

**New England Chapter APWA
Minutes of the February 21, 2024, 11:30 AM
Executive Committee Meeting
Zoom Conference Call**

1. **Call to order EC Board Meeting:** Meeting was called to order by President Roy. Otero noted attendance. Guests/Committee Chairs included Amanda Bazinet, Jaqui Connors, Nichole Davis, Conrad Leger, Kris Surette.
2. **Concerns, etc.:** None
3. **Consent Agenda:** *These items will be acted together at their conclusion by a single vote.*
 - a. **Approval of Minutes:** January 17, 2024, minutes were reviewed.
 - b. **Treasurer Report:** Otero reported that she is in the process of setting up a Square account to facilitate credit card transactions, following discussions with Julie Bebermeyer and Jill Wilbeck from APWA. Sponsorship checks are steadily coming in. The Vermont event opened the vendor registrations in January. She has been busy with vendor registrations, obtaining Certificates of Insurance (COIs), mapping them out on the layout plans, and managing payments. In collaboration with Diana Forbes from APWA, she is finalizing two agreements related to the Summer Conference: one for the golf event and another for the entertainment segment. As soon as these agreements are fully signed, she will promptly make the necessary deposits. The accounts with Santander have been completely settled and balanced. Jaqui Connors has been compensated \$10,000.00 for her role as Secretary/Treasurer in 2023, check was cut on February 6th. Connors stated that she was charged \$6.00 for the Web.com (associated with Constant Contacts). Otero stated that she removed that card and put her credit card information in and Connors should not have been charged. Otero will look into this.
 - c. **Finance Committee:** Schaeffler reported that the request for 2025 funding has been distributed to all Chapter Chairs for the upcoming conferences and significant events scheduled for 2025. She is aiming to have these requests returned by March 1st. A meeting to discuss the allocation of Sponsor funds is in the works, which she will be coordinating with Conrad. Additionally, she has shared the 2023 expenditure details with each of the committee chairs, as requested by the Finance Committee, to assist new chairs by providing them with historical financial context. She emphasized that any funding requests must first be approved by the Finance Committee. Connors reported that she continues to receive mail, including a check and several documents, which she plans to forward to Otero. She requested Leger to contact the Sponsors and asked Schaeffler to communicate with her Vermont Vendors, ensuring they understand that all correspondence should be directed to Otero. Leger and Schaeffler confirmed that the forms clearly instruct sending all items to Otero and expressed interest in identifying who is still sending materials to Connors.
 - d. **Delegate's Report:** Westerling reported that the National winter meeting is scheduled for next week. The APWA National Website has been updated and now offers comprehensive information on government affairs, showcasing its efficiency. The National team is actively collaborating with various government agencies on key issues such as water resilience, and the lead and copper regulations, and on asset management. Today, Rick Merson will discuss the Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Act (WIPPES Act). Efforts in outreach and advocacy are being intensified to support both the WIPPES Act and the First Responders Act. Andrea Eales, the Director of Government and Public Affairs, leads an excellent team ready to assist in promoting these initiatives. Preparations are underway for the Snow Conference and PWX in Atlanta. The website now features updated National Certificates, a testament to the Directors at National's commitment to this initiative. Among the notable certifications available are Public Fleet Professional, Infrastructure Inspector, and Stormwater Manager. As of February 2024, our membership stands at 31,975.
 - e. **Director of Region 1:** Benevento announced that the combined Region 1 and 2 Delegates meeting is scheduled for next week in Mystic, CT, from 8 AM to 5 PM on Thursday. Jill Wilbeck will be present to discuss various topics, and Andrea Eales will address government advocacy. The agenda promises a comprehensive day with 117 slides of information. Benevento shared insights from his recent two-day trip to Washington, D.C., for a Board of Directors meeting, where Dom Lombardi from Region 2 was appointed President Elect following the untimely passing of Lisa Rapp. Currently, the nomination process is underway to find a new Director for Region 2. The visit to Washington also included meetings with key government figures, including the head of the Federal Highway Administration and John Podesta, a senior advisor to President Biden, making for an eventful discussion on Public Works topics. He praised the work of the APWA's Washington office, particularly the Government Affairs office, for their support and readiness to assist with First Responder and Death Benefits issues. Regarding national nominations, which he believes are open until the 29th, regional nominations are handled by the Regional Committee. He mentioned that two National Board of Director positions in Engineering and Technology and Transportation are becoming available as the current holders complete their terms (3 two-year terms). Interested parties are encouraged to apply. Mulleavey clarified that nominations for these positions are now closed and are under review. Additionally, this year's Snow and Ice event will take place in Kansas City, with PWX set for Atlanta.

