



Board Meeting Notes (v.0)

Date	July 14, 2026		
Time	10:00 am CT		
Location	In person: No in-person location Virtual option: via Microsoft Teams (email invitation issued on request)		
Call to order	Brian Gongol called the meeting to order at approximately 10:03 AM.		
Roll call		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
	GONGOL, Brian	X	
	LOWERY, Angel	X	
	ROBERTS, Joe	X	
	JOHNSON, Jessica	X	
	ZUVER, Torey	X	
	HOVDA WALTON, Emily	X	
	MULLER, Mike	X	
	SEUFERER, Chuck		X
	SLATER, Alan	X	
	HURST, Ryan	X	
	POE, Mary	X	
	Others in attendance are kindly asked to identify themselves following the roll call of officers		
Other Attendees	Ethan Hall and Chris Holley, Committee Chairs, and Erin Benson, AWWA National, were also in attendance.		
Approval of agenda	Agenda approved by unanimous consent.		
Assign designated dissenter	Designated dissenter – Ryan Hurst was nominated to serve as the designated dissenter.		
Approval of minutes	Alan Slater motioned, Emily Hovda Walton seconded. Meeting notes for Board Meeting held on May 19, 2026 were approved by unanimous consent.		
Chair's report	Written report submitted by Brian Gongol. Brian Gongol presented the report from the Chair (attached). Name tags have been received. Brian will distribute to		



board members as he encounters them.

The NSAWWA had good attendance at ACE. Doug Woodbeck was recognized for Fuller Award.

Brian presented a podium talk on cyber security and a poster presentation. Brian suggested we consider a poster session at the Fall Conference (general professionals / YPs and student presentations).

Committee google form appears to be working well. It was pointed out that you need to login only if adding attachments.

Brian will attend the Summer Workshop at the end of the month. There are remaining funds if others have a desire to attend.

Reimbursement checks have been distributed to teachers who attended the UNL STEM teacher's workshop. Brian would like to prepare a "Water 101" presentation to help bridge the gap between chemistry projects discussed during training and real-world use.

Brian received a call from the Flatwater Free Press and was asked to offer a perspective on datacenters. Brian was noted quoted in the final published story.

Brian is still working through problems with Listserv.

NSAWWA LinkedIn page is attracting attention.

Few responses have been received on the time and talent form.

Brian briefly reviewed the AWWA events calendar.

Update on goals:

1. News Coverage: There is a story currently available with Auburn's Alan Slater through Nebraska Public Media.
2. Awards: Well on way to goal of 10 new awards.
3. New Members: Membership is stable. Looking to keep pushing.



Mary Poe delivered the Director's report (attached).

Mary attended ACE in DC. One of the big themes during the board meeting was AI and the role it could play in the water sector.

Brent Tippey (Kentucky-Tennessee Section) began his term as AWWA president.

Mike Worlton (Arizona Section) will serve as the AWWA representative during the Fall Conference.

Treasurer's report

Written report submitted by Jessica Johnson.

Jessica Johnson presented the May and June Budget Reports.

Joe Roberts to follow up with individuals regarding remaining checks from the prior WFP sporting clays event.

Joe Roberts motioned to accept the Treasurer's report, seconded by Jessica Johnson. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

Other officer reports

Committee reports

Archives & History:

Written report submitted by Craig Reinsch.

Audit:

No report submitted.

Awards:

Written report submitted by Sarah Sawin.

Budget:

Written report submitted by Jessica Johnson.

Processed checks from UNL STEM workshop. Future deposit to investment account.

Cross Connections:

Written report submitted by Chris Holley.

Looking for speakers at Fall Conference. Chris to follow up with Greg and Andy.

**Education:**

Written report submitted by John Keith.

Preconference – Midwest Assistance Program will provide full day training. Jessica to send brief description to Angel to aid with finalization of Fall Conference agenda.

Fall Conference:

Written report submitted by Angel Lowery.

