

Approved

MeWEA Executive Board Meeting

VIRTUAL

February 16, 2024

9 AM

MINUTES

Virtual Attendance: Emily Cole-Prescott, Terry Tucker, Rob Pontau, Phil Tucker, Stacy Thompson, Paula Drouin, Charlene Pouli, Andy Begin, Sierra Kuun, Gregg Wood, Evan Pereira, Peter Zaykoski, Dan Marks, Jim Cohen, Cindy Wade, and Nicki Pellenz.

Absent: Jeff McBurnie

Guest: Janine Burke-Wells

Call to Order: President Emily Prescott called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Quorum: It was determined there was a Quorum.

Minutes: Motion made by Charlene Poulin, seconded by Rob Pontau, all approved the January 16, 2024, minutes.

Treasurer's Report: To be reviewed at the next meeting.

Budget Approval: *Budget discussion toward the end of the meeting.*

Old Business:

Utility Manager Committee report: Rob Pontau reported the following:

- Committee has been extremely active.
- There will be a meeting on February 29th at 3:00 pm at the Mass Landing Brewery in Freeport.
- 15 Managers have signed up to date.

Planners & Wastewater Utilities Event in the Spring Update: Emily Prescott reported the following:

- There is a lot of interest in planning this event, which will be held toward the summer. Emily will report on progress at a future meeting.

NEBRA:

- Janine Burke-Wells offered to help with fly-in materials and to assist MeWEA. Fly-in materials would be helpful to have.

REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

DEP REPORT: Gregg Wood reported the following.

- DEP in process of hiring for Jim Crowley's position and for a remaining permit writer position.

- PFAS Statistics Evaluation remains ongoing. Gregg explained the steps forward for this initiative.
- Rule Making: Total phosphorous & Total nitrogen rulemaking is moving forward, so look out for comment periods to open in the spring and early summer.
- Chapter 500 & Low Impact Development: DEP has convened a steering committee, so that work remains ongoing.

Legislative Report

Jim Cohen reported the following:

- The legislators are at the halfway point this session, which does not seem as hectic as last legislative session.
- The budget was released yesterday; no major concerns at this moment for MeWEA.

JETCC-NEIWPC: Peter Zaykoski, reported the following.

- Renewals deadline at the end of the month.
- JETCC has 2 trainings next week.
- North Country Convention in 2025 at Northern Maine Community College, and working on planning that event.
- Working on getting a date for the next JETCC Committee meeting.

MWUA: Andy Begin reported the following:

- MWUA has a new Executive Director, Nicki Pellenz, who was selected from a competitive hiring process.
- He thanked Cindy & Joan for their hard work while the executive director position had been vacant.
- Nice win on LD 1111 both in the House and Senate voted ONTP.
- Will be doing a Strategic Planning Session this year.

NEWEA STATE DIRECTORS REPORT: Paula Drouin reported the following:

- Working on fly-in details. Paula plans to schedule fly-in meetings again this year.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: No report.

COUNCIL DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

OUTREACH COUNCIL: Phil Tucker, Director. The following was reported:

Government Affairs – Dan Marks and Amanda Smith – Dan Marks noted that the Govt. Affairs Committee continues to track bills and work with other associations.

Public Relations – Evan Pereira – Evan reported on progress of public relations. Terry Tucker answered a question about invoicing for the existing contract.

Membership – Jen Nicholson – Phil Tucker reported that Jen is working on individual membership billings.

PERSONNEL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL: Stacy Thompson, Director
Stacy indicated that she met with all the chairs last week. Stacy will be attending New Professionals Committee Meeting on February 20th. She attended the special Maine Climate Council meeting Governor Mills hosted on January 23rd, and she provided an update from this meeting.

New Professionals – Sierra Kuun is working on family ice night at Thompsons Point, with date to be determined. June 22nd will be the Sea Dogs Water and Wastewater Professionals Day.

Awards Committee – Michael Guethle – Nothing new to report.

Convention Committee – Justin Barnett and Tim Wade – Contracts for Sunday River 2025 and 2026 are needed. Cornhole event costs briefly discussed.

Personnel Advancement Committee – Charlene Poulin – attended the MWUA trade show earlier this month. Said it was a good show! Charlene plans to do a Call for Abstracts for the Fall Convention and plans to work on convention packet materials.

TREATMENT SYSTEMS OPERATION COUNCIL: Paula Drouin, Director – submitted a report. Paula mentioned the importance of coordinating a list of sponsors.

Collection Systems – Kevin Eaton and Ashley Jones – No new update.

Laboratory – Stephen Knollmeyer – Paula met with Stephen Knollmeyer. He indicated that they are working on reviewing the EPA's recently released method re: PFAS. Emily thanked Steve for stepping up to take over this committee.

