Science Joel Cary

- Abstract review planning process – working on feedback and funneling to all committee members.
- Discussing potential survey to operators to determine what they need at the conference.
- Planning additional joint events to bring new members in; all strong committees but need to keep momentum going for finding leadership.

Member Engagement Tyler Clary

- Seeing more meeting attendees; YP Committee historically strong but need new membership now.
- Noted that a little pomp and circumstance surrounding the Board can inspire some to leadership roles.
- Great existing video should be used more.
- Young Professionals would like to bring back the YP Summit.
- Thanks to those who organized scavenger hunt, definitely a focus for next year but need to follow up and get participants involved with the organization.
- Membership Drive – competition within subsections Sept – Dec with winner receiving a catered lunch. Need 22 more members to fulfill our goal.

Internal Communication Libby Barg Bakke

- TCC in transition, needs new leadership.
- Melissa Porter is new Water Matters Coordinator; next issue will be mailed October 7.

(Trustee Barg Bakke left the meeting at 10:00)

Public Communications: Jamie Porter

- Wrestling with in-person vs. virtual trainings, especially in the area of customer services.
- Looking for customer service reinforcement, especially trainers.
- Still receiving requests for two-day trainings – now brainstorming options. including virtual training, 1-2 hour segments, internal staff training.
- All committees are working together to support the conference.
- Cross connection has new leadership, looking at backflow training in a box.
- Looking at providing webinars throughout the year, not just conference focused.

WUCs and WARNs John Roth

- Tri-state WUC is scheduled for November 17 in SeaTac area. This will include attendance by AWWA national representative Chris Moody who works from Washington DC.
- WARNs – resource sharing network to coordinate response to disasters as well as local issues.

Philanthropy Division – Nick Belmont

- Water for People rolled into the PAC.
- Official acceptance of two PAC events – Wine for Water and conference silent auction.
- Wine for Water may rotate among subsections in an effort to be more inclusive (currently always held in Walla Walla).
- Volunteer fatigue and need for new leadership.
- Reaching out to subsection liaisons to get a better understanding of events. section-wide so there will be a conduit to provide assistance.

- Outreach to find what events are planned for this year and next year; things are restarting after COVID. So far have provided \$24,000 to Water for People.
- E&T Fund has reported, appreciation for their efforts navigating this unusual time.

2023 Budget Discussion

- The Chair thanked Chair Elect Sleeth, Treasurer Canady and Executive Director Kihns for working with the Trustees to pull the budget together.
- Conference registration fee will increase by \$100 which puts the Section more in line with other regional conferences and allows us to better support the membership going forward.
- Canady noted the full budget has been provided to the membership. The increase in registration fee will allow us to restore some expenditures like sending people to ACE, hosting a meet and greet at ACE and purchasing shirts.
- Budget is still prudent on the expense side; liaisons should work with committees to recoup as much in income as possible to balance their expenditures.
- Fresh Ideas poster competition will return and is another example of committees working together to make things happen.

Motion: Belmont moved for approval of the 2023 Budget as proposed. Clary seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Membership

There were no comments from the membership.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.