



*Engineering Minnesota's Future*

## MGEC Executive Board Candidate Information 2019-2021 Term

Office you are running for							
Director	X		Secretary			Vice President	

Name: Laura Lyons

Job Classification: Engineer Grad 2

Current Agency/Office your work in: MPCA

Work Address: 520 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN      Work Phone: 651.757.2430



Professional Licenses: Engineer in Training, studying for P.E. license

Previous/Current offices held with MGEC (list years)	<i>Board Member</i>			<i>Officer</i>		
	<i>Negotiations</i>			<i>Committee Member</i>		
	<i>Contact person</i>			<i>Instructor</i>		

Number of years working for the State	1.5	Number of years a full MGEC member	<1
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### Why are you running an MGEC office?

Before starting with the state, I had not previously been part of a work union. None of my close family or friends were in a union either, so I did not fully comprehend the benefits of collective bargaining or arbitration. Many of my new coworkers who had parents or friends in unions signed up to be full members of MGEC right away, since they understood its value, but those of us who did not have that background were generally inclined to be fair share. Some have switched to be full members to participate in the survey or to vote on the contract, but others do not consider those benefits worth the cost of full membership. This model is not sustainable now that fair share members are not required to contribute. Accordingly, one of my goals as a director would be to develop a 'What MGEC plans to do for you' initiative to bolster the current 'What MGEC has done for you' dialogue. This initiative will increase education of new hires on the benefits of MGEC, and increase engagement with the union as a whole to determine the most-desired improvements across agencies and years of service.

To best represent its members and their needs and wants, I feel that MGEC needs to be more transparent to all members. This transparency is necessary in finances and on when bargaining is, what is being bargained for, and how bargaining is progressing. For example, a number of younger members were not pleased with the 1% Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP) bargain, since that money could have been invested at a lower cost in a different fund. But the chance that we would have a HCSP come out of bargaining wasn't included in update emails during the bargaining process, it was only in the final contract vote. You had to go back months in board meeting minutes to find mention of a HCSP being discussed with OMB. I recognize that the bargaining process requires some confidentiality, but it should be balanced with openness where it's an option, so that members can voice their dissent before things are written into the contract. I also feel we need increased transparency in finances, like how we spend almost \$300,000/year on staffing, so if elected I will work with the treasurer to make that information more presentable and open to members. To increase transparency I also aim to organize more meetings at each affected agency, so we have a more year-round presence, not just when we need members to call their legislators. Similarly, I hope to determine if making draft board meeting agendas available prior to board meetings is feasible, so that interested members could attend the meeting or call in once Skype capability is established at the MGEC office.

**Additional information you want to share with members:**

Although I have not worked with the state for very long, I am passionate about ensuring that our union fees are being utilized as efficiently and openly as possible. I do not have children, so I have plenty of time to devote to the initiatives described above, and others that members encourage the board to pursue. Thank you for your consideration!