

## **WAEF Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at WAEF Office- Stevens Point**

**Board Members Present** Jim McGinity, Mary VT, Rebecca Clarke, Emily Jacobs, Carrie Hembree, Gail Epping, Mary Hollenbeck. Not present – Mike Anderson, Nancy Saulsbury, David Swanson, Angela Vines.

**Pre-Meeting Notes** – Prior to the meeting, the board brainstormed some visionary organizational ideas. This brainstorming session also developed a list of ideas for further board development opportunities were created.

The list is as follows:

- What is the best method for board communication? Email? Home? Phone? What is the plan/timeline for getting back to board members? Need to develop a board member communication plan and follow-thru protocol.
- How do we as a board measure the effectiveness of the board and individual board members? How do we set board members up for success in their term? Resources and training needed, etc.
- Training is needed on committee development and expansion
- Need to develop individual board member talents and tap them. Need to identify individual member talents and tap them; i.e. database?
- Need to build respect on the board, possibly through communication pact, promptness with meetings and responses outside meetings, professional communication (less formal), have some “get-to-know-you” meetings, etc.
- How do we as an organization relate to our members? What are our methods of reaching members? What would be more effective or more desired? Have we looked at the professionalism of how we communicate to members?
- Motivation of board members needs to be a priority. We need training in this area, pep talks, fun stuff, perks, accountability verses delegation, etc.
- How do we remove deadbeat board members? – Steps, clear, written expectations, etc.
- We are great at setting goals but need better timelines; more realistic, doable. We need to set a committee meeting calendar, need a way to check our action items in between meetings.
- Letting go of baggage – how can we carry on positive legacies while leaving dirty laundry behind?
- Visionary verses action – What is the vision for WAEF? How are we meeting our mission on a local level, statewide level, board level, and individual member level? What does success look like for WAEF in a year? For a conference? In a month? Etc.
- We need training on the differences between advocacy and our 501.c.3 restrictions. What is our past? What role should WAEF be playing in the advocacy realm?

Along with this list, the pre-meeting discussion also established a Taskmaster and Timekeeper would be decided for board meetings. This role would change with every

meeting and help to keep all on time and to keep speaking time equal. The pre-meeting discussion created some long and short-term goals for new member information being dispensed. The methodology was broken into stages and the stages we rated as short or long-term.

**Action Item** - Also established through this discussion was that Mary VT and Carrie Hembree would create a binder with coded tabs and highlighted information specifically for new members.

There will also be a new member face-to-face meeting at the Winter Workshop in January. It was not stated who would be responsible for this meeting.

**1:00** – Meeting was called to order by Jim McGinity

Because the pre-meeting discussion took longer than expected, some agenda items were tabled until next meeting. The discussion on Board Communication was tabled until the next meeting. The discussion on how to handle deadbeat board members will be tabled until next meeting.

The action items were briefly reviewed from the last meeting (see last meeting minutes).

**Action Item** – All committee reports should be turned in to the board chair prior to the next board meeting with Priorities Tick Sheet for that year.

**Action Item**- Mike Anderson still needs to get the listing of newspapers, news stations and radio stations to Sterling Strathe so he can market Fall Conference 2004.

**Action Item** – The board still needs to select people for the Midwest EE Conference Steering Committee. We need 1 board member and one general member with conference experience.

The Emily J made a motion to change the minutes from November's meeting. Mary VT moved to accept the minutes with the changes. Emily J. seconded the motion. All were in favor.

There was no public input for this board meeting.

**Treasurer's Report** (Gail Epping)– See Gail Epping' attached Treasure's report with highlighted changes. There are still some challenges with QuickBooks. We just changed over to this system and may be lacking some expertise in this program. Some of the numbers and categories are not matching up. There is a \$5521 profit listed from fall conference, which is mostly due to fewer expenses. Thank you notes were already sent to Mary Pardee for her efforts with the Fall 2003 conference.

Mary VT requested a form for committees to use to fill in their budgets. Gail suggested using the Excel Spreadsheet she sends out prior to meetings as a "template", where people can copy and paste it to fill in committee-specific details.

Gail wants to have all the financial reports in 1 month before the deadline of April 1. Rebecca complimented Gail and the finance committee on their great job with the budget. There may be kinks to work out but this budget is very readable and user-friendly.

**Action Item-** All committees should submit their budget to the finance committee by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

**Action Item-** The whole board would like training on budgeting at the Spring retreat. This training will be one hour long and will be put on by the finance committee.

**Action Item** – While writing these minutes, Rebecca Clarke noticed that while there is “discussion” about the budget and finances, the board never votes to approve the budget. Is this strange? Rebecca would like some discussion about this at the winter meeting.

**Administrative Assistant Report** (Jim McG) – Jim read the report sent out by Shirley prior to the meeting. Shirley made it through her first WAEE conference this past fall, 2003. She is still finishing up fall conference stuff. She will meet with Gail and Mary VT in January. It was also stated that Shirley spirits and friendliness at fall conference were great. It was noted that Phil, her husband, has been a great help with office moving and renovations.