Agenda is nearly complete. Angel is looking for information on preconference event and looking for speakers for backflow. Mary requested information for dignitary speaking requirements.

Fuller Award:

Written report submitted by Chad Roberts.

The Fuller Award nomination has been submitted.

Manufacturers and Associates Council:

Written report submitted by Monte Dakan.

Monte is working with vendors.

Membership Engagement:

Written report submitted by Chuck Seuferer.

Membership is stable. 299 current members.

Nominations:

The committee is scheduled to meet at 2:00 pm.

Brian, John, and Ryan to meet to discuss nominations.

Philanthropy:

Written report submitted by Steve Hanna.

The sporting clays event is scheduled for September 11th.

Public Information:

Written report submitted by Mary Poe.

The Governor's Proclamation event was very well attended.

**Publications:**

Written report submitted by Brian Gongol.

Brian encouraged board members to share or like linkedin posts to increase visibility. Brian would like to update contact list.

Scholarship:

Written report submitted by Melissa Polito.

Small Systems:

Written report submitted by Alan Slater.

Brian will look to recruit individuals to serve on committee and work with Alan. Erin Benson may also have ideas. Ethan would like to be included for coordination with panel discussion.

Top Ops:

Written report submitted by John Keith.

Looking to recruit teams.

Water Utility Council:

Written report submitted by Chad Roberts.

YP and Student Activities:

Written report submitted by Samantha Corey & Ethan Hall.

Held quarterly webinar. Looking to hold two more webinars before November. Brian requested that Ethan send calendar of YP events to make sure the publications committee can help get the word out.

Recent event reports**ACE (June 21-24)**

- **Several board members attended**

Review upcoming events**Board meetings**

- September 8 (virtual/MUD offices)
- November 3 (annual business meeting)

Summer Workshop (July 30-31) in Denver, CO

- AWWA expectation: Chair, chair-elect, and section staff expected to attend. Recommended for trustees.
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- Attending: Gongol
- Maybe: Roberts
- No: Hurst, Johnson, Lowery, Muller, Poe, Zuver

Fall sporting clays shoot (September 11)

Fall Conference (November 3-4)

Membership summit (January 2027)

- AWWA expectation: Membership chair and section staff expected to attend
- Attending: None thus far
- Maybe: Lowery, Muller
- No: Poe, Zuver, Hurst

YP summit (February 14-16, 2027) in Vancouver, BC

- AWWA expectation: YP chair expected to attend
- Attending: None thus far
- Maybe: None thus far
- No: Gongol, Hurst, Johnson, Lowery, Muller, Poe, Roberts, Slater, Zuver

Washington Fly-In (April 2027)

- AWWA expectation: At least one state delegate
- Attending: None thus far
- Maybe: Gongol
- No: Hurst, Lowery, Muller, Poe, Roberts, Zuver

RMSO (Spring 2027)

- AWWA expectation: Section chair expected to attend. Chair-elect and secretary/treasurer recommended.
- Attending: None thus far
- Maybe: Gongol, Lowery, Poe, Roberts
- No: Hurst, Slater, Zuver

ACE (June 2027)

- AWWA expectation: Secretary or other board member registers free on a co-op basis (must work registration desk)
 - Attending: TBD
 - Maybe: TBD
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- No: TBD

Review AWWA "expected attendance" matrix

Old business

AWWA Membership Challenge

- Progress report
- [NSAWWA is actively working on the membership challenge.](#)

Member interests survey form

- Progress report
- [The Member Interest Survey has been submitted. Brian has received a few responses.](#)

LinkedIn group champion/custodian

- [Brian is looking for a LinkedIn "champion".](#)

Magnetic name badges

- Badges are complete and will be handed out individually

Paid staff position

- [Topic to be discussed at the next retreat.](#)

Strategic plan

Discuss Goal #4: "Collaborate with water stakeholders"

