

Minutes of the InWMC Board Meeting

Held on January 21, 2015 at USGS Offices in Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendees:

Heather Buck
Melissa Clark
Jeff Frey
Ashlee Haviland
Shawn Naylor
Gretchen Quirk
Greg Bright
Sara Peel
Jody Arthur
Joy Foy
Chris Ritz
Jill Hoffman
Eric Moore (guest)

Shawn Naylor called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

Old Business

Shawn asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the last meeting. Jody verified that there were none. Minutes approved without motion.

Shawn said the MOU between USGS and the InWMC is signed. Mike Griffin (Director) is the official member. Jeff Frey can be the official designee on behalf of Mike.

Symposium Recap

Shawn said that we now have most of the presentations, which are posted on the events page. We had a very good turnout, 160 registered. Not quite that many attending in the morning and about 90 attended in the afternoon.

Sara Peel said that we need two screens in the future because some people had difficulty seeing the presentations. But, otherwise, she's heard nothing but good things from people who attended.

Shawn said that In terms of good things that came out of that symposium, one was the issue/question of forming a committee or a task force that would be comprised of members from the water sector and the ag sector, modeled something after the KY-IN group.

Shawn said Brad Hall presented on this and said the big question is whether the council would host such meetings or if we would go through Farm Bureau.

Jeff Frey said the creation of the KY group was driven by Pete Cinotto but it has evolved. Farm Bureau already has their working group. We're in a little different situation. Farm Bureau has their working group and they don't want to change that. But maybe what they're looking for is more technical input. Maybe a starting point would be to have a discussion with Jill Reinhart at NRCS and maybe Justin Schneider [at Farm Bureau] and maybe get their take on how they'd like to proceed. He doesn't want to step on toes and it seems like maybe we could.

Sara said there is a lot of interest, though. She suggested that maybe we can have two separate groups working together, one being the monitoring council and one being Farm Bureau. She said we just want to make sure we have a point of contact for each group communicating with each other. Farm Bureau is more producer-focused and technical focused, not water quality/technical focused.

Jeff said that they [Farm Bureau] is more interested in it [monitoring] now, though. And having the producers involved, they can bring that group along. Sara suggested they could meet one time together and then separately. She had the impression they were two separate teams talking to each other, maybe working together but also having some independent things, too.

Jeff said that was his take, too. Chris Ritz agreed. He said he will talk to Jill Reinhart. Jeff said he had talked to Jill at the meeting. Said he and she planned to meet but now that should really be Shawn for the monitoring council. Shawn asked Chris if he could set up a meeting with Jill where the three of them [Chris, Jill and Shawn] could talk. Chris said he would try. He said that Jill is a very busy person. but that he will communicate with her and have her contact Shawn. Shawn said a conference call would work. Tony and Chris will meet with Jill and send an email to Shawn re: her availability.

Shawn said he's sees that as having the potential to meet maybe once or twice a year since everyone is so busy. Maybe have folks from the ag sector tell us what their concerns are maybe around regulatory issues that might affect them and then maybe in the water monitoring community, we can let them know what is going on in monitoring. That would be very helpful to them.

Shawn said he sees this as a group that meets not monthly or bimonthly but maybe twice a year. Jeff said it would help get direction on both sides. We might be able to tie in some of our edge-of-field studies throughout the state. There are several that are ongoing, or the water quality stuff, being able to link some of the stuff that's going on at IDEM or with any of the partners and see how that might fit in to help them to see how that might fit in to help them answer their questions.

Sara said having people who are working in the ag sector and on monitoring showing what they are doing and how it's cohesive may be also useful. She said it could be a standing committee. They may have to meet more regularly in the beginning to figure out what they need. Sara suggested Ron Turco might be willing to chair. Shawn recommended Dan Perkins might be another person who would be good. He's got very good connections with farmers in Jasper CO. He's one of the leaders in the state for creating good communication with farmers.

Jeff agreed noting that he was able to bring in saturated buffers and that Jasper CO is one of the few places in the state doing that right now.

Shawn asked if there was anything else to do in terms of following up from the symposium. Jody Arthur said she didn't think so, other than some logistical things that she will follow up on for next year. She added that we did have some recommendations that we got through email from some members that she would work on.

Jeff added that one of the things he noticed when putting this together that it would be good to send out a follow-up email to all attendees to encourage them to join the council. Ashlee Haviland is going to include a blurb about how to join the council in the next newsletter.

