

## **MINUTES**

### **MAEE Board Meeting**

Thursday, July 19, 2012 / 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Via Video Conference (St. Paul, Duluth, and Ely locations)

**Board Members Present:** Kristi Pursell, Britt Gangeness, Stefan Theimer, Dan Schutte, Katie-Lyn Bunney, Erin Zoellick, Amy Markle, John Smith,

**Others Present:** Jeff Ledermann (MDE), Jill Nocera

**Not present:** Faith Krogstad, Anna Dutke

**Quorum present?** Yes.

#### **Proceedings:**

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m., Britt Gangeness, President.

Dan moved and Kristi seconded to approve the agenda for the meeting. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda: May meeting notes were moved to the agenda for discussion. The consent agenda was moved by Stefan, seconded by John, and unanimously approved. The consent agenda included the following resolutions: approve reports from executive team, membership, communication, awards, scholarships, legislative, partnerships.

Britt went over her concerns with the May minutes, namely that one of the votes wasn't assigned. Dan recalled that he motioned, and Kristi seconded. Motion to approve May minutes as amended. Katie-Lyn motioned, John seconded. Motion passed.

#### Governance items

##### **Quarterly financial report**

On behalf of the absent Treasurer Faith, Britt passed out financial reports in three pages: budget performance, balance sheet and conference income and expenses. The 2012 conference made about \$1500. Our accumulated losses over 7 years is -\$8,000. A motion was made by Dan to approve the reports. Katie-Lyn seconded, and was unanimously approved.

##### **Mid-year adjusted budget**

Britt and Faith created an adjusted budget that cuts several remaining costs: reduces bookkeeper costs, stops admin contract assistance after August, removes mileage reimbursement for meetings, and reduces the credit card fees we pay through our web credit card payment system. These cuts bring the budget to a "break even" budget for 2012. However, the adjusted 2012 budget assumes that we will successfully bring in the following revenue in the last half of the year:

\$386 in individual contributions

\$920 in individual membership dues

\$600 in organizational membership dues

Discussion ensued regarding the revised budget. The board decided that online credit card payments are an important service to offer. Rather than cut that cost entirely, MAEE will choose the least expensive option possible-- that likely means about \$25/month. This was edited on the revised budget. Katie-Lyn offered to do the e-updates, allow the organization to cut the administrative assistant contract costs. John motioned to approve the revised budget, which balances at -\$100.39 for the year. Stefan seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Legislative committee: Letter to Pheasants Forever**

John reported that Pheasants Forever recently cut their program support for an EE program called the Leopold Project. The committee is requesting approval to send a letter to Pheasants Forever on behalf of the organization regarding this cut. The overall idea of the letter was approved, and drafts will pass through the executive committee for approval, prior to being sent. Question was raised as to what the goal of the letter was. The Leg. committee will assure high quality and clear goals.

#### **Appointment to the National Green Schools review committee**

With Scott's departure from the board, Jeff asked about replacing him as the MAEE representative on the MN Green Schools committee. Would involve about 4 hrs in one meeting in 2012. Kristi motioned to approve Dan as the representative with Stefan as the proxy. John seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Board seats**

Resignations- two resignations in June, Nicole Pokorney and Scott Alseben.

The bylaws allow the president to appoint members to vacant seats, with the board's approval. Britt is seeking approval to appoint Jill Nocera to Nicole Pokorney's seat (it had been expected and Jill was recruited). Jill introduced herself. Kristi motioned to approve the appointment, Dan seconded, motion was unanimously approved.

Scott's seat will remain vacant until 2013. It will be filled through the election process. Discussion ensued regarding recruitment for fall elections. Several names and ideas were passed to Stefan.

#### Strategic discussions

##### **2012 conference**

The board reviewed the evaluations from the 2012 conference.

##### **Framing the conference discussion: use a strategic lens**

Britt asked the group to review the strategy screen that we created and our competitive advantages.

The criteria for a strategy screen that the board agreed was important are:

- Mission
- Competitive advantages

- Break even or make money over 12 months
- Fit within our current capacity as all-volunteer organization

Our competitive advantages are

- We bring together a diverse EE community members.
- We hold a professional and quality state EE conference.
- We support legislation on behalf of the EE community.
- We have international affiliation with NAAEE, and access to the resources available through their affiliate network.

Some of our strategic questions are:

- How can we increase our visibility?
- How can we do more advocacy for EE?
- How can we add more value to membership?

Our conference is our life-blood (both in energy and money). The board will consider, “How can we deliver a 2013 conference that meets our identified priorities (above)?”

### **2013 conference**

The board broke in to groups of 2-3 and discussed one or two of the following questions. The information will be used by the conference chairs to make decisions about the upcoming conference, with a goal of having a date, location, and budget prepared by the September 20 meeting.

- How could we change our event budget so that it is less risky?
- How could we structure the conference so that it is not outside our capacity?
- How could we use the conference to bring together diverse EE members?
- What makes a “quality” conference?
- How could we use the conference to support legislation or advocacy?
- How could we use our NAAEE connections at the conference?
- How could we use the conference to bring in memberships?
- How could we use the conference to increase our visibility?

What makes a quality conference?

- Sessions and workshops being outside, quality information sharing, active,
- Is there a way to “bring the conference to a different level?”
- Stefan echoed outdoor session benefits, but noted that the number and nature of the proposals dictate this to a certain extent.
- Networking, bringing like-minded people together to share their interests
- Good Food!
- Community hang-out time? Outdoors, cheap, internally-catered healthy food?
- Acoustics, technology, and room set-up are high quality
- Detailed-oriented and polished – making it easy to arrive and know where to go.

How can we use the conference to bring together diverse EE community members?

- Get glowing reviews from past attendees and publicize/market/promote
- Provide a diversity of topics.
- How is the conference marketed at large?
- Having an easily-forwarded email attachment and flyer, if we don't already.
- NAAEE website, SEEK website, University contacts (Hamline, UMD, Northland), nature centers having posters
- Discounts for referrals?
- Work out a partnership with some of the native american tribes and communities in Minnesota. New board member recruit works at Fond du Lac.

Advocacy

- Partnerships with N.A. tribes, schools (Garlough),
- Beef up the sponsorship committee
- Talk about keeping the conference shorter to reduce some of the costs associated with it (one day?)
- Advocacy? Develop strategies on how to support the EE community. What outcome do we want?
- Facilitate discussions to help gather ideas for developing new policies or practices.
- Make sure that every conference includes some sort of advocacy action.
- Service projects as part of the conference? Could we save money on location in this manner? MNA does something like this to help with facility cost reduction?

How can we use our NAAEE connections for our benefit at the conference?

- Tax Break
- Good resources, i.e. human/people, more national perspective on EE, what is happening around the rest of the country.
- Mentioning our relationship at conferences to give people a broader perspective. May make a bigger impact, more credibility to the organization?
- Referencing the number of members in neighboring states. FYI - next MEEC is in Iowa in 2013

How can we structure conferences so they are within our capacity?

- Involve more members
- Breaking down responsibilities to volunteer coordinator to assign to various volunteers
- Have a rule about not being able to chair two conferences in a row.

How do we increase membership and visibility?

- Increase marketing – using press releases, facebook , promoting awards program more
- We need someone devoted to conference promoting and marketing
- Discounted membership for referrals, discount for conference/membership fee paid jointly
- Having multiple days with one day rates – more options for how people can attend conference.

At 8:00 p.m. John motioned to end the meeting. Erin seconded. Passed.