Pretreatment – Riley Cobb – Nothing new to report.

Residuals – Travis Peaslee & Andre Brousseau – Nothing new to report.

Stormwater – Sarah King and Jodi Keene – Nothing new to report.

Treatment Plant Operators – Alex Buechner

OFFICER'S REPORTS

Presidents Report:

- Lifetime Memberships: Motion made by Rob Pontau, seconded by Phil Tucker, all approved LeeAnn Hanson & Mary Waring as Lifetime Members.
- Budget Workshop Debrief: Executive committee members met earlier this month to do a budget deep dive. Emily provided brief overview. After discussion, Terry Tucker made a motion to approve a not to exceed budget of \$212,000. Phil Tucker seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. A careful review and consideration of finances will be necessary this year, as even this budget amount is too high. Jeff McBurnie will report at next meeting. This year the focus will be on fundraising coordination; reviewing

contracted services; reviewing opportunities to raise revenues and reduce expenditures; focus on strategic planning to establish MeWEA's direction.

President-Elect Report: Terry Tucker reported the following:

- She coordinated a Council Directors meeting and will continue to have these meetings quarterly.
- Dan Marks will follow up about joining several environmental coalitions in Maine.

Vice President Report: Rob Pontau reported the following.

- New York invited the Operators Challenge Maine team for April 15-17th down for training.
- Looks like New Hampshire will have a team this year,
- April 5 is another training for Operators Challenge in Holyoke – will be in Westborough. They will probably go on Thursday.

Immediate Past President: Tim Wade was not present.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

- Strategic Planning Session will be April 12th, 2024,
- Next Executive Committee will be May 17th, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Stacy Thompson, seconded by Rob Pontau, all approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 am.

COMMITTEE NAME: JETCC

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: February 8, 2024

RECENT ACTIVITIES: Our February schedule will wrap up with two classes: a remote class with Patrick Wiley on Process Control Instrumentation (February 21) and an in-person class in Farmington with Peter Gagne, Andritz, and Ryan Peebles, Clean Waters, Inc. on Sludge Dewatering and Chemical Conditioning (February 22). March will begin with a class on Pipe Locating and Leak Detection taught by Eric Denslow, Eastcom Associates at the Maine Water Company plant in Biddeford (March 7).

The Management Candidate School January class that was postponed will be held on February 28. MCS students attended the first day of the MWUA conference on January 31 and are assigned to complete a writing assignment based on vendor interactions they had at the conference. The next regular class is scheduled for March 13.

Wastewater Operator School continues. We will be through the first four classes as of the date of this meeting.

DECISIONS MADE:

In anticipation of the Committee Chair, Travis Jones, terming out, the Committee elected Jon Helstrom as the next Chair and Yarissa Ortiz-Vidal as the next Vice-Chair. Both Jon and Yarissa hold positions on the Committee that represent MEWEA.

We are beginning to look at the dates for the next North Country Convention. There are two weeks on the NMCC academic calendar that look to be of potential interest: March 31-April 4, 2025 and May 12-16, 2025. The Committee agreed that moving the Convention to the window in May would work well, as long as it works for NMCC and does not conflict with other significant conferences and events in the region. Please let me know if you are aware of any conflicts with either of these sets of dates.

We are planning to put on a community engagement event associated with the next JETCC meeting. Get in touch if you have any interest in helping me plan this event.

ACTION PLAN COMMITTEE/OFFICER ASSIGNMENTS:

NEXT MEETING/OTHER IMPORTANT DATES/DEADLINES: The next JETCC meeting is tentatively scheduled for early June and the location is TBD.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS & MISCELLANEOUS:

REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

NAME: Peter Zaykoski, JETCC Program Manager

DATE SUBMITTED: 2/15/2024

MEWEA Executive Committee Meeting – February 16, 2024
Treatment Systems Operation Council Director Report
Submitted by: Paula Drouin

Collection Systems Committee reported:

- No report.

Treatment Plant Operators Committee reported:

- No report. Next meeting is 2/20

Stormwater Committee reported:

- **New Committee Co-Chair:** Sarah King is stepping down after serving her two years as co-chair of the Stormwater Committee. The committee is truly appreciative of all that Sarah has done and look forward to continuing to work with her in the future. The committee is looking to vote in another co-chair. One person has volunteered to fill this role, Ali Clift, who is Education and Outreach Coordinator with the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District. Any other committee members interested were instructed to say so by end of day 2/9. Electronic voting will occur the week of 2/12.
- The committee has set the dates for the 2024 meetings, which are as follows: 3/1, 6/7, 9/6 (at the Maine Stormwater Conference Friday lunch), 12/6.
- The Committee sent a Survey of Stormwater Committee priorities sent to SWC members to help inform areas of focus for 2024
- Continuing to follow stakeholder process with MEDEP as they develop Ch. 500 updates
- Continuing to support MS4-regulated communities through the appeal of LID ordinances

Residuals Committee reported:

- No report.