Strategic Plan

Communications Committee work plan is done. No significant changes there.

Shawn asked what we were going to do with the technical resources committee. Shawn has spoken to Joe Foy about chairing it, but he said he doesn't have time. So, we're in a situation where we don't currently

have a chair for that committee. Sara asked if this committee has tasks or whether it is just a remnant committee.

Shawn said one of the main things this committee was going to do was to reorganize the resources on the website and check to make sure all the links are active. Sara suggested that if this is all that committee was doing that we should punt that to the Communications Committee. And with all the stuff that the Communications Committee is doing, considering that it's all the same people, we may overload them. Jeff asked for input.

Jody said that it's hard to know right now if that would overload the committee. She wasn't able to pull together a meeting in early January as planned. She said the purpose of that meeting was going to be to start hammering out the timelines in the work plan and to start getting a little more specific about that. So, we're not at a place yet where we can say that we can take on the extra work and that we'd have to look at that within the context of all the other things we're going to be doing.

Sara asked if there was a reason why we feel the need to reorganize. Shawn said there are different ways to organize the content on a website. User-based (lay versus technical user). We're not taking that approach right now. Some people in the past, including Jill Hoffman have suggested that this might be a better way to organize the outreach and technical resources that we have. So, the idea was that this committee would be a major re-working of our content. But, at this point, Shawn said he doesn't see the momentum and the time being available to do that much work.

Jody suggested tabling the issue until the Communications Committee meets again. They will discuss it and bring recommendations back to the board. Sara said she will check the links and send the correct links for any that are broken to Jody.

Shawn asked if there is anyone present from the Groundwater Task Force Committee. Jeff said there wasn't but if we need to, we could see if Randy Bayless is available. Shawn said he will send a message to the leaders of the GW focus committee and ask them for a work plan by the next meeting. Sara suggested sending the Communications Committee work plan as a template.

Gretchen Quirk has started a draft work plan for the Network Optimization Committee.

Shawn said the goal for next board meeting will be to have draft work plans for the remaining two committees by the next board meeting.

Sara suggested that if we do end up forming a committee for the ag group that we tell them they would be expected to develop a work plan. Shawn said this would be a good litmus test to see if there is enough commitment and/or whether a new committee is warranted.

Shawn asked if we should have an overall deadline for this to be completed and suggested that it should be finalized by the general membership meeting this summer. Jody said that work plans are the next step, but they are just one piece of the strategic plan. We also need to establish timelines for revisiting and ways to measure progress along the way but that we still should have that ready for the general membership meeting.

Jeff asked if we should also make it a goal to get some of the tasks done so we have something to report as progress, highlight things that have been accomplished. Ashlee suggested that quarterly progress reports from the committees to the board would be good so that we can assess and address any roadblocks and then revisiting the plan annually. Jody agreed that quarterly is a good frequency.

Shawn said we're now on a schedule where we have a general membership meeting each spring/summer and a symposium each fall. So, maybe after the symposium, we should think about having a business meeting.

Ashlee agreed saying we got this work plan going in June of last year. We're nearing a year already of our strategic plan. So, by the next symposium, it will already be more than a year.

Ashlee said that at the annual revisit, we can decide what's achievable and what isn't. That way, we still know where we're going and where we've come from, and we still have some direction. Sara said reviewing the whole plan at the January board meeting makes sense because it's kicking off the next year.

Jill said that the board agendas should reflect the board-related assignments in the strategic plan. We don't want to wait until the end of the year on this stuff. Jody said she had wondered how we would go about making sure the board tasks get done and said that plugging them into the agenda is a good idea. Jill said that when you put board tasks into the agenda in a more intentional way, you'll get more participation out of the board. You know what's coming at the meeting, that it's not a series of updates. Rather, it's a couple of updates, then work.

Shawn asked about the utility of developing a work plan for the board. Jill said this is a good idea. Jill said what they [Upper White River Watershed Alliance] tries to do is that for those items that get assigned out, they're brought into the agenda so that you're actively working on them because, with most boards, it's rare that lots of homework happens between meetings. So, this helps you use that meeting time more effectively.

Jill said she will pull out the board tasks out and put them into a draft so we can see what a board work plan looks like.

Shawn asked if the quarterly reporting should appear in the work plan. Jody said it should, since it's a task.

Jill recommended that Ashlee and Greg turn these updates into accomplishments for the social media and newsletter.

