

MAEE Board Meeting Minutes

Saturday, May 12, 2011

Audubon Center of the North Woods



Present: Dan Schutte, John Smith, Stefan Theimer, Scott Alsleben, Faith Krogstad, Britt Gangeness, Kristi Pursell, Erin Zoellick, Anna Dutke, Amy Markle, Nicole Pokorney (by phone)

Absent: Ben Bishop

Approve Agenda

Dan motioned to approve agenda, Kristi seconded, motion passed.

Approve Minutes from March

Britt suggested minor changes, which she emailed to Faith. Amy moved to approve the amended minutes, and Stefan seconded. Motion passed.

Action: Jeff Ledermann as a Department of Education ex officio board member.

Britt shared a volunteer job description for this new position. Dan noted that it would be helpful to have a direct conduit to the Minnesota Department of Education. Britt noted that Jeff is a former MAEE board member, and Stefan observed that Jeff worked on the second version of the *GreenPrint*. Kristi moved to invite Jeff Ledermann as an ex officio board member as described in the job description. Anna seconded. Motion passed.

President's Report

Britt reported that Adriane's pay will come in under budget by the end of the year (~\$300-400). Several letters of support for funding of federal legislation were approved via email by the board: funding the Office of Environmental Education at the Environmental Protection Agency, funding NASA's Innovations in Global Climate Change Education program, funding NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants Program, and funding SNF's Climate Change Education Partnership. These were circulated at the meeting. The LCCMR communications person contacted Britt to say that there were errors in the article written by MAEE. Amy Kay originally wrote the article and the errors were not major. Britt made changes and added content about the legislative process. The revised article is posted on the MAEE website under Advancing EE. The original letter was printed in the most recent newsletter.

2011 MEEC Conference Report (Nicole)

Nicole reported that the event budget summary is not complete. Stefan sent her some information and estimates. This info is on the Skydrive, but it has not been checked over. Erin has received all the bills. Now all the Wild Apricot income and expenses need to be put into a spreadsheet. Erin noted that the Wild Apricot info is not complete. Expenses from the conference are about \$19,000. Britt encouraged Nicole to include all the expenses in the event budget so that next year, MAEE will have an accurate picture of costs. Overall, it will appear that MAEE did not lose money on the conference. However,

MAEE originally budgeted to make \$10,000 on the conference. Nicole will create this report tomorrow and send it to Erin. Once this is complete it will be emailed to the entire board.

Aside from financials, Nicole reported that there was a lot of positive feedback. Nicole felt that things went very well. Nicole needs to get the evaluation to a format that will work and will send it to Britt, who will send it out to conference attendees.

Britt will help Nicole write up position descriptions of those who planned the conference.

2012 Conference Ideas (Nicole)

Keynotes and “big picture” timeline – Amy is going to Itasca to scope out the site.

Britt suggested creating a Lodging coordinator for the Itasca location. This person would get the word out that people can individually reserve space. MAEE could reserve a group site or more locations starting on June 21. Cash flow seems like it will suffice for reserving up to \$1000. MAEE could then allow people to reserve spots starting in Feb. Britt suggested over-reserving and padding the conference fee in the event that not all the spots are filled. She suggested reserving Wednesday and Thursday nights. Amy volunteered to assume this role. Amy is confident that MAEE will be successful in reserving space. She also suggested that we could partner with the University of Minnesota to use their lodging. Amy will call them. Generic info will go out on the listserv saying that MAEE will be reserving space at the park for the conference. The U of M students could be participants, and staff could lead sessions.

Logo contest – this idea was raised for the next conference. Faith will send logo contest rules and release form to the board (esp. Nicole). Nicole would like to send out a notice in the e-Updates.

How to include Jeffers Foundation (Dan) – This foundation is interested in working with MAEE as an avenue to reach formal educators. They expressed interest in cosponsoring the 2012 conference. They want to see children getting outdoors and curriculum formalized. They suggested that the 2013 conference be held closer to the Twin Cities so that more teachers could attend and save money on lodging. Dan will be attending the Jeffers board meeting on Saturday. They mentioned offering stipends for teachers. They are also interested in non-formal educators, getting families outside. Britt suggested that we generate ideas of specific ways for them to participate. John brainstormed some barriers for teachers to attend the conference. John suggested we offer discounts for first time attendees, Stefan suggested promoting the idea that teachers bring colleagues with less grounding in EE. Dan will ask whether the Jeffers Foundation would be interested in sponsoring teachers (first-time attendees, bringing colleagues, paying for the following year’s membership to MAEE, etc). MAEE’s role would be to serve as the fiscal agent for the stipend money.

Communications report (Stefan, Scott, John)

There was a glitch in the newsletter printing, it seems like the newsletters were not sent out. Otherwise the newsletter went well. Scott is looking for ideas for the next newsletter, which has the theme of play and recreation. The goal date for the newsletter is the summer solstice. One idea raised was highlighting the Jeffers Foundation website launch.

Stefan brought up press releases and press kits. He thought it would be useful to have a press kit to include if we send out a press release. This is on Stefan's work plan. Scott suggested creating a Facebook page.

Membership report (Kristi, Dan)

We have about 194 members. We have more organizational members (some are comp members like Audubon). Kristi added logos to the website. We are missing addresses for some members due to a glitch with conference registration.