Lab Committee reported:

- Paula Drouin met with Stephen Knollmeyer on 2/14 to introduce herself and explain the Council Director role. She is going to assist with reviving the lab committee. Stephen is going to reach out to Andy Wendell to see if he has a committee list so he can have a starting point.

Pretreatment Committee reported:

- James Crowley's position has been posted, with no replacement in place before his departure. Jim has given his current supervisor, Holly Ireland (Compliance/Licensing) a walkthrough of pretreatment program. A third license writer has not been hired yet. If questions or pretreatment issues arise, Gregg Wood will be point of contact. A meeting will be scheduled with Gregg for details on next steps.
- EPA is in discussions regarding a nationwide Influent and Effluent PFAS study. As of now, nothing else is new from EPA on PFAS limits, as limits will likely come much later after going through courts/appeals. PFAS data shows variability of PFAS loading from industries like paper mills and car washes. Landfill leachate is proving to have most significant loading potential. Receiving water sensitivity is an important factor to consider when thinking about potential nitrogen limits in future permits. MeDEP and EPA continue to not agree on what limits will look like.
- In the year 2025- Electronic submittals of Annual Reports to begin for approved Pretreatment Programs, as well as Indirect Discharges who are not included in an approved pretreatment program. Unclear what reporting software will be used.
- Senator Brenner is in the works of passing a bond that already has the Governors' approval, but Appropriations Committee still needs to back it. The bond will be used strictly for infrastructure to help remove PFAS for facilities.
- The Maine Civil Support Team is part of the National Guard. If a water or wastewater utility suspects a hazardous chemical has been discharged into the distribution or collection system, the Maine Civil Support Team can be deployed. They will show up with members who are specialists in collecting and analyzing samples. They can mobilize within 4 hours if a utility suspects a hazard of unknown origin has been introduced to their system. They must do the following in order to have the Support team deployed to assist.
 1. Contact the local emergency management agency director (usually the fire chief or police chief and notify him/her of the incident.
 2. The local emergency management agency director will contact the county emergency management agency director. The county EMA director will contact the Maine Emergency Management Agency.
 3. The Maine Emergency Management Agency's Duty Officer will send a notification to the Maine National Guard so the Maine Civil Support Team can deploy.
 4. These services are at no cost to the utility. Again, the request has to be managed as shown in Steps 1 - 3.

Personnel Advancement Council Executive Committee Report Council Director – Stacy Thompson

- Will be attending New Professionals Committee Meeting on February 20th.
- I'm on the Community Resilience Working Group for the Maine Climate Council.
 - Attended the Special Maine Climate Council Governor Mills had on January 23rd.
 - Discussed the major storms that occurred in December 2023 and January 2024.
 - Heard from multiple communities and the destruction that occurred.
 - Maine Climate Action Plan to be finalized at end of 2024.
- Met with Committee chairs on Monday February 5th.

New Professionals – Sierra Kuun

- Working on family ice night out at Thompson's Point; date coming soon.
- Water and Wastewater Professionals Day – June 22, 2024. See flyer on next page.

Awards Committee – Michael Guethle

- Nothing new to report.

Convention Committee – Justin Barnett and Tim Wade

- Need to get contracts from Sunday River for 2025 and 2026.
- Briefly talked about the budget and the cost of corn hole. Slightly joking, but we might need to start charging for entry or find more sponsors for the event.

Personnel Advancement Committee – Charlene Poulin

- Attended the MWUA trade show earlier this month. Said it was a good show!
- Would like to do a Call for Abstracts for the Fall Convention
 - This will help streamline sessions, bio forms, etc.
 - Did mention that the packets for last Fall Convention didn't really have anything in them other than sign-in sheets. No bio sheets or synopsis of the session.
 - Work to have better packets for moderators with MWUA.

Outreach Council Executive Committee Report

Council Director – Phil Tucker

- Attended EWEA Annual Conference in Boston
- Attended 2 PR Committee meetings to discuss PR campaign.

Communication Committee

- Working on March issue of One Water
- Held a short meeting on 2/2/24 for newsletter planning but MWUA reps were not available, so rescheduled to 2/9/24.
- Sent out email to Executive Committee regarding requests for article.
- Schedule
 - Feb. 16 – articles due for March issue
 - March 8th – all copy to graphic designer
 - March 29th – publish.

