

**WAE Board Meeting  
Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc WI  
October 27, 2006**

Board members present: Jeremy Higgins, John Heusinkveld, Rebecca Westfahl, Betsy Parker, Joella Zocher, Amy Workman, Tanya Zastrow, Mike Ring

The WAE Board meeting was called to order at 12:57pm by Chair Jeremy Higgins. The agenda was reviewed.

**Review of Meeting Minutes from the September Board meeting**

Jeremy asked that in the school forest/public input section, Jeremy be designated as either Jeremy Solin or Jeremy Higgins, to avoid confusion. Amy Workman moved that the September minutes be approved as amended. Michael Ring seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no **Public Input**.

**Administrative Assistant's Report**

There was no formal Administrative Assistant report due the conference. Rebecca Westfahl did bring up some concerns Carol Weston recently voiced about her job description. Carol Weston has taken on many duties, from proof reading conference and newsletter materials, to financial officer, and now possibly website, if Sunshine Kapusta cannot continue to do so, due to her new job. In a recent management committee phone conference, Carol Weston expressed to both Jeremy Higgins and Rebecca Westfahl that she is not necessarily against these new duties but wants us to be aware we are changing the job description dramatically. Will this affect other key duties that Carol Weston currently is required to do? Will this affect the hiring of a new person, should that ever come up? Is Carol Weston being compensated properly for the work she is doing? All these questions came up and were discussed. Only a few people on the board had a current job description to look at. A large discussion ensued regarding actual duties of the organization, office duties, conference things, etc. It was brought up by Betsy Parker and Rebecca Westfahl that we seem to need a full time administrative director. This full time position would seem to help alleviate many problems. Discussion also focused on compensating Carol Weston, in various ways (i.e. perhaps contracting with Carol to do the website). However, the larger issue of what needs to be done, what should be farmed out to volunteers and what should be done in the office still needs addressing.

**ACTION ITEM:** Jeremy Higgins and Rebecca Westfahl will meet with Carol Weston personally sometime after the conference to review her job description, her actual job duties and perceived possible additional duties on the horizon. The major focus is keeping Carol Weston professionally challenged, but not overwhelmed. We want to keep her!!! We will bring Carol's suggestions back to the board or even invite Carol to the January meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Jeremy Higgins will send out to the board the various ways of compensating Carol Weston through the university system prior to the December meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Jeremy Higgins will get a copy of Carol Weston's current job description and UWSP contract out to the board for review, prior to the December meeting.

**WAE Budget**

There was no formal budget report as a report was given the night before at the conference to the general membership.

**ACTION ITEM:** Betsy Parker will get a copy of the 2006 Annual Report to Carol Weston to get on the website, possibly in the next newsletter.

**ACTION ITEM:** Rebecca Westfahl will work on getting a final budget report from the 2006 conference committee for the December meeting and make sure a current budget is available for the board to review for the December board meeting. THE BOARD STILL NEEDS TO RAISE \$2,000 FOR THIS YEAR'S BUDGET.

**POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM:** Find out costs of concrete, known expenses for easier grant writing possibilities. For example, we should find out how much it would cost for a tri-fold, 2 color brochure, 5,000 copies. How much would dinner for 96 participants at Treehaven for Winter Workshop cost? How much do we spend on plaques and award money? And so on. If we can get these costs, we can more easily write grants. Bring thoughts and ideas to the next meeting maybe.

## Committee Reports

**Networking Committee:** Betsy Parker is willing to take over the WAEE website if Sunshine Kapusta no longer can do so. Rebecca Westfahl gave the board some brief insight into Sunshine's new job at the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE). As the environmental education specialist at the WCEE, Sunshine will be creating a new environmental education website on WI issues and information following the pattern of Georgia, North Carolina and other state websites. This is a high-powered website, very expensive with lots of links to research, jobs, calendar of events, etc. Sunshine will have a larger audience than WAEE current membership list. There will be a newsletter sent out similar to information contained in the old EE Network and on the scope of the EE Network. Sunshine still wants to work on the WAEE website, but she was only 6 days into her new job and is not really clear on her job description or duties. Her boss is Randy Champeau, director of the WCEE and long time supporter of WAEE. This clearinghouse website idea has been around since last December's EE Forum. Many people stated they would like such a website and information available to them. At the 2005 spring retreat, this website was also discussed by the board, but it was clear we had neither the time nor the money to create or maintain such a website. So apparently the WCEE is going ahead with this.