Ashlee made another call for newsletter articles. Said she will create an archive for any articles or ideas that don't fit with the current theme. She said she will also be including membership opportunities in the newsletter as well because the newsletter goes out to a lot of non-members as well. She said Facebook is doing really well. One post a couple of weeks ago had more than 500 views. She's puzzled about why our "likes" aren't going up but she figures we're still reaching people.

Jeff asked if you have to like the post or just the page. Sara said that you have to like the page for you to see it and then, if you want your friends to see it, you have to like or share the post.

Ashley said our theme for the next newsletter will be a forward-looking issue. Jill asked if Ashlee has a section for things to watch and suggested that there might be some bills to watch. She doesn't have a lot of content but said there a couple of bills related to statewide water management. There's the thing coming from Charbonneau and Merritt, and there the thing she's working on with the mayors, who are in the middle of wrapping up their piece. Neither of those efforts have a lot to provide in terms of content yet but they are still something to watch. Sara added that there is also the statewide volunteer groundwater monitoring bill that Charbonneau introduced. Ashlee asked for anything Jill might be able to provide for the newsletter on these efforts.

Shawn suggested we call this section of the newsletter, "Water Policy Development in 2015" and add some bulleted links. Sara suggested adding a link to the General Assembly and provide information on how to track bills.

Gretchen suggested putting a link to the general assembly with instructions on how to watch the bills mentioned in the newsletter.

Shawn asked Ashlee to send another reminder to the entire board to ask for contributions to the newsletter. Sara said the marketing gurus say it takes seven times. Ashlee said that she feels like more than twice makes her a nag. Everyone agreed that it's okay to nag. Jody said people are so used to cross-postings that they aren't hypersensitive about that stuff anymore.

Jody asked if Ashlee is sending out her reminders to the board or everyone. Jody suggested that we may be missing an opportunity for content by focusing only on the board for content ideas and asked if there is a way to solicit ideas from the membership as a whole. Sara suggested that instead of emailing all members to solicit content, we could add a section to solicit more ideas. Shawn said we have pretty broad representation with the board. But, at the same time, it makes total sense for someone who is out there reading the newsletters and who isn't affiliated with the board but who may be doing something they want to highlight. So it's important to throw that out there as an option but not something we want to throw out to the membership with every issue. Sara suggested including that in the section for becoming a member, saying that provides two ways to be involved.

Jeff asked about putting the newsletters on the site. Sara and Ashlee said they must be since we provide a link to them. Shawn said they're on the home page. The most current newsletter is not up yet. Sara noted that the blog page is very outdated at this point, too.

Several agreed that the newsletters should appear in the news section. And, we should remove the blog since we're not actively blogging.

Shawn said that at the next Communications Committee meeting, we should assign the web updates to one person. He said Melody has expressed an interest in this in the past and that it might be time for her to take over with that stuff, and maybe the email blasts that we send out. Ashlee said that it's good to have a point of contact for that.

Shawn said there are six issues pages posted, soon to be seven. Greg has provided Shawn with some information on fish advisories that he will soon get working on. Shawn, Ashlee, and Jody have discussed how to roll these out. Ashlee said the arsenic paper was featured in the newsletter and then she posted it to social media. Jody suggested that we use flooding next since spring is on the way. Ashlee will feature the flooding paper in the February issue and post to our social media channels.

Network Optimization Committee Update

Jeff said they've been working on new maps. One of the things that have slowed their progress is that Stream Stats has been down. They are at the point now where all of the streams will associate the nearest gage with the nearest sampling spot. But, you have to make sure that you're on the right stream. So, you can't just load it into Stream Stats and assume you're on the right stream. They have to go through all the different sites and check to make sure. Once they do that, they will just be comparing the drainage area between the two to make sure they are on the right stream and figure out if they're in the 10%, 15%, or 20% and then rank them as far as whether they are usable or not. They can do that in batch mode, so once we have that it will be a pretty quick process. Jeff Thomas at ORSANCO gave us the NHD, so we have land use for all the sites. But, one of the issues is that they were not the same across states. So, we'll need to look at that to make sure we have some consistency.