Treasurer's report (Erin)

There has been a lot of work on Erin's part, so Quickbooks is not yet up to date. Erin handed out an expense transaction summary and deposit transaction summary. Erin thinks we might have made \$22,000 on the conference, conservatively. It was difficult to separate out conference registration and memberships on the website so that things could get entered in to Quickbooks. Cybersource is the company we use to process credit cards, and when that is entered into online banking it is a lump sum that is difficult to tease apart. Britt suggested that we talk to the Nonprofit Assistance Fund to see how this could be streamlined.

Erin filed for a three-month extension on filing the 990EZ form. If we made \$22,000 on the conference, we could hire someone to help with taxes. We could do this in July.

Defining board roles (Britt)

Britt noted that we've done a good job recording job descriptions for conference roles because we engage outside of the board. Some responsibilities of board members have changed due to things like technology (website), so it seems that our roles need to be updated. Britt wants to gauge how important that would be for the board at this point. Britt will send out an assignment for everyone.

2012 board recruitment (Anna)

Anna attended the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits conference. She learned that board roles should be based on the strategic plan. Roles should be listed on the website. List the skills needed. Important to be intentional about recruiting for skills. Be comfortable going outside your organization to recruit strangers. Skills first, EE second. Five seats will be up for re-election. Erin (unsure), Kristi (unsure), Nicole (interested), Stefan (interested), Ben (unsure). Britt may resign as president but remain on the board not as president. Britt thinks we need accounting/financial expertise on the board. Faith suggested evaluation skills. Erin noted that if we recruit for these skills, we may need to be prepared to launch some of these projects. Organizational management skills were suggested by Britt. Faith raised the question of recruiting for reasons other than skills: geography, connections, life experience. Scott added diversity to this list. Erin noted that we may not be successful in recruitment, and Faith suggested that we allocate funds for professional development for current board members to fill gaps in skill sets. Amy suggested connecting to the Mdewaketon community. Anna suggested that we all think of our roles for 2012 and think about recruitment before the July meeting. Also look into recruiting organizational memberships and volunteers.

Affiliate Network update (Faith)

Faith attended the NAAEE Affiliate Network Summit in Baltimore, MD in early April. Over forty affiliate representatives were present from the US and Canada, with funding from the EPA. Faith reported that the new interim director of NAAEE is an NAAEE Affiliate Member staff member, which will likely help raise the profile of the Affiliate Network within NAAEE. She will be vying for the Executive Director position. At the Summit, the group worked on a strategic plan for the Affiliate Network and in the process, learned about strategic planning. The Affiliate Network is interested in building capacity of the individual affiliates, strengthening the Network, and improving communication between affiliates. In addition to strategic plans, the Affiliate Network would like to see individual affiliates create business plans. There was a brief orientation to business planning at the Summit.

Planning to strategic plan (Faith)

At the Affiliate Summit in Baltimore (see above), information and resources on strategic planning were provided. Faith suggested that we “plan to plan”. John, Erin, and Stefan indicated they were interested in being involved. Faith recommended that MAEE purchase a strategic planning workbook recommended by the trainer in Baltimore. Faith will call the group together for a planning session.

Awards program (Amy)

Amy would like the awards program to be ready to launch for fall. Amy will create a website for it. Kelley Dinsmore and Pete Cleary are involved and think that it will be easy to recruit teachers to judge. Amy secured buckthorn and leather awards for the lifetime achievement award winners for years to come. Other award categories are formal educators and nonformal educators. NAAEE recognizes affiliate award winners at their conference. John offered St. John’s University wood shop as a source for awards.

NCLI and ELP update (John, Stefan), relation to Green Schools Movement.

Stefan reported that he called together the PCA, DNR, and MDE to gauge interest in an ELP in the new legislative climate since the November election. Due to staffing changes, there was no one from the PCA and two people from the MDE. It is not clear at the national level what is going to happen, whether money will be tied to implementation or if it will simply be a mandate. The group noted that it is very important to EE that Jeff Ledermann is now at MDE. We have an opportunity to take action that hasn’t existed for at least 5-8 years. Jeff pointed out that the GreenPrint has an appendix about getting EE in schools, but it needs to be updated to take current circumstances into account. Talked about putting together a white paper spelling out what the MDE can do for EE (“a plan to plan”). Spelling out what teachers need to implement EE in every classroom.

Stefan and John met with a Minnesota Green Schools Coalition (through the US Green Building Council) which included St. Paul Schools. Attendees were interested in improving buildings and using them as teaching tools. Britt questioned how MAEE is different than Green Schools

network? Is it a difference in education vs. facilities? Stefan noted that education was not part of their definition of “Green School”. Their goal is to have all youth attending schools in green schools. In the Green Ribbon program that was recently funded, EE was part of the definition of what makes a green school. John and Stefan thought it was good to be at the table. Scott is personally interested in the green school movement. There is overlap between ELP and Green School initiatives but they are different. Scott suggested that we could recruit green school partner organizations may be good candidates for MAEE organizational membership (and Amy suggested conference sponsorship).

Other announcements

All NAAEE affiliates were asked to be part of a learning group through the Affiliate Network but MAEE declined. We don’t have the capacity right now to take it on. Kristi responded that we weren’t prepared to participate at this time.

Adjourn

Amy made a motion to adjourn. Dan seconded. Passed.