It seemed to many on the board that Sunshine's new position was similar to the executive director position that WAEE so desperately needed. Betsy and others wondered if this position and the new website now made WAEE redundant. Would our website become obsolete?

**ACTION ITEM:** Betsy or Rebecca will talk to Sunshine about her new position and this website. Rebecca will iwith Sunshine is willing to have regarding the content and mission of this new website and the fate of WAEE's website.

**ACTION ITEM:** Jeremy Higgins will meet with Randy Champeau before the December meeting to gather information about this new website and position.

Betsy Parker attended the WEMA meeting the board was invited to last September. WEMA deals more with school libraries and not too much of the meeting related to WAEE. Still there was discussion of funding crises in schools and Betsy was able to make some good connections. WEMA hired a public relations person who gave them insights into what was going on, and how they (they = WEMA, WEAC and DPI) should respond to it. Betsy also met with their "advocacy advisor" Mike Bloomenfeld. Betsy felt his work for the group was impressive. This advisor offers information to his clients on three tiers. First, he looks at our organizations issues, needs and concerns and works at a legislative level to address these issues. Next, he actually advises us on what he sees occurring on a legislative level, because he has the experience to interpret the players. Finally he can actually help us lobby or advocate for us on a legislative process. (Any lobbying action would be conditional, as determined by the board.) Mike also told Betsy there would be many benefits to his work with our organization. Members will see we have more status in the legislative community; this may get us more members and gives us more clout. He can also help us with networking with other groups. Mike will put together an estimate of his costs and get back to Betsy in a month.

Much discussion ensued again about this person filling the needs of an executive director. It was also very clear that we have NO money to pay for this person. He would have to entirely funded by grants and is this sustainable?

**ACTION ITEM:** Betsy will get back information on Mike's costs and other information by the December meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Betsy will check into applying for a DPI liaisonship for WAEE.

**Membership Committee:** The annual meeting at the fall conference everyone felt was good. The annual report was good and definitely needs to get on the website. In terms of putting together the annual report as a group effort there was much discussion about communication and following through with duties. Email is great, but we need to be sure that people are reading and responding to board items on the email. We had stated in the past that not responding means you basically agree with the content. But in this case, we needed content for the annual report and no one was responding and there wasn't follow up until late in the game.

**ACTION ITEM:** To strengthen committees, Amy Workman will contact the people from last year's membership survey that stated an interest in helping with membership.

**ACTION ITEM:** Membership and any other committees will also work to contact members AND GET THEIR MEETING DATES TO CAROL SO SHE CAN GET THEM ON THE WEBSITE!. This includes Winter Workshop (if you want help), networking, finance, and fall conference 2008.

**Conference Committee:** John Heusinkveld reported on the Midwest Environmental Education Conference (MEEC 2007). The committee was able to secure Richard Louve, author of No Child Left Inside. It's a great keynote since he is so in demand, but a little terrifying in that he costs \$7,500. The board wanted to know if the committee is writing grants? John said he would ask. Rebecca did talk to Sterling about it. And he said they were going to write grants although its tough because they are getting at this so late, and the WEEB grants are due in January and they won't know until close to conference if they got them. Also, WEEB grants are only \$5,000. Sterling said to Rebecca they could get more grant money if they put a forestry tilt to the conference. Rebecca didn't comment on this. Rebecca did mention to the board that it is very important that the board keep a close eye on this committee although they are experienced. The two budgets they've shown so far already have registration fees less than this year and show a profit of only \$13,000. Rebecca is not suggesting we "micromanage anyone", to which there was much snickering ☺ But we do need to let these volunteer committees know what is expected of them. Betsy asked if there was a binder. Tanya Zastrow said a MEEC binder is passed from state to state and it is pretty good. But the budgeting part is always screwy and hard to follow. So many people "donate" things like printing or whatever and it makes it hard to create a budget. Lack of a clear planning procedure and budgeting information for conferences was seen as a major problem. Joey Zocher agreed to write grants for the committee if they were not. John Heusinkveld will bring written reports to the board on MEEC for upcoming board meetings.

Winter Workshop: Steve Sandstrom got a call for presenters ready for this fall conference packet and it was emailed to members. Steve's job at Northland has changed and he is mostly on his own. John Heusinkveld will help Steve with the planning and implementation of Winter Workshop and may continue to do the next couple. John Bates is the keynote for this workshop. Tell all your friends!!

