

MGEC ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

February 18, 2010

The 42nd Annual Meeting was held Thursday, February 18, 2010, 10:00 a.m. at the Ramada Inn in Minneapolis. Thirty-six Executive Board members and members attended.

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

President John Siekmeier introduced himself and thanked everyone for coming. He noted three subjects to be discussed during New Business.

II. Executive Director's Report – Dana Wheeler (MGEC)

Executive Director Dana Wheeler oriented members to the logistics at the meeting site including the annual meeting informational materials. He also spoke of today's agenda. He thanked Rhonda Bauer, MGEC Administrative Assistant, for her usual good work and help in making the meeting today possible.

Dana reported that this meeting format was an example of attempting to try a different setting, one that would allow for discussion, continuing education opportunities and networking with others in the field. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about this format at the conclusion of the meeting or day's activities.

This format included the first combined meeting with MSES (Minnesota Surveyors and Engineers Society). MSES applications and brochures were available for anyone wanting to join MSES. The MGEC contract provides that professional membership fees can be reimbursed by the employer.

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

MGEC Secretary Len Leitner presented the minutes of the 2009 Annual meeting. A motion was approved to dispense reading of and to accept the minutes.

IV. Awards Committee Report – Chair Len Leitner

Len Leitner described the Wealth Maximizer scholarship donated by Josh Vinkemeier, to be awarded to the child of an MGEC member today. Chad Jorgenson is the winner of this \$500 scholarship. His mother, Cynthia Jorgenson, was present to receive the scholarship. Len informed the group of the usual MGEC scholarships and awards that will be opened to members later this year.

V. Treasurer's Report – Executive Director Dana Wheeler

Treasurer Jessica Forsberg was unable to be present at today's meeting. Executive Director Dana Wheeler presented the FY 2011 budget. He explained changes from the FY 2010 budget due to increased membership numbers and therefore increased dues income. There is increased income from PE class tuition. It is expected that expenses will be less in FY 2011--the cost of the annual meeting is less, printing and communication costs have been reduced through negotiating prices and increased use of electronic communication. More will be spent on lost time due to it being a negotiations year. Most of the board members' time is done on a voluntary basis.

MGEC dues have not been increased in over ten years. Reserves continue to grow slightly and provide MGEC with the ability to respond to members' needs as well as support special undertakings by the Executive Board. Past President Peter Buchen acknowledged Dana's role in keeping the budget in good condition. Dana responded to a question about what lost time refers to.

A motion was approved to accept the budget for FY 2011.

VI. New Business – President John Siekmeier

President Siekmeier addressed the topic of MGEC'S Legislative Committee hosting an MGEC Day at the Capitol.

Discussion of Position Paper A - Cap on DOT Commissioner's salary:

- The employer should not be able to individually pick employees and pay them more. The bargaining unit still should be setting terms and conditions of represented employees. The change to the law should just be to eliminate the cap.
- A clarification may be needed to the MGEC contract on the base terms and conditions of employment. Another point to make is that engineers currently need to leave the bargaining unit in order to get an increase in wages / responsibilities.
- The law was rewritten allowing specific qualifications allowing state epidemiologists to receive pay above the cap pertaining to the Governor's salary. Medical doctors are also exempted from the cap.
- A motion was approved to clarify who the law covers, i.e. not MGEC members. Any new law should not set salaries of MGEC members outside of a negotiation process with MGEC.

Discussion of Position Paper B - Compensation for employees being commensurate with compensation by other employers doing State of MN work:

- A wage study by American Engineering Council about twenty years ago reported that if all the work were done by private contractors, they would get complacent and work quality or value would diminish. The same if all work was done by state employees. They concluded that state employees should do about 66% of the work and 33% contracted out. One suggestion was that MGEC should promote a ratio of 40% contracting out to 60% work done in-house.
- Currently there is no law. If there were it would be easy for future legislatures or governors to change the ratio percentages. We should find out what the ratio is now.

- The Taxpayer Transportation Accountability Act (TTAA) report produced by MnDOT is something MGEC is currently reviewing and will respond to. We should work with MnDOT to help make future reports more accurate.
- President Siekmeier stated MGEC is tracking increases such as project contract supplemental agreements and change and work orders. These increase the project costs.
- If ranges are suggested they would need to be adjusted for different work types so that it isn't only certain types of jobs (the basic easy stuff) that get assigned to state employees.
- A specific number should not be set but rather a range set as a goal for how much work would be done by state employees.

VII. President's Remarks

President Siekmeier commented that MGEC is the only advocate for state employees with regard to engineering functions and protecting taxpayer money, and it needs to be a priority to be at the capitol communicating messages that are important to our members and the public. We're a volunteer organization with one executive director and a part-time administrative secretary. Would you like to see MGEC hire additional staff? It might be someone to facilitate member engagement.

- Suggestion that now is a good time for increased cooperation with other bargaining units.
- Suggestion that we establish a political fund to support candidates. and that there should be a moderate increase in dues to accomplish it. President Siekmeier pointed out only a fraction of our membership would support this based on the survey. He doesn't believe MGEC will make contributions to candidates.
- Question if MGEC should provide a rebate to members with the suggestion that this dues rebate be used for political action, health care costs or other member priorities. No response to this question as time ran out.

VIII. Adjournment

Time ran out and participants were asked to follow up with ideas and comments on the format of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Wheeler
Executive Director

Rhonda Bauer
Administrative Secretary