- Discuss a designated-observer plan
- Potential stakeholder counterparts (water sector): NWEA, APWA, LONM, NRWA, NRD, Nebraska Water Resources Association,
- Potential stakeholder counterparts (professional orgs): APHA, ACEC, NFPA
- Potential stakeholder counterparts (ag sector): Farm Bureau, Nebraska Farmers Union, Nebraska State Irrigation Association, Nebraska Corn Growers Association

Potential stakeholder counterparts (conservation orgs):
Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League

New business

Budget changes:

- Motion: Budget for membership lapel pins
 - [Purchase 100 pins and get 100 free. Reported cost was approximately \\$380. Motion was made by](#)
-



Angel Lowery and seconded by Ryan Hurst to add lapel pins to the budget. Motion approved.

Fall Conference:

- Discuss current state of planning
- Discuss "Fresh Ideas" poster contest
- Discuss first-time presenter track
- Angel and Emily to discuss.

Awards

- Discuss art glass sculptures for awards
- To be discussed in September. Reported cost of approximately \$55.

Proclamation: Water and Wastewater Operators Week

- Select week
- Identify responsibility
- Jessica is coordinating with others.

Public outreach kit for festivals

- Discuss event in Gordon
- Assign task for research
- It would be beneficial to have some sort of pop-up set up for miscellaneous events.

Historical markers

- Discussion of concept
- Assign task for research (standing or ad-hoc committee)

Announcements

Upcoming meetings

September 8

November 3

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Alan Slater, second by Emily Hovda Walton. The motion was approved and the meeting concluded at approximately 11:47 PM.



Attest

Respectfully submitted by Torey Zuver and Joe Roberts



Chair's Report

July 14, 2026

What's new

- The **magnetic nametags** have arrived. I'll distribute them when I see you.
- **ACE was a success** for us as a section -- we had a great turnout at the opening general session, and four of us were able to attend the Fuller Award breakfast to show our support for Doug Woodbeck.
- I personally enjoyed **presenting at ACE**. Mary Poe and Jessica Johnson were kind enough to attend my podium talk on cybersecurity and take photos (thanks!), and I hope I represented the section well.
- I also gave a **poster presentation** at ACE, which was a completely new experience for me, but I'm pleased to report that the poster got mentioned in a feature article in Water Online. I would like us to discuss what it would take to get a poster session underway at the Fall Conference: ACE had a student track and a general industry track, and the student track could be a really good tool for encouraging student and YP members to identify AWWA as essential to their careers.
- The **committee report form** seems to be working well, but I discovered a hiccup. In adding the feature to allow chairs to upload files, I unwittingly also ended up requiring users to have Google accounts. I'll separate the forms so that people can resume submitting regular reports without having to log in, but will retain the option to upload a report if necessary.
- I am heading to the **AWWA Summer Workshop** in Denver at the end of the month. I'll report back on what I pick up.
- We distributed about \$3,000 in reimbursement checks to the attendees at the **UNL STEM teachers' summer workshop**. It is important to me that we follow up with the attendees at least a few times during the coming school year to facilitate contacts between those teachers and their local water utilities. These are AWWA members' funds being disbursed, so we should show a return on membership value. I got a preview of some of the content being presented and hoped to prepare a "Water 101" presentation to help bridge the gap between the chemistry projects being discussed at the workshop and the real-world use (or non-use) of that chemistry in real community water systems, but unfortunately there was not enough time to get a real presentation assembled. I would like to get a few of us to knock our heads together to prepare something if we expect to provide funding for this same workshop next year.
- A few weeks ago, I spent about an hour on the phone with Anila Yoganathan of the Flatwater Free Press to offer a perspective on **data centers and water consumption**. I was not quoted in



the final published story¹, nor were any of the four individuals I recommended for further follow-up, but I am pleased to report that I expect to give a 30-minute presentation on the topic at our Fall Conference this year. My emphasis during the interview was that we recognize considerable potential for data centers and artificial intelligence to improve the water industry, but that we also recognize the substantial impact that they can have on both first-order water consumption (mainly for evaporative cooling) as well as second-order consumption (via thermoelectric power generation), and that we as a sector encourage all water users to be intentional and respectful of this precious resource. I also attended a session at ACE on the subject, and I hope to offer a well-rounded take on the topic at the Fall Conference. Though AWWA wasn't directly cited in the news report, I am pleased that we are gaining some traction in being seen as a reputable source for news coverage.

