

MGEC ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2009

[draft]

The 41st Annual Meeting was held Monday, September 14, 2009 at StoneRidge Golf Club in Stillwater, Minnesota. Approximately 184 members were in attendance.

I. Call to Order – Vice President John Siekmeier (MnDOT)

Vice President Siekmeier filled in for President Peter Buchen (MnDOT) who was attending an out of state conference. John called the meeting to order by welcoming attendees and thanking Dana, Rhonda and the Program Committee for organizing the event. He thanked board members, voluntary committee members and the many others for their time in serving the membership. He reviewed the agenda and encouraged participation for the entire meeting.

II. Awards Committee Report – Chair Ron Dahlquist (MnDOT)

Chair Dahlquist announced the 2009 awards and scholarships:

- Golden Slide Rule Award: Michael Pretel, Principal Engineer, MnDOT – Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail Project.
- Scholarship for Family Members: Justin Scott who is completing a double major in mechanical and industrial engineering at University of Minnesota Duluth. His father is Michael Scott, Senior Engineer, MnDOT Central Office.
- Minetor Memorial Scholarship: Brett Ballavance, Senior Engineer. Brett is an environmental engineer at MPCA in Duluth and is pursuing a second degree in civil engineering.

III. Education Committee Chair Paul Kettleson (MnDOT)

Chair Kettleson thanked instructors who have volunteered their time teaching the MGEC P.E. Exam Review class. Service awards were presented to instructors with ten plus years teaching: Blake Nelson - 17 years (MnDOT), Bill Priebe - 15 years (MPCA), Randy Thorson - 11 years (MPCA), Rich Lamb - 12 years (MnDOT), Petra DeWall - 10 years (MnDOT).

IV. Secretary's Report – Secretary Len Leitner (MnDOT)

A motion was approved to dispense with the reading of the 2008 Annual Meeting minutes.

V. Treasurer's Report – Executive Director Dana Wheeler

Executive Director reviewed the Treasurer's Report for FY 2009. A motion was approved to accept the Treasurer's Report. The audit of the MGEC books for FY 2009 was completed on July 29, 2009 by Past Presidents Joe Pignato (MnDOT) and Dan Sullivan (MPCA).

VI. Nominations Committee Report – Chair Patrick Ferrin (Administration Dept.)

Chair Ferrin presented the slate of candidates for vice president, treasurer and five directorships, for terms beginning January 1, 2010. He called for nominations from the floor. Current director Jessica Forsberg (MPCA) self-nominated for the treasurer position. Nominations will continue to be accepted through September 30, 2009 at the MGEC office.

VII. New Business – John Siekmeier

Vice President Siekmeier talked about what MGEC's priorities might be for the next year: He has had experience on the MGEC Negotiations Committee and Bargaining Team over the last ten years attempting to negotiate a better deal for members. It can be a frustrating experience since we negotiate with the governor, not our department heads or reps from our agency. The governor literally sets the agenda for how state workers get compensated. So given that, and with the current economy, there's really little interaction from the state. However, as we look ahead towards 2011 there are four reasons we should be optimistic:

1. One of those reasons is that we're going to have a new governor. I don't want to be partisan one way or the other; I just want participation from our members. Whether that's with the candidates on the democratic side or with the candidates from the republican side. We really need to get more engaged.
2. We participated with the state on our compensation study and now we have the actual data on our side.
3. In Minnesota we have the Taxpayers Transportation Accountability Act (TTAA), which attempts to create a level playing field between the public sector and the private sector consultants.
4. Hopefully the federal government, with respect to transportation at least, is going to be authorizing the next federal transportation bill that will stand six years. Again we have the potential to be more engaged and hopefully push that program forward.

With that backdrop, MGEC has already begun and will be picking up speed on these issues in 2010. Our Legislative Committee has been meeting regularly the third Monday of every month. So any of you that are interested in participating more with MGEC are welcome to join. The goal of this committee is to increase our visibility across the state, both with the public and especially with the legislature.

One thing we did this year was produce the brochure (which you see on your table) about what all the state engineers in Minnesota do. The idea is to use this brochure to connect with our representatives. Again one of the goals of MGEC for next year would be greater visibility both with the public and legislators. In order to do that, in order to interact with the legislature, we need as many of our members as possible to engage their representatives and senators. If we could get just 5% of our members - we've got about 1,000 members - so if we had even 50 members that would step forward and really engage their representatives, we

could certainly make an impact as far as our ability to have the legislature understand what we do for the state. The concept is to have an MGEC Day at the Capital, probably in February or March of next year, and get 5% of our members to meet with their representative or senator. The other thing that we plan to do is an initial letter to state and federal delegations encouraging them to support public sector engineers.

Another thing I would like to mention is additional cooperation with other professional organizations, such as the American Society of Civil Engineers. They have produced a report card on America's infrastructure. So they're another group we can team up with and show the legislature and public how important the infrastructure is and what needs to be over the next few years. I would like to point out, as I did last year, that in our contract membership in these professional organizations is reimbursed up to \$225 each year, which would cover the cost of your membership. I believe it's important to participate as public employees in these organizations, otherwise these professional associations become more dominated by private sector consultants, and then their agenda shifts to what might benefit consultants. So I want to encourage you again to take advantage of this benefit in our contract.

We need more member volunteers to accomplish this interaction with the legislature. It will take more than just this committee and we're going to need to reach out to our members if we are going to do that. Not just tonight but through other occasions where we're going to identify legislators who are on the transportation committee and other committees that interact with DNR, PCA, Health, etc., and connect our members with those representatives and senators on those committees. We'll be doing this in the coming months with the idea that we're more effective as an organized group as opposed to hiring a lobbyist. I feel that getting our members engaged and having conversations with their elected officials is more effective than hiring a lobbyist to sit at the capital to attempt to make our issues heard. So I really want to use our members as best we can.

In wrapping up I wish to announce a networking/cooperation opportunity - the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota will be holding their centennial this October 30. This is a good chance for our members to interact with other civil engineers around the state.

In closing I just want to pass along a bit of incentive which relates to my call for your greater involvement with your elected representatives. I recently spoke with several representatives and a couple of congresspersons about how we might do more as a bargaining unit in Minnesota, and they were very supportive. However many of them didn't know MGEC exists – that's something we've got to correct. The initial response was that maybe we're to the point that the members feel it's important enough, that they don't believe their level of compensation is adequate, that they'll actually become more engaged. Many of the legislators simply believe that if they don't hear from us, they're not really all that interested in trying to do

more for a group that isn't communicating to them about what its needs and concerns are. To paraphrase what I heard last evening, "maybe times are finally tough enough for your members that they will see the need to become engaged."

Whether you're democrat or republican, we need to get more engaged. Those legislators make a lot of decisions that affect us and when we're invisible our issues are not addressed. So again I encourage you to contact me, talk to others, and get engaged. This is sort of the agenda for how I see MGEC in 2010. If you would like to talk to me after the meeting, particularly with what's happening with the DFL candidates, or you're interested in engaging with the republican side, and if there's any way you can facilitate that type of engagement that would be wonderful, but see me either way. Thanks a lot and thanks for your time and participation.

VIII. Adjournment – John Siekmeier

Before adjourning the Vice President opened the floor for any comments or questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Len Leitner
Secretary

Rhonda Bauer
Administrative Secretary