

## AWWA Retreat

6/30/21

ATTENDING:

Theresa Konda  
Rob Pierce  
Lee Dunn  
Brittany Travers  
John Keith  
Adam Darbro  
Craig Reinsch  
Marc Rosso  
Angel Lowery  
Mary Poe  
Brian Gongol  
Mike Koenig

### Agenda

#### **1. Introductions & refreshments**

Marc gave an introduction and covered housekeeping items.

#### **2. State of the Section, Mary. 10 minutes.**

Mary provided a State of the Section Report. Copy of the outline is included with minutes.

Membership is trending down. Mary discussed some of this is due to students.

Discussion Brandon Ostentausky on water operator York. Discussion on the issues with retention and membership.

Discussion on benefits of membership. It was suggested by Craig to have Ryan and Craig work together on putting together benefits of membership to AWWA

Discussion was also worked around the cost of attending of conferences less for memberships.

Mary talked on what we can do to reverse the trend.

Mary talked about this would be the year to make changes because of the pandemic. When Marc was the chair of membership. He would reach out to the attendance of the fall conference and reach out to them and see what they can do to get them to register.

A lot of the discussion centered around reaching out at a personal level. Grassroots phone calls.

Mary talked about revising the ABC's of AWWA. This would be for new board members.

**3. Review budget & investments, John, 15 minutes, Scott Fuhrman, 15 minutes.**

John provided update on our budget. Not a lot of activity since the pandemic.

Theresa discussed that there are RMSO's available for maybe using funds available for board members to attend.

Scott Furman gave an update on our investment funds. He focused on the reason why we started it. How it is performing and if it was meeting our goals.

Discussion was had about moving to a more aggressive investing to get better return on our dollars. Then we talked about what to do with the funds we are making. We are a non-profit and we should have a goal of what to do with the funds.

**4. Conferences. 20-30 minute presentation, 30 minutes discussion.**

- Past attendance trends (2017 to 2020) – AWWA and full conference

<b>Year</b>	<b>AWWA only</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>AWWA %</b>
2017	Unknown	314	n/a
2018	80	304	26.3%
2019	94	363	25.9%
2020 (virtual)	n/a	n/a	n/a

Craig started off talking about the fall conference. What are some ideas for what we did?

We will not be having an in-person dignitary from the association. Mary suggested having a dignitary speak at lunch.

Needing more consultants.

Craig provided numbers of our attendance to the Fall Conference.

Craig SWOT'ed us on the fall conference

NSAWWA Retreat – 6/30/2021: Fall Conference Discussion

- SWOT analysis – fall conference

- Strengths:
 

◆ Networking	Virtual option: Bad
◆ Stability	
◆ Education/Credit hours	Mixed/both
◆ Business development	Bad
◆ Social/fun	Bad
◆ Conference costs are low	
◆ Travel (more focused by getting away	Bad
  
- Weaknesses:
  - ◆ Membership pricing (different attendance costs)
  - ◆ Travel/lodging
  - ◆ Attendance (virtual vs in-person)
  - ◆ Non-virtual option/hybrid (not being able to view sessions later; big systems like it, small systems don't)
  - ◆ Pizzazz (extra stuff)
  - ◆ Inclusion/diversity (fall conference typically has more engineers and fewer operators; large vs small systems)
  
- Opportunities:
  - ◆ Top Ops (ACE)
  - ◆ Competitions (backflow, water taste testing, etc)
  - ◆ Scholarships
  - ◆ Networking
  - ◆ Recorded sessions (for later viewing)
  - ◆ Hands on topics
  - ◆ Booth/table for membership information
  - ◆ Advocacy
  - ◆ Leadership training
  - ◆ Job fair/career promotion (high schools, etc)
  - ◆ Joint conference with Rural Water to help increase attendance

- ◆ Small systems training opportunities (Wichita State, MAP (Midwest Assistance Program))
- Threats:
  - ◆ Social exclusion (post-pandemic)
  - ◆ Generational differences
  - ◆ Other conferences/organizations
  - ◆ Many large conferences
  - ◆ Habits
  - ◆ Topics focused more on: “how does it work” or “how does it affect me”?
  - ◆ Budgets available for training
  - ◆ Lack of communication
  - ◆ Workload (availability for training)
  - ◆ Less people joint groups now (rural fire depts, etc)

Focus areas (top few):

- Joint conference with Rural Water
- Job fair/career development (include high school/Kearney)
- Hybrid conference offerings (recorded session)
- Small System education opportunities
- Pizzazz (what to offer)
- Leadership training opportunities (as separate training)

Were the cups a good investment? Maybe anti-climactic because we did not get a personal feedback.

Advocacy

Top 5 Ideas

1. Working with Rural Water
2. Career Job Fair
3. Bringing Hybrid conference to reality.
4. Put focus on Small Systems
5. Pizzazz/Networking/ Fun
6. Leadership Training

5. Lunch and conversation. 45 minutes.

**6. Operators.20-30 minute presentation, 30 minutes discussion.**

Ryan Hurst gave a update on the current state of what is available to operators across Nebraska for CEU's. We also discussed what is available for Certification Training and the need of a program for bringing operators into the industry.

The Southeast Community College Energy Generation Operations program has electives that will help bring people into treatment plants. We need to do more to make this program successful.

A lot of the next conversation was on what do we need to do to fill the needs of distribution, collections, small towns, street departments. Ryan Discussed with the board the option of a Public Works Certificate. This could be non-credit classes that help those get into the industry. The Board wanted Ryan to take up the lead and see what we can do showing AWWA's support.

**7. Strategic planning conversation. 90 minutes.**

What to do with 12k liquidity. Possibly 35% scholarships 65% for other. What do we do with this extra funds. Talking about using funds to offset costs of hybrid conference.

We want to commit to the Hybrid option on the Fall Conference. Our goal is to provide recorded sessions to people at a later date.

Membership. Fact Sheet on benefits of being part of AWWA. What kind of gift for the conference. Prizes. Long put competition. Could give 5 systems free memberships and free attendance of the conference. John suggested membership is covered for all person who apply for the scholarship.

Publications. Membership directory sending out. Maybe we need a non-electronic version. Directory and History book for all membership goal being 2022 for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Written copy after the fall conference for the publication committee.

75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Idea on having a big event.

**8. D&I Documents. 15 minutes.**

Marc talked about a 1 year plan for improving Diversity and Inclusion. DE&I will be becoming a part of the membership committee. Could be a stand alone joint committee

**9. Potential BOD meeting between the retreat and FC.**

Board Meeting August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1 PM via Teams.

Board Meeting September 13 12:30 NDEE office.

10. Concluding remarks and adjourn.