New Business

Discussion on the Relative roles of the InWMC and IWRA

Shawn said he missed these discussions, but after the symposium at the IWRA business meeting on December 11, there was some concern expressed regarding the overlap between the InWMC and IWRA. Jeff said that this came up within the context of how we work together. He said it some suggested that we might be stepping out of ur bounds, that we really ought to be focused on monitoring instead of having symposia and some of the other things we do. If it was just one person, he would not have brought it up. But, he said there were 2-3 people who were shaking their heads or commenting. He said Jane Frankenberger was one of the most outspoken. And she wanted to and was willing to meet, with us and maybe Jeff [Martin]. Jeff said it seems like it would be worthwhile to have a discussion. He added that part of this is on them as far as defining their mission. They really don't have a true mission in their mind as far as what they are trying to do. So, it might be a worthwhile thing for both of our groups to talk about this and figure out how our roles can work together and to stress what each of us does well.

Shawn said he glad Jeff mentioned the fact that the IWRA seems to lack a clear-cut mission. Jeff said they acknowledged that. Shawn says the council has done a pretty good job of coming together and being outspoken not just about water monitoring but water resources consideration in general. Sara said it's taken a while, but we've gotten there. Shawn said it's a little annoying to have someone on the outside looking in and saying that we are doing more than we should be doing.

Shawn asked for Jill's input. Jill said that she is currently in the middle of a discussion with the mayors. Organizational questions come up about who should lead on different things. We have a good sense of what we want to do, a set of activities based on a planning process. And, if they were to have the same sort of activities, we could put all of that into "buckets" of activities like outreach, data collection, etc. Then maybe we could do an asset inventory to know what each group has to accomplish those buckets of activities. Then you can also see overlaps. If we're both doing the same thing or offering the same sorts of service around those activities, then it might make sense to collapse in that area. It may show that we're doing things that they aren't doing. This is an exercise in laying out everybody's activities and then lining up the organizations' assets to determine if they can or are willing to work on those activities. It's hard to have these conceptual discussions because people start to get defensive about their space or posture, which is not the issue at all. Jill said what you really want to know is whether this is repetitive and is there some efficiency to be gained. An objective process helps that.

Jeff said it seems like our strategic plan really outlines what we're doing in pretty good detail. Jill agreed that we're in good shape, but she doesn't know if they have a similar plan. Jeff said they don't have that. He added that there's a whole lot of gray area, too. For those folks that say we should focus only on monitoring, but the whole point of monitoring is to tell us what those results are telling us.

Sara said that she thinks that our symposia are complementary. They're not happening at the same time. They are not competing with each other. Jeff said they always have a hard time getting people to come to the fall symposia. They do a great job with the field trip ones, but the fall ones are hard. So, it seems like there is room for a complementary effort.

Sara suggested that we invite the new IWRA president, Joe Schmees (incoming) and some other key people from IWRA to our next meeting and have that be part of our planned topic of discussion about what they are doing, how we can work together and what they see as overlap. She said we all need to be in the same room as Jill suggested.

Jill asked who the primary leadership is in that group. Jeff said that it was Claus, who is the current president and Joe Schmees, who is the incoming.

Historically, Jeff Martin would be a good person to have on there. Jeff added that Jane also asked to be in on the discussion. Jill said that the discussion should be limited to a couple people from each board. We don't need the whole board engaging in a what-if scenario. We can always bring back the findings of that exercise, what we learned. If they don't have their goals clearly articulated, maybe our having that discussion will force them to do that.

Jody said that those who attend this discussion should be limited to members of our respective boards. If you invite a bunch of people, the discussion can become just a bunch of individuals with different opinions that may or may not be shared by others. Ashlee agreed adding that too many cooks in the kitchen can be a problem. Sara suggested that Jane should bring her concerns to one board or another. She's a member of the monitoring council as well. So, if she wants to bring it to our board instead, that's fine, too.

Shawn said Jane created a bit of conflict during the symposium planning. He said last year, they focused on energy and water with a huge focus on getting people from the energy sector in to discuss what their needs were in terms of water and water data. We had the same vision for this year's symposium. We wanted to have people from the agricultural sector that could learn and tell us a little bit about what their needs are. There was a goal to get feedback and have people from that sector be present. We need to branch out of the water resources community in terms of who we're talking to when we talk about the importance of water resources, data, and the relevance of our monitoring findings. Jane seems to be against this. She suggested to Shawn that this event should be just for people who are doing ag-related monitoring, presenting their research to one another. So, this is potentially something that ideologically Jane feels is something she needs to push. Shawn said he likes the idea of her bringing her concerns about this to the IWRA leadership so that they can start discussing this within some context instead of just complaining.

