

Colorado WaterWise Board Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Conference Call

10 a.m. to noon

P: Called-in via phone
X: Attended in-person

Board:

P	Alyssa Quinn	Platte Canyon W&S District	alquinn@plattecanyon.org
P	Amy Volckens	Brendle Group	avolckens@brendlegroup.com
P	Brad Brady	Yearout Energy Solutions	brad.brady@yearoutenergy.com
P	Courtney Black	Intera	CBlack@intera.com
P	Diana Denwood	Aurora Water	ddenwood@auroragov.org
P	Don Drew	Courageous Marketing	d.drews@courageousmarketing.com
P	Eric Olson	City of Fort Collins	eolson@fcgov.com
P	John Berggren	Western Resource Advocates	john.berggren@westernresources.org
P	Katie Helm	City of Fountain	khelm@fountaincolorado.org
P	Lance Ackerman	Colorado Springs Utilities	lackerman@csu.org
P	Laura Wing	City of Thornton	laura.wing@cityofthornton.net
P	Lindsay Rogers	WaterNow Alliance	ler@waternow.org
P	Lyndsey Lucia	Northern Water Conservancy	llucia@northernwater.org
P	Quint Redmond	Agriburbia	qredmond@agriburbia.com
P	Ruth Quade	City of Greeley	ruth.quade@greeleygov.com
	Thomas Riggle	Centennial W&S District	triggle@highlandsranch.org
P	Tyler Kesler	Town of Erie	tkesler@erieco.gov
P	Melissa Brasfield	CWW Board Staff	admin@coloradowaterwise.org

Guests:

Jessica – Evoque Communications
Tom – CO Native Landscape Coalition
Meggi Varnai

Call to Order

Diana called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM
Introduction of board members and visitors.

Tom talked about the Colorado Native Landscape Coalition. The coalition is made up of five organizations; Wild Ones Front Range, Audubon Habitat Hero Program, CO Wildlife Federation Certified Gardeners, CO Native Plant Society, and PEPAN. These groups all have similar goals and programs to create a unified voice that native plants are important. The coalition meets monthly as a group. They are working on a fact sheet to distribute about the goals of the coalition. They are also developing a document called “Recommended Native Landscaping Policies for Local Governments and Water Providers”. The coalition’s three primary goals:

1. Local and state government should promote native landscaping.
2. Definition of xeriscape should be revised to include a native plant profile.
3. Landscape management practices should support biodiverse ecosystems.

The coalition is currently reaching out to future partners to learn more about ways to work together. Diana mentioned that many of us would likely be interested in learning more. Diana asked if he could share the Fact Sheet once it is available.

Board Business and Action Items

- Approval of October Board Minutes. Ruth motions, Alyssa seconds. October minutes are approved.
- Committee Update: Newsletter
 - We are working on the winter edition. Some board members have been contacted to write articles.
 - Diana started a "What's changed since COVID..." section. This time we wanted to highlight what has changed with outreach/rebates/customer service. If you have any ideas, let Ruth know the details.
 - Diana and Melissa will be making some updates to the email notification that goes out to our contacts when the newsletter is published. This email will include a snippet of an article from the newsletter be included in the body of the email with a strong membership plug.
 - Don Ireland has joined the Newsletter committee to assist with article writing.

Budget First Reading

Brad walked through the excel file with the 2021 budget. Brad has incorporated edits from Symposium and LLYLI committees. Management

- Brad asked if we want to keep the CWCB grant in the 2021 budget? Amy said that she does not think we will be soliciting external resources in 2021.
- Brad asked about the budget for board meeting expenses for 2021. Brad is reducing the board expenses for 2021 because we will likely not be meeting in person for at least the first portion of next year.
- With those changes, we are left with about \$4,500 of profit in the budget.

Symposium

- Melissa explained the changes to the budget with AV costs and furniture rental.
- Tyler mentioned that streaming and conferencing software may be increasing in 2021 so we need to be prepared for that.
- Melissa also noted that the committee made the assumption that the event would be able to be held in person next year. If we have another year like this one, we will see out expenses drop off significantly.

LLYLI

- Currently the budget lands negative but we are hoping for more partners with the SWEAP partnership.
- Brad asked if the Colorado Gives Day Income were included in the \$20,000. Alyssa said that the committee was not sure how much to account for so we did not add a value for that fundraising effort.
- Laura asked if the website hosting costs have been updated with the new service. Alyssa confirmed that it was included in this budget.
- Alyssa mentioned that the partnership income has been spread out to quarterly anticipations based on historic information.

Newsletter

- The only change was the 2021 rate increase for Melissa's hours.

Brad will send out the budget sheet with these comments to the board for a final review.

Board of Directors and Management Team

- Board of Director – Need for Solicitation
 - Because of the board member limitation that was voted on and approved last month, we will not be doing any new board member solicitation.
 - Diana discussed that the Diversity & Inclusion subcommittee is working to develop a statement and will be giving an update to the board at a later time.
- 2021 Officer Elections
 - Co-Chair
 - Lyndsey is stepping down as Co-Chair.
 - Diana would like to stay.
 - Diana to stay on as co-chair is approved by the board.
 - Katie Helm has expressed interest.
 - Katie to join as co-chair is approved by the board.
 - Co-Secretary
 - Courtney is stepping down from Co-Secretary.

