



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Conference Planning Committee Meeting #1**  
**January 17, 2024**

**In-Person Attendance:** Matt Saam, Brad Henry, Cristina Mlejnek, Eric Fosmo, Nina Stanley, Toby Muse, John Powell, Mitch Hoeft, Nick Williams, Mark Erichson, Mary Detloff

**Virtual Attendance:** Chris LaBounty, Chris Petree, Jeannine Clancy, John Mazzitello, Eric Nelson, Heidi Hamilton, Mike Marti

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1. Introductions

All those present introduced themselves.

2. 2024 Conference Planning Committee Initiatives

Matt reviewed the two 2024 committee initiatives. Those present provided comments and suggestions on each initiative related to the spring conference.

- a. Initiative: Strive to increase attendance at both fall and spring conferences with a goal of 10%
  - Provide a registration discount to first-time attendees
  - Ask for feedback from first time attendees on post conference survey
  - Send a special invitation to award recipients, education program graduates, workshop attendees, front line workers, etc. and consider a discount for the full conference
  - MN Transportation Conference will be held in late May, which could present an issue for those not able to attend both. This may be a one-time change with future MTC held late April/early May
  - Increase promotion of the spring conference to counties
  - Continue to work with other organizations asking them to promote our conference and reciprocate
- b. Initiative: Make additional progress toward reducing food waste
  - Consider not offering a box lunch to go on Friday
  - Consider stressing the past food waste – over 100 box lunches left in 2023

3. Review of 2023 Fall Conference: Committee Member Comments, Feedback

- Positive comments on venue and venue change
- Session topics were well-received (less technical)
- Exhibitors appreciated having specific times to staff booth so could mingle at other times
- Some exhibitors were frustrated about the lack of visitors to their booth – how can we increase foot traffic?
  - Vendor bingo card – attendees get bingo card stamped and turn in for prize
  - Dedicate more non-compete time to exhibit hall. Consider eliminating a session or adding more vendor time
- First-time attendee/colleague of CPC member attended fall 2023 and loved it – will come back

- MN Rural Water does an exhibit hall well – what can we learn?
- Hotel rooms booked at the Mystic Lake Hotel as an individual are less expensive than those booked through our contract - \$149/night in contract. Mary will look into this.
- Promote availability of exhibit space to public organizations – put those spaces outside exhibit hall?
- Offer drink tickets or other sponsor opportunities for spring conference potentially for specific events like Thursday evening activity

#### 4. Final 2023 Fall Conference Budget

The final budget was reviewed with a few highlights below:

- Estimated 425 attendees, actual 477 attendees (340 members, 133 non-members, 1 guest, 3 students)
- Net exhibit hall income was \$5,103
- Most expenses were close to estimated
- The budget was initially estimated at a \$1,635 loss. The event ended with net profit of \$22,179.40.

#### 5. Review Most Recent Conference Evaluations

Conference evaluations from the [Spring 2023 Conference](#) and [Attendees](#) and [Exhibitors](#) surveys from the Fall 2023 Conference were reviewed.

The breakfast check-in and slips asking for tips were odd and unexpected. Mary will look into this for 2024, modify if possible, or will notify attendees how to handle it if we encounter this again in 2024.

#### 6. Review of Planning Process, Timeline and Committee Roster

The planning outline and timeline for the spring conference were reviewed. The committee roster was distributed. Any corrections should be sent to Mary.

#### 7. Review/Brainstorm Potential Session Topics, Draft Conference Program

Possible session topics were shared, with committee members volunteering to follow up on each topic as noted below. The [Master topic list](#), [Fall 2023 Conference survey future session ideas](#), [Fall 2023 Conference Call for Presentations responses](#) and [Spring 2023 conference survey future session ideas](#) were referenced.

Topics were added to the [draft conference program](#) throughout the discussion.

- Peter Pollock – Friend of John Mazzitello (served together in Afghanistan) speaks on leadership: communication, connection. Per John, Peter will discount his fee for a Wednesday keynote and a 90-minute Thursday morning session to \$6500 plus \$550 in airfare and Wednesday lodging.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9D1Q3mmpys>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKr3PcuPAkg>
- Erin Koegel / Sustainable Infrastructure Resilience Advisory Committee – the committee report is coming out late January 2024 – potential presentation for Friday - Brad
- AI – what will this mean to our industry, local governments, etc. – Heidi, Mike, Brad
- Facilitate a Thursday evening activity onsite at Grand View versus something nearby that would require bussing/transportation
- The Brain-Friendly Workplace: Why Talented People Quit and How to Get Them to Stay - Heidi
  - Update: On-site speaking fee approximately \$30,000 plus travel costs
- Lessons from The Ledge (line 86 from the master topic list) – Nina

- Pedestrian crashes/TZD/ federal funding for safety, role of public works in providing safer roads - Brian Sorenson, state safety engineer, Julie Long, national perspective speaker - Mike, Chris L.
- Workforce development - maybe a panel?
  - MTA doing workforce development focus, new website - Jeannine
  - APWA national doing workforce development also – potentially talk about this in their remarks? - Jeannine
  - ACEC/MN new workforce development initiative - Eric
  - Opportunity + - WSB – Mark
  - Michelle Stockness/SUSA - Chris L

8. Review of APWA National, APWA-MN Committees/Groups with Spring Conference Involvement

- Chris P. will invite national president Gary Losier, region VI director Joe Johnson, and CEO Scott Grayson
  - Jeannine serves on APWA national board
- Consider a panel of APWA-MN members involved on national committees talking about their involvement, what they get from it, etc.
- The Education & Training Committee will likely request time to discuss upcoming and concluding chapter education programs and potentially recognize those graduating from programs
- The Membership & Special Events Committee will assist with/coordinate the Thursday evening activity
- Assuming he can attend, the APWA president will be invited to welcome conference attendees alongside chapter president plus have a few minutes to speak during the Thursday business meeting

9. Next Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 6 11am – 1:30pm, City of Apple Valley or Virtual via Zoom