What's underway

- I still have not found a solution to our **need for a new listserv** program. I'm all ears if you've got a recommendation. I'm looking into a few alternatives (Beehiiv, Ghost, and others), but nothing has impressed me yet.
- The **LinkedIn page** is still attracting new followers at a nice pace, which I'm glad to see. I hope you're following the page yourself. I do still hope to recruit a few designated boosters to help amplify the messages we're putting on social media.
- I'm still not quite sure how to generate interest in the **time and talent form**. We're getting fantastic responses to surveys asking specific questions (like looking for Fall Conference moderator volunteers), but there's just very little response to the more general question of how to get members more engaged. I might start breaking out discrete requests, like asking for volunteers to take on specific roles.

Friendly reminders

- I remain interested in trying to help **energize the quiet committees** and make the committee chair role smoother for the active ones. Please let me know about any obstacles you think we could help break down.
- Please send me suggestions when you'd like to **get the word out** about things that don't fit neatly into categories like event announcements. Looking for new members? Have a certain type of volunteer you need? Working on a secret project in your underground lab? I'd like to feature these in our weekly newsletter, and I haven't heard much from our section leadership yet. Please help!

¹ <https://flatwaterfreepress.org/data-centers-can-guzzle-serious-water-as-some-nebraskans-worry-tech-giants-seek-solutions/>



Progress toward goals

News coverage (3 times)

Upcoming potential news pegs include Source Water Protection Week (September 28th) and World Toilet Day (November 19th).

I'm always interested in anything you think might be newsworthy that we could use as a reason to reach out once again.

I am planning to generate a template for us to use to announce career milestones and membership anniversaries. If you happen to know of any good candidates to treat as test subjects, please let me know.

Progress/results:

- Nebraska Public Media covered a story about Auburn's new source of water supply following our Drinking Water Week announcement.

Awards (10 recipients)

We're one month away from the deadline for awards. Under "new business", we will discuss raising the stakes for the awards we hand out. I think we can do some real good with a modest investment in some tasteful physical awards to go with our certificates.

Progress/results:

- I can safely report that we have at least five strong award nominations already. The deadline is August 15th, and even if you don't want to complete a nomination form yourself, all I need from you is a name to get a recommendation started.

New members (30)

Our membership looks stable, but the gray tsunami continues to affect us. I'm out to redouble efforts between now and our next meeting.

Thank you for your support of our community!

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Gongol

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mary Poe
Nebraska Section AWWA Director
mary.poe@nebraska.gov
Submitted July 13, 2026

ACE26 was a success, and although I haven't seen the final numbers there were over 10,000 attendees. Nebraska was well represented (see picture from Opening General Session) and it was a great conference and venue. ACE27 will be in San Diego June 13-16, 2027.

The big theme during the board meetings June 20-21 was Artificial Intelligence and the role it could play in the water sector. The association settled on the Cimatri company to help with their AI strategy, and to determine how AI can benefit the association and the water industry. They don't think it will eliminate jobs but rather supplement the work we do by utilizing time-saving tools.

Brent Tippey (Kentucky-Tennessee Section) began his term as the 145th AWWA President. Brent is a Senior VP at HDR.

I'm excited to welcome Mike Worlton (Arizona Section) as the AWWA representative visiting our Fall Conference. Mike is an AWWA Vice-President and an area director for Black & Veatch.

AWWA will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2031. This leaves 5 years to start planning for the important event.

The association is ahead of projections for their **2026 WIG (Wildly Important Goal)**.

2026 WIG: Increase membership from 48,904 to 50,600 and to increase membership revenue from 15.4 M to 16.1M.

End of Director's Report - Mary Poe, July 13, 2026