Sara said that the three people she knows that attended told her that a lot of the presentations were over their heads. Like that was not the text or tone of our conversation, us talking to other monitoring peers, not us talking to lay people. And "symposium" itself suggests something other than lay people. So, if we want to talk to lay people, we should use the term "conference" instead. It's more welcoming. So, if we want to do something to talk to lay people, then we need to do it in a different form.

Jeff said that we could also work with the presenters more to help them understand who we're targeting. Sara said they do that for ILMS with presentations that are clearly targeted for people with no science background.

Ashlee suggested possibly offering concurrent sessions, symposium sessions and conference sessions. Sara said maybe totally separate events. Ashlee said it's a lot of effort to put together two events. Sara said the same is true for holding concurrent sessions within a single event.

Shawn said that in the first meetings that Jane didn't attend, most of the original planning committee (himself, Logan Garner, and Dave Scott) were steering the symposium in the direction of having producers come. Sara said that if this was the goal, the registrations didn't reflect that.

Shawn said that Jane came in and steered it in a different direction. Jody agreed saying that Jane definitely wanted it to be a professional scientific discussion. Sara said she thinks that's what we presented. Shawn said Jane steered it that way.

Ashlee noted that it took much more time than it should have to wordsmith the title for the symposium. She said she thought we had decided on the title but then when Jane entered the planning process, it took another two hours to figure out the title again.

Jody said that the problem was that someone came into the process at a late date. She didn't know if Jane was invited or inserted herself, but she had a fundamentally different vision of what that symposium should be. And, it sounds like it was successful in derailing what we originally intended it to be because we were well on the way of creating a good symposium oriented to the producer. She said she wasn't involved in deciding topics or speakers and focused only on logistics. But, that was her take on what was happening during those conversations. She said that when you have a very strong personality come into a process, it's easy for things to morph. She added that we've gotten very good feedback on the symposium, though. Just scanning the evaluations, 45-50 of them, the feedback looks good. She thinks this issue just goes back to being very clear about what your goals are for a symposium.

Jill said that the goal of the symposium can change from year-to-year based on whatever is happening. If we feel we want to take data out to the producers or engage lay people and that's our objective for the year, that's the organization's prerogative to understand what their target is. It doesn't have to be the same target every single time. We can change topically and we can change audiences, providing something to the professionals and researchers among us or if we want to take our professional level stuff to different audiences. She said we don't have to define our audience the same way every year. Rather our audience should align with our organizational goals, which can change each year.

Shawn said a big buzzword now in the scientific world is the term "nexus". Last year, Randy Bayless introduced this term at the 2013 symposium asking where the overlap between energy and water resources interests exists and how water monitoring fits into that overlap. Shawn envisioned our most recent symposium to be the water-ag nexus. He said that if you're steering a conference toward researchers talking to each other, that's not the nexus. You're not finding any overlap there. That's just water resource professionals talking about their data. In today's day and age, a big problem is a little bit of distrust among the public for science and a lack of understanding for people about the importance of science. That's where the Water Monitoring Council can plan a really important role in telling people about the importance of water monitoring, what we're finding with our research and data and bridging the gap between science and citizens.

Sara said she agrees but she's not sure we're at that point yet. We're just getting to the point where we're finally starting to talk to each other in the state through the council and that taking it to the next level with lay people is probably the next step. We just haven't gotten the breadth or reach to do that yet. That may have been the goal of the symposium, and maybe we didn't tell Jane that when we invited her into the planning process. And, that's on us as much as it's on her. She said she wasn't in on the planning calls, but it can be hard to cut Jane off. Whoever was in charge probably should have taken a little bit more control. Either way, if that's where we want to go in the next couple years, if that's what our plan states, we just need to figure out what our next symposium focuses on in terms of topic and who we're trying to target.

Jody agreed that the audience piece is really important. She said it occurred to her, stepping back to the IWRA conversation that this is what they do very well. They have researchers presenting to researchers. They excel at that. They've done that for years and that's what their conference is. It's not geared toward lay people. She said that this might be food for thought as we go forward in our conversations about our different roles. Maybe reaching out to lay or interest-oriented audiences is the right role for us, to work on the nexus and leave the researchers talking to researchers to the IWRA.

Jeff said he was thinking the same thing. But, when you talk to Jeff [Martin] and some of the others, their goal is to talk to lay people. But, he doesn't think they do that. Jody said she's never seen many lay people

at those conferences. It's usually professionals. Jill said no lay person could even read have of the presentation titles on their agendas. Jody said that's not a criticism, that's just what is.