Government Affairs Committee – Amanda Smith/Dan Marks

- January 16 Legislative Breakfast included between 8-10 Legislators.
- January 25th – GAC meeting discussed:
 - Breakfast – how to do it better next year.
 - Recapped speakers and their messages
 - Discussed what role MeWEA should have when collaborating with other Environmental groups.
(Terry will bring to the Executive Board for discussion and report back guidance for GAC)
 - Discussed current LD's, some are being monitored by various members of GAC: None are imminently concerning.
 - Paula and Terry discussed DC Fly-in
- Jan 31st Group email re: negative PR from WVOM spot related to Casella JRL contract. Extension request.
 - MeWEA will attend 2/15 public hearing in Brewer to combat misinformation.

Membership Committee – Jennifer Nicholson

- Nothing new to report

Public Relations Committee – Evan Pereira

- Issued successful media push with recent press release highlighting the looming turnover and veterans' opportunity in Maine's water workforce. Examples (to share with others however easiest, linked below and attached press release):
 - Wastewater Digest: \
<https://www.wwdmag.com/utility-management/press-release/33019461/maines-clean-water-workforce-is-one-of-the-oldest-in-america>

PLEASE ADD THE REST OF HIS REPORT.

Maine's Clean Water Workforce is One of the Oldest in America – State Changes Labor Rule to Attract Veterans to Industry Water Workers brace for “Silver Tsunami” with fifty percent of operators eligible to retire by 2030 January 23, 2024 – AUGUSTA, Maine – One of the biggest challenges in growing Maine's economy is the aging workforce. With 22-percent over the age of 65, more Mainers are expected to retire than enter the workforce creating the potential for a statewide labor shortage, according to Maine's 10-Year Economic Development Strategy. This problem is being felt acutely in Maine's clean water industry where the average age of an operator is 56 – eight years older than the national average. The ‘silver tsunami’ has led to a 24-percent decline in the clean water workforce from 2015 to 2023, shrinking it from 850 water operators to 650. “Without a sufficient workforce, the State of Maine will not be able to protect and preserve the clean water standards we've all come to expect,” said Emily Cole-Prescott, President of the Maine Water Environment Association (MeWEA), the largest association of clean water industry professionals. “Our operators are critical to the daily preservation of public health – without the next generation stepping into these jobs, we will have a serious environmental crisis,” Cole-Prescott said. In an effort to stem the looming problem, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP), the governing body of Maine's clean water industry, worked with MeWEA to make it more competitive for the industry to recruit a talented workforce. In 2024, one of MeWEA and MEDEP's primary goals is to attract Maine veterans to careers in clean water because of the highly transferrable skillset developed during military service. Veteran Travis Peaslee is now the General Manager of the Lewiston Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority (LAWPCA), one of the largest clean water facilities in the state. He believes attracting veterans to the industry is critical to building the next generation of its workforce. “The skills and discipline gained from a military career are highly transferrable to the front lines of public health,” Peaslee said. In 2023, Peaslee worked with MEDEP to adjust workforce rules to allow veterans' previous military experience to transfer to careers in Maine's clean water industry. The rule change, which is now in effect, will enable veterans to leverage military experience to start above entry-level, advance starting salaries, and provide a more seamless licensing process. Veteran and reservist Benjamin Pendleton was a Marine Science Technician in United States Coast Guard for sixteen years. Pendleton recently accepted a position within the Division of Water Quality Management at MEDEP and adds that “going from a career in military to water was a natural transition. Veterans possess the ability to interpret state and federal laws and understand the urgency and quick decision-making needed in emergency situations – you need those skills in the water industry.” “Careers in clean water provide a critical service to the health and safety of our people and our environment,” said Brian Kavanah, Director, Bureau of Water Quality, Maine DEP. Kavanah agreed that “the DEP's incentive is a perfect fit for veterans to naturally extend their careers in public service.” For an up-to-date look at available careers within Maine's water industry, visit here.

[About MAINE WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION](#) Representing 650 businesses, nonprofits, regulators, and water and sewer districts, the mission of Maine

Water Environment Association is to support the future of clean water. Through training, education and advocacy for sustainable policies, MeWEA invests in innovative technologies and infrastructure to protect clean water, the environment and public health. For media inquiries: Diana Nelson, diana@blackflymedia.com, 978-985-9993

UPCOMING EVENTS

JETCC

North Country Convention – Spring 2025. Presque Isle

MeWEA

Ski Day - March 14th, Saddleback Mountain

DC Fly-In – April 9-10th, 2024

Sea Dogs Event – June 22, 2024

Fall Convention –September 18,19,20, 2024, Sunday River.

NEWEA

Spring Meeting - May 19-22, 2024 – Spring Meeting, The Viking Hotel, Newport, RI.