NIWR Board Meeting Record

Date: November 20, 2024
Time: 3:02 – 4:21 EDT
Attendees: Jeff Peterson (MN), Yu-Feng Lin (IL), Karen Schlatter (CO), Keith Cherkauer (IN), John Schwartz (TN) Linda Weavers (OH), Mike Dietz (CT), Nicole Misarti (AK), Brian Rahm (NY), Tao Yan (HI), Stephanie Ewing (MT), Jerry Kauffman (DE), Martha Narvaez (DE) India Allen (VSA), Amy Weckle (IL) Jennie Snyder (SIU), Leslee Gilbert, and Laurie Katz (VSA)

1) **Call to Order and Executive Committee Announcements (Jerry)**
   Jerry called the meeting to order when it became a quorum with over 50% of the Board present at 3:02 pm. Executive committee had a meeting about the events of the last month, will send summary.

2) **Approval of October 16, 2024, meeting record (Jerry)**
   John Schwartz motioned, Karen Schlatter seconded, and the Board approved the October 16, 2024, meeting record.

3) **WRRA program update (Christian)** Christian - Deadlines 11/8 annual report received 53 of 54, missing one. Pending SF425 annual financial report – due 11/30. Verify match requirement simple form with signature due 12/10. UCOWR/NIWR meeting special sessions for people awarded grants from the 3 RFPs, invitations sent with some positive responses. On time and on target for FY 25. Mike asked about a proposal where the information is from NY. Should be in state only? USGS does not think so. Jeff asked about who should submit number, Christian - Grants office does not know how to answer question. SF425 is official communication between university grant office and USGS grant office. Jeff asked would base grant proposals be the same. Christian - Currently under CR and expect to be under another CR and submission dates will be similar.

4) **Financial Report (India)**
   43 institutes have paid so far for this year, and it is good in comparison to the previous year. Balances are similar to last year, but that is only because they did not pay after September last year due to a bank issue. The unrestricted account has been growing. Only 2 institutes have outstanding dues from the prior year, Todd will come to DC to change banking information. In February will have executive committee on bank accounts.

5) **Federal advocacy update (Leslee/Laurie)**
   FY 25 appropriations, high probability will get another CR to push it to March 2025. Complicates things because there will be a new Congress. Wrap up FY25 while working on FY26, which will be busy. Doug Bergum nominated as Interior Secretary, likely to be confirmed. FY25 where do things stand – advocacy matters as much as ever or even more. Last Trump administration zeroed out USGS, congress did not go for that and is not expected to do that. It will require a big effort to talk about the value of this program and continue to fund it. Look at regional "water users" of data to show breadth of services, outside of academia, as advocacy tool. Planning an advocacy webinar in January 2025. Annual meeting in February will be in a CR and some offices might be reluctant to meet, but Leslee thinks it is a good timeframe. Need to find champions in Congress to help with push. New Congress begins January 3rd. Right now, looking at committee chairs (next 2 weeks), then ratios of members from each party, then actual members (early January).

6) **Updates on NIWR initiatives**

Communication & admin. Contract with UCOWR (Jeff/Jennie)

Communications committee meeting had some great ideas on how communications would go forward with the most effectiveness, focusing on regional and network topics. Website mockup finished, giving feedback. Newsletter format was agreed upon and Jerry will provide the first spotlight article.

Student Travel Awards (Karen/Mike)

Karen said the travel awards have a link in the abstract submission form and on the conference website. They must answer two questions on a form. The timeline – is a month a safe time to review the student applications? The students will be involved in planning the conference's student activities. Based on prior numbers and the amount of questions Jeff thinks a month will be plenty of time.

2025 Conference (Jeff)

2025 Conference is moving along well. 31 special session proposal and three of them will feature USGS competitive grants. Field trips ideas have been narrowed down. Call for abstracts is open and due on January 29th, 2025. Exhibitors and sponsors – NIWR has been a sponsor in the past for $10,000. Can take advantage of some of the sponsorship opportunities like having a table with information. Will vote on the sponsorship in person in February.

JCWRE 2024 special issue (Jeff) is almost ready for publication and is the 60th anniversary issue. Looking to see if there is interest in a 2025 special issue and can take any direction the editors would like. Can put out a call for editors.

7) **February 2025 and Fall 2024 NIWR Meetings (Yu-Feng)**

Fall Virtual Meeting – Thank you for your participation. 96 was the peak at one time, but some people shared log on so over 100 is estimate. Amy Weckle has the recording in box. Do we want to share recording and the meeting summaries? The board has shared the notes in the past. Jeff raised the point that maybe everyone does not want it shared. Will it be available to everyone or just to people who paid? 47 institutes paid. Jerry proposes sending website to everyone with the notes and a link to the recording to those who are interested/attended.

The dates of the February 2025 NIWR meeting in DC have been set at February 24th-26th with Monday and Tuesday being full meeting days and Wednesday being a Hill Day. Weekly meetings have commenced with Yu-Feng, Laurie, Jeff, and Jerry with help from Amy and Jennie. Agenda was discussed. Asked the board if there was anything the board wanted to add or change. There are more activities for new directors, need to target invited speakers. Looking for any comments on those. Laurie has completed the registration database and will go live today. Has been working with vendors and is ready to welcome NIWR back to their facility. Jerry and Laurie have been working on swag, will be long sleeve sport t-shirt with NIWR logo, men's and women's cuts will be available. Yu-Feng confirmed that they will be using aluminum water bottles that can be reused and then recycled. Karen asked about agenda – Sharon brought up a session about scaling water equity. Research grant efficiency discussion with USGS to make the reporting efficient, has been implemented but would still speak with the USGS. John Schwartz thought it was valuable to have other program managers speak. Brian asked if NIWR has considered foundation funding as a national network for funding program managers. Reminder to book hotel rooms – put in Sunday arrival. Hotel code will be sent through email.

8) **Adjourn at 4:21 pm** (The next board meeting is December 18, 2024 at 3 pm EDT.)