



Maryland Water Monitoring Council
~~Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources~~
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Mat Pajerowski, USGS
Vice-chair, acting Chair

Katherine Hanna, Maryland DNR
Executive Secretary

Directors

Andy Becker, KCI Technologies
Megan Brosh, Baltimore County DEPS
Lindsay DeMarzo, Howard Co. OCS
Jason Dubow, MD Dept. Planning
Bob Hilderbrand, UMCES
~~Ken Mack, Mont. Co. DEP~~
Byron Madigan, Carroll Co. BRM
Richard Mitchell, US EPA

Jeff Reagan, Biohabitats, Inc.
Nancy Roth, Tetra Tech, Inc.
Ken Staver, Univ. of MD WREC
Matt Stover, Maryland Dept. of the Environment
Chris Victoria, Anne Arundel DPW
~~Alice Volpitta, Blue Water Baltimore~~
Michael Williams, Univ. of MD College Park

Minutes

MWMC Board Meeting

March 8, 2022, 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Virtual

In attendance: Andy Becker, Alice Volpitta, Byron Madigan, Bob Hilderbrand, Jason Dubow, Katherine Hanna, Ken Mack, Ken Staver, Mark Trice, Matt Stover, Megan Brosh, Mat Pajerowski, Chris Victoria, Chris Wharton

10:02 Mat Pajerowski called the meeting to order.

Katherine Hanna held the vote to pass the July 20, 2021 minutes into Board records, and the minutes were accepted. The October minutes were discussed, and if no edits are sent to Katherine, the vote will be held next week via Google Forms.

Matt Stover announced that all five pending Board members have been approved by the DNR Secretary, with official letters still to come. The new vacancies from 2021 include two state government seats, one at-large seat, one local government seat, and one intergovernmental organization seat. He has not received any additional Board member suggestions for the open seats on the Board, but will accept suggestions through Friday, March 18. Alice Volpitta suggested Dr. Micah Miles of Waterfront

Partnership of Baltimore, a nonprofit organization, as an at-large candidate. Ken Mack volunteered to be moved from an at-large seat to a local government seat, since at-large seats would be easier to fill. The Board was generally supportive of this action.

Matt has not received names of any Board members interested in the Board Chair position. He will be accepting these through Friday, March 18 as well.

Katherine mentioned that some assistance with meeting minutes would be helpful, as would greater Board and Planning Committee participation when the Annual Conference approaches. She is able to dedicate less time and effort to these duties due to present office circumstances. After some Board discussion, Mat Pajeroski tabled the topic for further discussion in the coming weeks.

Katherine reported on the MWMC's current budget, 2021 Annual Conference expenses, and the Conference Evaluation Survey.

The 2021 Annual Conference drew 450 registrants, which is about 200 fewer than prior years. However, actual attendance was far lower than registration numbers. This dropoff was attributed to "Zoom fatigue."

The Conference Evaluation Survey, completed by 50 attendees, reflected this attribution as well. Comments bemoaned the loss of the in-person environment, but were generally positive.

Katherine proposed December 1-2 as potential dates for the 2022 conference but will need to discuss availability with the venue. She will contact Crystal at the Maritime Institute to pencil in potential conference dates (pending future bid results) and to work out event expenses and their IT capabilities.

Committees reported on activities since the last Board meeting:

Andy Becker reported that the Stream Monitoring Roundtable was held on March 10, 2022. There were 70 registrants and 24 presentations on monitoring plans from state, local, academic, consultant, and non-profit groups. An in-person workshop to potentially be held this fall would discuss pollutants of emerging concern. There is a need to drum up interest and start planning. It would cover PFAS, chlorides, water temperatures, and drinking water issues.

No representative from the Citizen Science Committee was available to report on activities.

Katherine shared Najma Khokhar's update from the Information Management Committee. There is a Committee meeting planned for the second week of April.

The Groundwater Committee had no recent activity, Mat Pajeroski reported.

Matt Stover shared that the Student Committee held a networking session in October. He noted it went well, the students asked numerous questions, and the event was generally well-received by attending students.

