

March 2010 Board Meeting Minutes

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS

26 March 2010

St. Cloud Public Library
St. Cloud, MN

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by President Ray Valley.

Present: Ray Valley, Ray Norrgard, Diana Regenscheid, Jack Lauer, Dan Steward, Anna Lipenga, Doug Norris, Beau Liddell, and former board member Lee Sundmark.

Treasurer's Report – Lee Sundmark

- Lee presented updated financial statement from annual meeting. Membership Savings (S1) balance of \$1,507.81 (increase from last year); Free Checking (S7) balance of \$1,341.94 (about \$300 less than last year), for total balance through March 7th of \$2,849.75. Balance is slightly better than last year and doing about as well as the organization ever has financially.
- Doug made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Anna; motion passed unanimously.

Secretary's Report – Beau Liddell

- Minutes from annual meeting were presented, and several minor corrections were made.
- Doug made motion to accept minutes as noted for corrections to website (will be approved at next years annual meeting); Ray N. seconded; passed unanimously.
- Beau got MFWEA original articles of incorporation from Lee and will update before next board meeting.

Position Statement on Conservation Funding – All

- Do we need to get updates on number of vacancies in FAW & Ecological Resources – decided may not be needed, just provide general relevance of shrinking human capacity relative to increasing demands.
- Need to request hunting fee increase as well as fishing license increase, focal point this year should be on fishing license increase since it's been formally proposed.
- Also should reference vacancies for all conservation agencies, and need information for SWCDs since they are doing conservation delivery as well and are feeling the budget crunches.
- Need to highlight need for fee increase and staffing capacity in public sector up-front just to get projects off the ground, rather than or in addition to after the fact management/maintenance.
- Need concrete information that folks can relate to: e.g. negotiate w/ landowners, project management in terms of contracts & administrative compliance, etc. to give them an idea on what's required to do this type of work and why the capacity is needed and tie it to the need for fund sustenance and especially association with license fee increase.

- Board members will provide editorial comments on Ray's position statement, and Ray will boil down to 2 pages; make sure Bill gets a copy to review as he has perspective from outside an agency that could help a lot.
 - Don't get so specific that we will lose sight of our point – remember that we're dealing with politicians.
 - May want to reference the conservation legacy council report commissioned by the Governor a number of years ago. Some relevant conclusions in there.
 - Ray's question: What is the train wreck that's coming if nothing improves?
 - ACQ & PILT is a good example.
 - Beau will give PILT language to add to #3 below on fund integrity so it can be included there and tie in the how impacts to PILT also influences other funds/efforts
 - We need to stay away from getting too much into the supplement/supplant thing right now.
-
- Also, need to be careful how we pitch contracting/private sector stuff. Could make some enemies.....don't open up a can of worms.
-
1. Supporting fee increases; index to inflation; provide some vacancy information for DNR FAW & Eco Resources – reference other agencies as well.
 2. Letter's main points need tweaking – reference general funds; include a reference to capacity; discussed proportion of allocation, but needs to be referenced to the cuts to the delivery program; some reference to reorganization of nat. res. agencies; too much reference on cuts; try to put a more positive spin on it; maybe reference general health & welfare to outdoors & environment and that health of our natural resources is tied directly to health of our citizens.
 3. These other funds must remain dedicated to conservation; insert PILT, etc. based upon comments above; mention % allocation in bonding must be maintained.
 4. Need to wordsmith and minimize reference to evaluation; minimize reference to private sector specifically; reword to something like “ensure that institutional capacity to maintain and manage these projects keeps pace commensurate with the demand”; ensure capacity to maintain/manage/measure accomplishments keeps pace with.....many projects carried out by NGO/private, but ultimately public agencies are called on to manage/maintain.....can't meet public trust obligations if we don't have increase in public sector capacity; should this be elevated above or inserted in the intro of the letter.....
-
- Maybe place in intro a reference to public trust doctrine & we (agencies) are required to do this.....regardless of who does the work
 - Perhaps we need a factsheet or talking point piece to follow-up on if we get questions to support or elaborate.
 - Remember that DNR is planning for downsizing.....so we could be presenting input in direct conflict to what DNR (and other agencies) are planning for.
 - Gravitating toward stripping out reference to number of vacancies and being more general.
 - Be aware as we're writing this that it's clearly aimed at natural resource agencies, mainly DNR, but we also extend beyond government agencies, so we may need to include some statements that cover this more broad coverage – what perspectives from the private sector could we include?

- Need to get comments back within a week and Ray will work on a new draft and send out for another week of review.
- 4/7/2010 – Ray sent out 2nd draft of position statement via e-mail on 4/3/10. Via e-mail on 4/4/10 Beau motioned to accept the letter with minor edits; Diana seconded on 4/5; Beau, Ray V., Diana, Jack, Nicholas & Bill voted in support as of 4/7/2010; no votes against.

Reorganization of Natural Resource Agencies Letter/Action – All

Board requested that Paul Stolen draft a letter on behalf of MACP, excluding information referencing history of issue and of MFWEA. Paul will get back to board within a week via e-mail if possible, and board will decide via e-mail on final version. Board felt that letter should be kept simple to address concern that any commission to discuss natural resource agency reorganization should include more representation by resource professionals & associated groups (e.g. SAF, AFS, TWS, MACP, others). Significant concern exists about the relatively few groups with resource management expertise that have been appointed as commission members.

Real scary in light of demands through legacy amendment and current amount of belt tightening that's going on. The bill for the reorganization directly calls for a significant reduction in staffing (mentions attaining through attrition, but that doesn't mean there won't be layoffs) and permanent budget cuts.

Paul provided 2nd draft letter on 3/31/10. Bill Faber motioned to accept Paul's letter and for Paul to send letter to legislature on MACP's behalf. Nicholas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with 9 directors viewing correspondence (Ray Valley, Ray Norrgard, Doug Norris, Beau Liddell, Bill Faber, Nicholas Snavely, Jack Lauer, Diana Regenscheid, Dean Paron). Paul will send final version to John Huber & Beau for posting to our website. All directors were encouraged to forward copy of letter to contacts of other professional organizations they may know.

A "letter to editor" associated with the position statement will be deferred, and if needed considered pending the response from the legislature.

Having no more business, Diana made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Beau seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.