**Committee Action Item:** We no longer have a board conference committee (i.e. someone who is watching over conferences in general. John has MEEC and Winter workshop. But who has 2008 fall conference??) Remember how important conferences are. Does anyone want this position? It should be a board position. Other members can be contacted as well. A site and theme should be chosen for 2008 very soon! Its nice if you have a year to plan.

**ACTION ITEM:** Can we get grants for Winter Workshop? Brainstorm ideas on how to make this conference more of a moneymaker for the organization.

**Awards Committee** Mike reported that we actually have lots of awards this year, which is really good. We only had two last year. However with lots of awards comes increased costs. Plaques are \$50 a piece (the cheapest) plus we pay for the meal of the award recipient. Mike went on to discuss his many ideas that he has for improving the marketing of and ease of WAE awards. The hope is that these improvements will help increase the number of awards per year. Awards could also become a separate, formal banquet and money making event. Jeremy Solin, who does the school forest awards, also had some ideas for awards.

**ACTION ITEM:** Mike Ring will send out a compiled list of improvements for WAE awards. Board members and Jeremy Solin will be contacted for input. Mike will compile all the information and create an awards protocol to be used with future awards committees

**ACTION ITEM:** If the board is serious about making the awards ceremony a separate moneymaking event, we need to start working NOW to form a committee and make that happen before MEEC or Fall Conference 2008 planning.

**Student Committee** Jeremy Higgins will ask 2 Point students to come on the board until May. Their role will be to help recruit students for the next go around and help orient the new students at next year's fall conference. Jeremy Higgins will get the students' resumes and the board will vote electronically on their nomination. They will come to the December meeting.

**ACTION ITEM** Jeremy Higgins will get students resumes to the board members. Board will vote on the students prior to the December board meeting. Someone should update the student board books before then.

**WEEB Liaison Report** Jeremy Higgins spoke with Pat Marinac, who is the new chair of WEEB and the environmental educator representative on the WEEB board. There is a new WEEB faction called WEEF (WI EE Foundation). This is the fundraising faction of the group that will solicit corporations, etc and farm the money out to groups like WAE. The general education fund has been dwindling for years. This foundation money will be a looser format and can come in larger amounts than WEEB's \$5,000 general EE grants.

**ACTION ITEM** All board members should review WEEB's "2010 Strategic Plan" that recently came out in the mail. If you didn't get one, check out WEEB online or call them. WEEB is interested in making this strategic plan the EE plan for the state and want to know which piece WAE can champion.

**Elections Committee** The bylaw revisions both passed for elections and retirement ages. The vote for the retirement was 65-1.

**ACTION ITEM** Jeremy Higgins will ask Carol Weston if our workstudy student can update ALL the bylaws for the website and also get them to the board members before the December meeting.

## **Old Business**

Because of time constraints the board did not cover old business.

## **New Business**

Next meeting is December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at Joey's school in Milwaukee. The time is from 11:00-5:00

**ACTION ITEM:** Joey will send out directions to the school prior to the meeting.

**ACTION ITEM** There was some discussion about any free board members interested in discussing, researching and cranking out some grants should plan this ahead of time and meet the Friday before the meeting at some determined location.

**WAE Recognition Dinner/Fundraiser** Joey is very keen about offering a fabulous, pricey dinner at Barossa in Milwaukee, known for its organic, locally grown foods. The owner would give us the room for free and then we would order meals as people purchase tickets. There would be no "up front"

costs for the meals themselves as the owner is not giving us a bottom line. There would be costs for invites, and possibly some short program on WAEE and how great we are. Joey envisions this as a low key, high class way to introduce a new clientele to us and our needs. Rebecca mentioned that it would be great to have a list of contacts; people with an interest in the environment who work/own local businesses.

**ACTION ITEM** Networking committee and Rebecca will work to develop or at least a method to develop a new database of non WAEE members, but rather of businesses in WI, interested in the environment as possible event attendees and donators.

Joey is also having a roller derby retreat with some friends at CWES this winter. She is willing to open it up to others, if we wanted to make it a winter camping/WAEE member outing. Any proceeds (not sure from where) from this outing, Joey and her friends are willing to donate to WAEE. The board heartily and gratefully accepted.

Betsy also mentioned we could piggy back our member outings with the WI Natural Resources Foundation. Rebecca encouraged anyone who does activities or outings to the general public to ask if there is any way to tie it into a WAEE member benefit.

**ACTION ITEM** Betsy will research these outings with aforementioned Foundation.

There was a motion by Mike Ring to adjourn at 3:30pm. Amy Workman seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.