Joe noted that the IWRA website says "promoting water resources, science management, education and communication for professionals and students." Jody said she hadn't noticed the "professionals and students" part when she looked at their site earlier. She thought their mission did sound sort of similar to ours but this does differentiate us a bit.

Jeff said a big part of what they do is to raise money for scholarship, so there is a strong component of student development, presentations and research, which is different from us, but again, complementary. Joe agreed.

Sara asked if there are any actions related to this. Jody said it sounds like we decided that we would have a small meeting with a few board members of the IWRA, but she didn't get a timeline for that.

Jill suggested we should include Martha Clark-Mettler as the outgoing president since she has that history, as well as Claus and Joe and then a couple of us is enough. Then we have a discussion to find out if we all understand our respective missions and our primary goals, and what our activities are related to those. Then we see how they line up. She said that once you get that down on paper, it will sort itself out. Does it make sense to collapse or further refine the niches so that everybody is clearer?

Jeff asked if it makes sense to send them the strategic plan so that they can have talking points before they meet? Sara said we should ask them to share a similar document or content or thoughts if they have them. She asked how often their board meets. Jeff said they don't meet often, usually just when they start planning the symposia.

Jody said she wasn't able to find any planning documents on their web site, just the mission statement, their bylaws, the basic organizational documents. Jody asked if Jill could sit in on the conversation. Jill said she could.

Ashley said that for next year, we should take a firm stance for whoever is planning the symposium that we are reaching out to the public. Sara added if that's our goal. Several agreed that it is.

Jody said that in terms of lessons learned from this year's symposium planning process is maybe that we just really need to refine what our goal is. And we worked with that a little bit this time. I don't know that there are any really big changes that need to happen. Sara said that if our goal is to reach out to the public, we don't have the right contacts in our database for that. We're all citizens, yes, but we're also technical. In order to reach citizens, we need a way to contact them. Ashlee agreed that we need a way to target them and speakers who can speak on a level that's not above everyone's head. We need to make it clear to the organizers that they need to find these kinds of presenters if that's our goal. Sara noted that without contacts for the general public, we may still be a couple of years out from being able to do this.

Ashlee said we might be reaching them through our Facebook. Sara noted that these are still more technical people. If you want to reach the bankers and lawyers, you still have some work to do.

Jill said that people will self-select. This is not an organization everybody. Water, water science and pollution still aren't mainstream. And, certainly water quality monitoring isn't mainstream. So, we can have these ideas about reaching more lay people but generally, people are going to self-select. This is not going to be a banker-lawyer organization ever. By its very nature, it's a step above even a watershed planning group where it's already hard to get everyday citizens involved. I don't think we should kill ourselves chasing that or stating that as our priority. That's a stretch. Now farmers, or people within a

particular industry who discharge or need volumes of water? Sure. They're sort of like lay people, so that's a connection. It's worth expanding those things. She said we shouldn't kid ourselves to think that anything called a water monitoring council is for a lay person.

Sara asked if our meeting with the IWRA will happen before the next board meeting.

Shawn will send an email to Martha Clark-Mettler, Claus, Joe Schmees and Jeff Martin. Jill will be there, too. She added that we need to make sure to not make any commitments at that meeting. Anything discussed will need to be brought back to the board for larger discussion.

Sara suggested that we send another email targeted to those who originally expressed the concerns to tell them that this is how we are handling and that if they have further concerns to talk to one of their representatives who will be at the meeting.

Shawn says that at the meeting we should just present our plan and tell them what we are doing and then ask them to define themselves and where they think there is too much overlap. Then we can start to think about action from there on out. Sara said maybe they already have. Jody said it sounds like they recognize that there is some work to be done in that area. Jeff said he didn't get that sense. He said that multiple people mentioned the whole idea of a mission but they don't have a specific strategic plan for where they are. Sara said if you ask them what they do, they will tell you they hold a symposium and give some awards and that's about it.

Jeff said, historically, they've been around since the 1980s, late 1970s maybe. So, that's nice. A lot of positive has come out of this.

Jody said it can only help us sharpen our own planning as well. It might benefit them, too. But at the very least, it might also help us to focus some of what we have in our strategic plan. We already have a great start.

Elections

Shawn said in the past, we have scheduled those elections for the general membership committee in May or June. We need to come up with some nominations, in particular who is going to replace him as president.