Board members took turns sharing updates for the News Roundtable.

Alice Volpitta had no updates from Blue Water Baltimore.

Andy Becker shared that KCI getting ready to start spring sampling for clients, and is starting to see the Medium Phase 1 MS4 jurisdiction draft permits come around, which is getting their plans underway for the next 5 years.

Chris Victoria noted that Anne Arundel County finished up Round 3 in 2021 and have produced an atlas of freshwater fishes of Anne Arundel County.

Chris Wharton had no updates from Tetra Tech.

Jason Dubow mentioned work with MDE, particularly Matt Rowe, to update one required guidance for comprehensive plans at the local level, provide update on how to protect waterbodies as we develop and grow, and integrate climate change adaptation into water resources management. Jason suggested that the stated MWMC Mission, which refers to monitoring, could go beyond the stated goal and cover other topics to connect monitoring results to policies and planning, as the Conference Evaluation Survey suggested this interest among attendees.

Katherine Hanna shared that MBSS Spring Training was held at the end of February, virtually on day 1, but day 2's in-person demo had to be cancelled due to weather. The spring index period has started and MBSS crews are starting to sample.

Ken Mack discussed that Montgomery County was knee-deep in benthic monitoring. They have held restoration webinars for residents featuring academia, governmental organizations, and internal people. Results were positive overall, and they received some great feedback. Restoration resistance from residents is here to stay but may be manageable.

Ken Staver noted no big university news, but they are attempting return to normal as much as possible. In agriculture, there are supply chain issues on things like agrochemicals; fertilizer has become expensive due to supply chain issues. The conflict in Ukraine is affecting potassium supply, and Russia supplies urea nitrogen on world market. Farmers are expecting uncertainty around spring planting, and grain, sunflower, and soy prices are much higher. Overall management will potentially look much different, which may be apparent when folks are monitoring in streams. No-tillage practices are being promoted to support carbon sequestration, but may increase dissolved phosphorous in these systems. The Board discussed creating an agriculture-focused workshop or conference session.

Matt Stover shared MDE's triannual review of water quality standards, which allows an opportunity to propose COMAR changes. A public comment period starts on Friday, March 11. Some content changes relate to coldwater, anti-degradation, designated use changes, and new Tier II streams. A hearing will be held virtually on March 30 at 5pm. Tim Fox has left state service, so Matt is covering contact duties. Also, the Integrated Report was approved by EPA ahead of schedule.

Megan Brosh shared that her office is ramping up for their spring biological season with lots of fieldwork.

Byron Madigan reported that Carroll County is waiting for their medium permit, which is expected in the next few days. MBSS season has kicked off and is currently their major focus.

Mat Pajerowski noted that USGS continues to look for ways to be involved with PFAS. One project currently underway is a search for instances of biodegradation, which would be big news. In another that's just starting out, USGS will be looking at PFAS occurrences near military bases in Maryland and

Virginia. There is also interest in sediment transport work in several counties in Maryland. There's a project to develop a model that anticipates increases in bacteria in the Anacostia River in support of the swimmable waters initiative in Washington DC. USGS is hiring entry-level positions for hydrologic technicians and hydrologists. Postings are on their webpage, USA Jobs, their Facebook page, and Twitter.

Action items

Let Matt know of any additional candidates for Board positions or the Board Chairship by Friday, March 18.

Katherine will send a rundown of Executive Secretary duties and a list of current Annual Conference Planning Committee members. She will also reach out to Crystal at the Maritime Institute to work out dates, event expense details, and hybrid conference capabilities.

Mat, Matt, and Katherine will meet to discuss whether Ken Mack can be moved to a local position on the Board and free up an at large seat to facilitate appointment of new members.

The Board will send edit requests for the October Board Meeting Minutes to Katherine by March 11, after which a vote will be held to finalize the minutes.

Andy and Clark Howells will meet to assemble a steering committee for an American Waterworks Association workshop.

Mat asked the Board to bring thoughts about an in-person July Board meeting to the April Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33.