**Action Item-** Rebecca asked if Shirley is taking the board meeting minutes and reports and is “cataloging” them, both hard copy and on disk somewhere. She will try to find out before the next meeting at Winter Workshop.

**Management Committee Report** (Jim McG) Jim reviewed the Management committee’s Priorities Tick Sheet. It was noted that working with the Networking committee was one of the main things the Management committee was going to do. Mike Anderson was not there to offer comment.

- Officer Transition/Expectations - Both Jim and Mary VT noted that the officer transition process (i.e. from Chair elect to Chair, from Treasurer elect to Treasurer) was nebulous at best. The process should be that we formally nominate and vote someone into the Chair Elect process at Winter Workshop every year.

It has been written into the board member job description by Paul Denowski and Jim McG that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> years, board members will assume a leadership role: i.e. become chair elect, treasurer, chair a committee or conference. The board still needs to establish some concrete method for actually approaching people on taking on roles, instead of waiting until Winter Workshop.

**WAEE Website** (Mary VT) Mary VT wants to establish a committee on this topic since it is not being maintained or updated on a regular basis. Sunshine Kapusta, from the Wisconsin Forestry Education Program at UWSP, has agreed to be our webmaster. She wants to keep her time limited to 2 hours per week. Sunshine also stipulated that she wants to have contact with one person only.

Rebecca mentioned that she had compiled information about EE events, grants, contests, etc that would be interesting to formal and nonformal educators. She compiled this into a calendar and gave this to Bobbi Zbleski Kubish to put on the WAEE website. Bobbi said it would probably be January before she could get to this.

**Action Items** - The management committee will look working with Sunshine and creating a committee for the next meeting.

**Conference Committee Report - Winter Workshop** (Mike Anderson) – See attached report from Mike. The Call for Presenters from Fall Conference 2003 packets was given to Mike. It will be distributed with the minutes to all board members to help find presenters. We have no Registration information on the website as of the distribution of these minutes.

**Fall Conference 2004** – Sterling Strathe is in charge and things are going well.

**Fall Conference 2005** – Mary VT will co-chair this conference with someone else.

**Action Item**- Mike Anderson still needs to get the listing of newspapers, news stations and radio stations to Sterling Strathe so he can market Fall Conference 2004.

**Action Item** – Mike A. needs to place a hard copy and computer disk to the WAEE office with these listings so we have it for future reference. Mike had mentioned at the fall conference 2003 meeting that his students were working this for extra credit.

Jim McG wondered if there are in fact more teachers attending fall conferences as a result of moving the conference dates to coincide with teacher in-service in the fall (WEAC dates). There needs to be an update to our database and conference attendance information so we can track this information easily.

**Action Items** – Mary Hollenbeck said she would ask Sterling to change his registration form for Fall 2004 so that people signing up for the conference will list their occupation.

**Action Items** – Rebecca will check with Shirley to see where we are at with our member database and with our conference database capabilities.

**Action Item**-Mary VT mentioned she needs to do a WEEB grant soon for 2005 conference. She will check with Dan Sivek to see where he is at with his grant to do a history check of EE in Wisconsin.

**Action Item** – The conference committee needs to get Sterling Strathe a WAEE “thank you” letter for those who make tax deductible donations to Fall Conference 2004.

**Membership Committee Report** (Rebecca) – The committee has been focusing on our membership database. The committee had a meeting in December and discussed website updates, and member database improvements, which would both greatly improve organization-to-member communication. Rebecca found the old list serve procedures, which would need updating and a vote to become policy.

The committee also developed a winter solstice card. The committee presented their winter solstice card for members. This card includes a happy season greeting for members as well as a wish list of needed items and a call for members to donate cash to the organization. The board voted on the type of card they liked. Gail had a few more suggestions for the card and did not want to decide on them at that meeting. Mary VT requested that, in order for the cards to go out in a timely manner, the board needed to get back to her in a week with final ideas.

**Action Items** – Rebecca will create a draft process for list serves, and their use by the organization. This draft will be sent out prior to the meeting and voted on at the Winter Workshop meeting.

It seems that Rebecca will take over as Chair of this committee as Mary VT takes over board Chair responsibilities. Carrie Hembree started a discussion about how we ask people to be chairs of committees. Jim McG explained that this happens normally at the Spring Retreat Weekend. The board decided to approach the following people about being a committee chair:

Networking – Carrie H./Mary H.  
Conference- Mary H/Nancy S  
Awards- Mary Pardee  
Membership- Rebecca C

**Action Item**- Carrie H said she would talk to Nancy S about chairing either the Networking or Conference committee.

**Networking Committee Report** (Mike Anderson) –No report. Rebecca gave a brief description about the high school conference on the environment.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/youthconference/index.htm>

Rebecca was the WAEE liaison for this conference. She felt it was a great success and was glad we networked with this conference. WAEE was listed as a partner on the website <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/youthconference/partners.htm> , in the materials handed out to participants, and Rebecca also had the WAEE booth there. We gave away a long sleeve WAEE t-shirt as a door prize. This conference had about 150 high school students from around the state and good media coverage. In case anyone has forgotten, not only did we have WAEE board members on the conference board, but we also had our name on a grant for the conference, enabling it to facilitate more activities at a reasonable price.