Sara said those are two separate things, though. We hold elections for the board and then the board will elect the officers. Jody said what we need to do this summer is elect the board and usually at the next regular meeting, the first meeting of the new board, we elect the officers.

Sara said Doug Smith had volunteered to be president-elect but has since gone, so we don't currently have a president-elect. Shawn said he isn't sure he ever volunteered. Shawn said we need to strongly consider finding another nomination from a federal agency. Jeff said that Doug wasn't federal, that he was serving as a member at large. Jeff said there isn't anyone at ARS to serve on the board. Jeff asked about the Soil Erosion Lab. Chris said that Tony and Shannon used to be the NRCS' main communicators with ARS at Lafayette. They used to try to meet every year but that hasn't been happening. Probably haven't met for a couple of years now. He said this is a good reminder to reach out to them. He said he thinks they would have interest in staying involved with the council. Jeff said he talked to them about that and that Chi Hua had committed to take over for Doug on the board. But, he's not been able to make any of the meetings. Chris asked if Jeff was staying in touch with them. Jeff said only on certain topics with some of the things they were doing, some of the edge-of-field stuff but not consistently. More so with Doug.

Shawn said we need to come up with a nominations committee. He said Sara joked earlier that serving on the committee is a good thing because you know you're not going to get nominated for anything. But, on a serious note, this committee really needs to take this responsibility very seriously. He said it's not that he doesn't like the people on the board right now. But, it's extremely important to any healthy organization to have some turnover and have people who are going to be nominated and who are going to come into that job sold that it a great responsibility and something that they should take very seriously. He wants not only a good number of nominees to run in each one of these categories but also to have people who are going to come into it having a good outlook on it.

Jeff suggested using social media to get the word out to get some new blood in. He said he thinks the energy that some of the new folks have brought to the board really helps.

Ashlee said she'll put out an announcement on Facebook.

Sara asked if we have a date for that election. Jody said that we usually vote at our general membership meeting in the summer. Shawn and Sara said that last year we voted by email. That was the first time we didn't have paper ballots.

Sara said we talked about it at the last general membership meeting about whether or not it makes sense to do that at the membership meeting or maybe if it would be better to do it at the symposium. But, Shawn probably doesn't want to stay on as president until fall, so it probably makes sense to do it via email.

Jody said if we do it via email, we can do it any time. Ashlee asked when we want to have nominations in.

Jody said the thing about nominations is that once people know you are looking for nominations, they have to have time to filter their networks. I'm not sure how using social media to solicit nominations would work because in the past, we've reached out to specific people we thought might make good nominees. It's been very targeted. So, even if we did throw it out to social media, anyone coming forward would have to fit within one of these groups. Sara said that they're pretty loose. Most people wouldn't have trouble fitting into one or more of them. Jody said there is an advantage to targeting our solicitation because we all know someone who would be great, interested and very committed, and we also know people who wouldn't. So targeting provides a little bit of a gatekeeping function in terms of making sure you get people who are willing to do some work.

Sara said that on the other hand, people who you might not have thought to ask might be very high performers. Jody agreed with that and has no particular preference either way. She said that we have a lot of flexibility with regard to time if we're going to conduct the vote via email. She said that we probably need to have the nominee list together by the end of March. Sara said we could finalize the list at the March 18 board meeting, conduct the vote and have the first meeting of the new board in May.

Shawn suggested the end of March. Jody said that wouldn't leave us much time to finalize it, which isn't a problem if the board doesn't have to do anything to finalize the list. She asked what we will do if we have a whole bunch of people who step forward. Are we going to impose any kind of filtering on that or not? Do we just put them all on the ballot wherever they fit and put anyone who doesn't fit into these categories goes into the at-large category?

Shawn said another problem is not having enough. Jody said she's an optimist. Sara said that in ILMS, they've had more board nominations than they have positions, and they all volunteered. They didn't have to go out and find them. Shawn said that getting the nominations before the March 18 meeting would give the board a chance to see where there are any spots with no nominees. Jody said that would give us time

to beat the bushes. He suggested an end of March deadline with a tentative deadline before the March meeting.

The board set a March 13 deadline for getting nominations to Jody. Jeff sent out an email to the board to ask them to let Jody know if they are still interested in serving and polled the members in attendance.

Jody said the IDEM will probably want to have representation but that it does not have to be her. That's something her commissioner would decide.