- Alyssa is interested.
 - Alyssa to join as co-secretary is approved by the board.
 - Thomas is also interested.
 - Thomas was not at the meeting and the board will hold on voting to confirm his interest.
- Co-Treasurer
 - Brad and Tyler are interested in staying on.
 - Brad to stay on is approved by the board.
 - Tyler to stay on is approved by the board.
- 2021 Meeting Schedule
 - We likely will not be meeting for the first half of 2021. However, Katie is developing a tentative schedule in case we can meet in person the second half of 2021. Below are the individuals/organizations that have volunteered their space based on their ability to accommodate that number of people.
 - Alyssa/Platte Canyon
 - Ruth/Greeley
 - Laura/Thornton
 - Diana/Aurora
 - Katie will develop a rough schedule and send it out for review.

Symposium Debrief

Melissa provided a recap of the Symposium and survey results.

- We had 110 individuals register for the symposium
- Each session had about 30-50 attendees. This is similar to the attendance rate we see at online webinars.
- Total income was about \$10,000. Total expenses are around \$4,000. We will come out around \$6,000 ahead this year.
- Overall, we received positive feedback from the event.
- Melissa will send out the comments received for each session to the leader of that session.

Comments from the board:

- Diana was really pleased with attendance numbers.
- Don suggested hosting multiple mini symposiums to keep thought leadership going throughout the year. Melissa mentioned that we do the webinar events throughout the year to continue that thought leadership.
- Quint mentioned that we might consider hosting smaller in-person events with online attendance opportunities throughout the year.

CO State Revolving Fund Sign-On Letter

Caroline from WaterNow Alliance joined the meeting to talk about the Colorado Intended Use Plan support letter and Colorado State Revolving Fund (SRF) process. Caroline is the policy director for WaterNow Alliance who has been working on this program. The SRF is Colorado's way to providing low cost loans and some grants for water infrastructure projects. The program sets aside 10% of the money in the program for Green Project Reserves. The SRFs are administered by CDPHE, DOLA and Water Resource Development Authority. Each year they create the Intended Use Plan for how the state will use those SRF funds for the following year. They accept public comments each year on this plan. Key recommendation in the support letter was to make the Green Project Reserves even stronger to include water efficiency and water infrastructure projects. The state determined that there will not be a change to the Intended Use Plan because they felt it would be more restrictive instead of more board. But it helped to get an understanding that the State is open to using these funds on water projects. Each year, in order to be included on the list of potentially fundable projects, communities are required to fill out an eligibility survey online, in June each year, to provide a high level overview of the project to determine a preliminary approval to get on the list.

- Amy asked what a typical loan size and interest rates is. Caroline said the first tier is \$3 million and less. The next level is \$3 million and above. The interest rate is around 2% but she needs to confirm that. And if you meet a certain threshold you could get reduced interest rates.
- Lindsey asked about the grant opportunities as well. Caroline said the grant funding is limited and is available to disadvantaged communities that meet certain requirements.

- Tyler asked about how the fund is funded and replenished. The SRF is a Federal/State partnership established under the Clean Water Act. The Federal government issues Capitalization Grants to each state from the EPA and the state matches 20% each year. As the loans are repaid that money goes back into the pot. For 2021, the Intended Use Plan has about \$150 million allocated in it.
- Diana about what would constitute a disadvantages community. Caroline said there is a statutory limit for disadvantages that Caroline believes is based on median household income.
- Diana mentioned that a joint webinar could be helpful to increase awareness of these loan and grant opportunities.

Letters of Support

Tyler led this discussion to talk about letter of support requests in light of the recent request and the tight turn around. As a non-profit, it can be advantageous for us to remain apolitical. We need to represent our members best and if we have a decent on a vote then we may consider having a clause in our bylaws to handle these situations.

Amy mentioned this might also tie into the Conflict of Interest policy. And how one person can abstain from voting and have that noted in the letter of support or decision. We could also write these letters of support as individuals but not CWW as a whole.

Tyler asked for two to four weeks for a turn around time for letters of support. Lyndsey mentioned that the management team came up with a process that includes having the request added to the upcoming board meeting. And the person requesting the letter of support will include the draft letter to allow each board members to review the information with their organization. And there will be a record of the decision we make in meeting minutes to identify who voted and the outcome of that vote.

Amy asked if it might be worth us having a statement that says “this is representative of individuals and not their member organizations”. Lindsey also thought that it might be helpful to have a policy or statement that has a process to identify what types of support letters CWW would sign onto

Lindsey and Tyler will work on developing some sort of statement and policy statement in bylaws to cover these details.

Round Robin

- Tyler discussed the rebates program participation was about 250% higher this year. This also justified hiring a FTE for 2021 to continue to grow the work they do. Erie also completed a rate study and will be launching a tiered rate structure in the future. This will not impact more low and moderate water users. However, it will drastically increase rates for about 11% of high-water customers.
- Ruth talked about the AMI conversion that Greeley is working on. She gave a brief update on their Life after Lawn program costs and time spent. For homeworkers that did the install themselves it cost about \$1 to \$2.50/sq ft. Is a landscaper installed it was around \$6 to 8/sq ft
- Laura asked who is on the water and land use planning group – Lindsay, Amy, John, Ruth said they regularly attend.
- Eric and Thomas passed their SLM certification test recently.

Wrap Up and Adjourn

Diana noted that committee chairs should discuss with their respective committees the 2021 Action Plan in preparation before the next board meeting.

Diana adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Submitted by:
Melissa Brasfield