**EE News Report** (Carrie Hembree)- A board bio is needed by Gail, Carrie will highlight a member organization, and we should have something about the EE Resources on the Web by Mary VT.

**Delayed Action Item** – Since this meeting, EE News has announced that the WDNR will no longer sponsor EE News. The next issue, Summer, will be the last. WAEE needs to decide how we will communicate with our members, how we

will deal with the fact that EE News is listed on our brochure as a member benefit, and we need to tell members how they will get info from us in the future.

**Student Report** (Emily Jacobs)- Emily will give an outline of a presentation that she gave to students at the Fall Conference 2003 for future students to use. She is updating a job description for student board members. Emily will pass on a disk and written document with all the schools in the state that may have an EE organization. She will put the disk in the hands of the new student and in the WAEE office.

**Action Item** – Get the presentation outline to the WAEE office.

**Action Item**- Get the disk with Wisconsin universities that have EE organizations to the office.

**Liaison Reports** – Time was running short so liaisons were going to send in longer reports as an addendum.

- **High School Conference**- (See Networking Committee report above)
- **Nature/Environmental Ed. Center Section**- Cathe Conn had not submitted a report for this meeting. There was a meeting held at the Fall 2003 conference.
- **Spring Adventure Workshop**- Rebecca C had emailed John Munson prior to this board meeting and heard nothing back. She told the board that the Workshop is the first weekend in May. She gave the board members John Munson's email address ([jmunson@uwsp.edu](mailto:jmunson@uwsp.edu)) in case people are interested. Rebecca was unsure about how information gets on the WAEE website, how they get our updated mailing list, etc. Rebecca is willing to go the workshop again this year for support if she is not swamped. They would like someone there from WAEE to tell about the organization on Saturday.

**NAAEE**- Mary VT said she would add an addendum about what's going on. NAAEE is looking to recruit people in the states who can disseminate information to the states. Mary VT is going to get more information. We may get some free training out of this.

**Action Item**-Mary VT said she would send us the email from Robert Olsen.

- **LEAF**- Not much new. Pilot testing lots classroom lessons.
- **History Project** (Mary VT) – Dan Sivek is writing a grant to research EE history of Wisconsin. He cannot do anything until after January. Dan is going to contact Dan Engelson for information. Mary VT is waiting to see where the grant money is going towards before she ties the WAEE fall 2005 conference into this.
- **MOU Steering Committee** – Mary VT said she would find out where other states are at in this process before we approach our members to get involved.  
**Action Items** – Mary VT contact other states and give the board a timeline of commitment.

**Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education's EE Communication Meeting** (Carrie Hembree)- This meeting addressed concerned the Center had over the loss of EE

News. The larger issue became “What is the status of EE communication in the state?” The meeting reviewed the history of EE News. In 1984, EE News left WAEE and went to the WDNR. It is as of today a WDNR publication. EEK, the WDNR EE webpage, was viewed by participants of this meeting as more “gee whiz” than informative about EE in Wisconsin. It was seen that, while the WDNR has taken on this responsibility, perhaps the WDNR is not the best vehicle for EE.

Participants at this meeting discussed possible options for EE News: an online and written publication like the EE Network, a joint venture, etc. There is a subcommittee to look over what other states are doing about communicating EE. Carrie H is on this committee. The WCEE maintains that it’s mission is to serve K-12 teachers. The WCEE doesn’t want the responsibility of communicating EE to the state. There is a follow up meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup> that Carrie H, Mary VT, and Rebecca C will all attend and will update the board.

**Resources on the Web** (Mary VT) – Mary gave a brief update. She is still adding things all the time. There is a concern that there is not much EE specific stuff, lots of the items are classroom focused. She is still adding many resources each day. The problem is the grant is up in December of 2003. There is a question of how this site will continue to be maintained. This will be discussed at another time.

**Action Items** - Board will discuss the status of this web site and its maintenance.

**Funding for Awards** (Gail) - The Finance committee is going to create a subcommittee to find some alternative funding for awards.

**Action Items**- By March, the finance committee will have a subcommittee that will offer the board some alternative funding ideas for awards.

#### **Board Member Accountability-**

**Action Item**- Carrie H will bring a copy of accountability, expectations, etc from her past board book with another organization.

**New Items** – Jim McGinity told the board that he was leaving for a new job in Florida. All were all sad and shocked to hear of his leaving. All fondly wished Jim good luck and thanks for all his hard work, and began discussing names of new board members!

**Action Item**- try to get names for people to replace Jim by the next board meeting!

**4:20** – Rebecca Clarke made a motion for adjournment. Gail Epping seconded. All were in favor.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Rebecca Clarke*