Shawn said he will remain on as past president. Jeff said USGS will serve. Ashlee said she is willing to stay on. Sara said she will serve. Melissa and Heather are still interested. Greg will commit to another term but will look for his replacement. Joe will serve if there are no other cities and towns. NRCS will love to stay one.

Sara said the folks on the phone are those who typically attend. Melody is usually in attendance, too. She hasn't seen Bob Gillespie or Tom Bruns for a while. She said she's not suggesting we ask them to resign, though. Jeff said Tom has been attending the Groundwater Task Force meetings quite a bit. Jody suggested that even if he can't continue to serve on the board that he might be willing to continue working with the task force. Sara said maybe he'd like to be a committee member rather than a board member.

Sara said that's another thing to think about. If we get a slew of people who are interested and we don't have board positions for them, they could serve on committees. Jody said that's another good reason to throw it out to a larger group.

Sara, Heather and Melissa volunteered to be on the nominations committee. Jody said she would help with the logistical work. Shawn said we would want our nomination committee to be well connected. Sara said it's not just on the nominations committee. Everyone should go out and ask two people they think would be good.

Shawn said we should send out an email to the rest of the board asking for two recommendations and as your nominations begin to fill up, then you start to do more targeted solicitation.

Jody will send an email to the entire contact list in Wild Apricot soliciting nominees for the InWMC board. She will include in the message the nutshell version of what she used before describing what the responsibilities are and give them a date of March 13 for getting their nominations in. She said she would also send them the list of board positions. Sara said we don't need to send them a list, that we can just fit them in.

Jeff said that sending them the list would help to jog their memories. Jody said it helps to give people some parameters and that if you don't send them a list you run the risk of having a lot of recommendations for members at large that don't fit into other categories. Sara said we'd be surprised at how well they all fit but said she didn't care if we send the list.

Treasurer's Report

Previous balance:	\$1,405.30
Income (dues):	\$20.00
Expenses (symposium)	(\$279.04)
New Balance:	\$1,146.26

Jody said that the Wild Apricot bill comes due two days after our next board meeting (March 20). She said the dues are \$600 annually which buys us a 500-member contact list, and we're only using 28% of our allowed storage. So, we won't have to upgrade anytime soon.

Jody asked if we want to ask the USGS to continue supporting the council in this way or if we want to begin paying this bill out of our own funds. And, if we are going to take over the payments, which we can probably afford at this point, we will need to vote on the expenditure soon. She said she can't pay the bill without board approval to use the funds for this purpose. Her concern is that since the bill is due just after our next meeting, if we don't have a quorum at that meeting, she can't pay the bill on time.

Jeff asked if we already paid that. Jody clarified that the extra we paid before the symposium was a prorated fee to upgrade through the remainder of our subscription and that now the full year payment is due.

Sara made a motion to pay for Wild Apricot out of our budget if USGS is unable to pay for the service. Jeff seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed with no additional discussion.

Jeff said he would verify but that Mike agreed to continue paying the bill annually. So, he didn't anticipate any problem. Jody said that the bill is being paid with a credit card, presumably USGS' card and that the contact information for the payment still shows Scott Morlock. Jeff said he should be the contact now. He will talk to Scott to change this in Wild Apricot.

Wrap-up

Next meeting: March 18, 12:30-2:30 at the USGS offices.

Sara suggested we send out a reminder of the new meeting date and time in case folks didn't pick up on the change we made at the last meeting to accommodate the academic representatives on the board. Ashlee said it would be good to get the reminders out earlier, too. Jody said she would try to turn the minutes around and get reminders out sooner.

Greg asked if the council wants to be involved in the Water Monitoring Inventory because funding is about to run out for that. Sara said it will end at the end of this month.

Jody said that her game plan was to talk to her branch chief at IDEM about the possibility of our taking over the maintenance of that tool through our branch. She said that based on what Laura has told her, that this involves someone to serve as point of contact, keep it organized and updated and handle anything that comes in. We're in the process of reworking all of our annual job duties so now is an opportune time for her to discuss it with her branch chief. She doesn't know if they will have the resources to do so but will initiate the discussion in the next couple of weeks.

Greg asked what happens if IDEM can't take it over. Will it die? Sara said she doesn't think it will die, but it will just sit there and there won't be anyone to respond to emails unless Jane applies for additional grant funding under another project. Jody is hopeful.

Meeting adjourned at 2:23 pm.