- f. **Education:** Modzelewski reported that they notified all the speakers for the respective conference they were selected for. The Spring Committee submitted the CEU request to National and the other committees will submit for their conferences. Yeo reported that they are reaching out to Fall presenters soon. He stated that Modzelewski is working on Spring, King is working on Summer and he will be helping Yanulis and Bazinet with the Fall presenters once they finalize their message. Lawlor asked if Modzelewski noticed that the City of Meriden presentation had to be pulled due to one of the presenters having a personal issue. Modzelewski stated he did see that and they are looking at the abstracts again and they might reach out to Lawlor to see if they can present on the Cape.
- g. **Awards:** We skipped this until Stinson was on the call and circled back towards the end of our meeting. Stinson reported that we are 9 days out for the submission deadline. We have 22 submissions at this time with 12 being project related and 10 people awards. Roy will sign the congratulatory letters. The committee developed the criteria for state awards and sent them to three reps in each state for them to search out people. The deadline for the CT state awards will be March 13th so they can present the winners at the Spring Conference. The VT, NH, RI, and MA award deadline will be April 5th. Their next focus will be the Luncheon and Summer Conference. Yanulis stated that the New Hampshire Public Works Association is having their annual meeting on May 9th. We should be partnering with them as they are doing great things and would love for us to reach out. Modzelewski asked Stinson if there were any awards without submissions. Stinson replied yes, the professional manager of the year for water resources, emergency management, right of way, technical innovation, asset management, and excellence in education. Stinson also stated he did not receive any for the big projects, 25-75 million or the structures and historical preservation which are under 5 million. Mattscheck stated the RI Equipment Show will be May 29th and he runs that event. He would be happy to hand out awards that day.
- h. **PWAC:** Piacentini updated that the committee convened in January, where they discussed the production of a new video, with plans for further conversation on the topic soon. The team discussed the need to build more on our social media accounts. The meeting also covered the Luncheon and the introduction of new panels for the membership booth which they are pricing out. These panels should be at every event with someone sitting at the booth for conversations. Benevento added that the costs for the panels would be covered by the PWAC budget. These panels require the development of new graphics. Benevento suggested a simple design approach featuring photos and bullet points, mentioning that Skyline, Peabody, MA could take on the design task. Otero brought up that she possesses a heavy pull-up banner displaying the outdated website address. Meanwhile, Garro stated if the panels are not ready for Spring Conference, they can create a board to bring. Schaeffler clarified that any requests for such projects need approval from the Finance Committee (FinCom), as PWAC does not have its own budget. When Benevento questioned if PWAC has a budget and asked about the Chapter-wide line item (821) Advertising-Education/Social. Schaeffler confirmed it was the correct line item for the entire Chapter to use, not just PWAC, emphasizing that FinCom's approval is still necessary.
- i. **Sponsors:** Leger has announced that sponsor payments are now overdue. He plans to collaborate with Otero today to identify which sponsors have yet to respond. His team is also tasked with updating the 2024 sponsor image block used in Constant Contact emails and on display boards. They are in the process of organizing requests for various events to ensure budget allocations are accurate and funds are directed appropriately. Leger highlighted the significant changes made to the sponsorship program, noting an increase in sponsorship contributions from about \$38,000 in 2019 to a projected \$80,000, thanks to the adjustments in 2024. This boost in funding is expected to enhance the program's capacity to serve its members more effectively. He expressed gratitude towards all sponsors, acknowledging their essential role in the organization's operations. Currently, they are collaborating with FinCom to introduce a new PWX Sponsorship Program, planning to distribute letters of interest for what will initially be a one-year trial to evaluate its success.
- j. **Scholarship:** Mulleavey reported that they had a meeting on February 7th, the committee revised the scholarship applications. The revised scholarship applications were forwarded to Otero and Ciancarelli for uploading to the website and for promotion via Constant Contact and Facebook. Shea has already publicized the information to Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and intends to extend outreach to Schaeffler to share in Vermont. To date, there have been two submissions for the Crombie scholarship and one for the standard scholarship. Plans for another meeting are in the works to discuss further actions. In response to Adams's and Benevento's inquiry about eligibility, Mulleavey encouraging anyone with connections to Public Works to submit an application.
- k. **Young Professionals:** Surette provided updates on the planning of the Director's Breakfast, noting that the event, initially scheduled for March, is now likely to be postponed to April. He shared that they are planning a spring tour of a Complete Streets project in Newport with a social event right after. Looking ahead, the calendar includes the Woo Sox event, Young Professionals (YP) Holiday event and a Toys for Tots campaign. Additionally, there are plans to leave a significant footprint at both the summer and fall conferences, with a strong emphasis on integrating a dedicated YP presence into these conferences. He expressed excitement for the upcoming activities and encouraged anyone with questions to reach out for further information.
- l. **Spring Conference:** Sopelak extended an invitation for the Young Professionals (YPs) to have a table at the Spring Conference. He reported that the committee convenes bi-weekly. The event, set to take place at a new venue, has

the capacity to accommodate 200 attendees. Efforts are underway to secure a keynote speaker, who is currently facing health challenges; the committee plans to follow up to confirm their ability to speak. Modzelewski shared that due to a last-minute cancellation, they are reviewing abstracts to select a replacement session. An onsite meeting is scheduled for March 1st. Accommodations have been arranged with blocks of rooms at two hotels, details of which are included on the registration form. Sopelak raised the possibility of offering complimentary admission to speakers, a practice not previously adopted since speakers are typically consultants who benefit from exposure to the audience. Benevento highlighted that while this has not been the norm, the decision rests with the committee. To complement the event, the Air Museum has generously offered to donate gifts for the speakers. Modzelewski asked Roy about the State Awards that have been mentioned and Roy responded that we will circle back to that topic later in the meeting (Stinson was not yet on the call, we skipped G. Awards and will have him report at the end of the meeting).

- m. **VMESFD:** Adams shared that their team convenes bi-weekly, with her responsibilities centered around coordinating volunteers and managing logistics. She noted that vendor applications continue to be submitted and expressed her gratitude for Schaeffler's guidance and leadership.
- n. **PWX Chapter Dinner:** Myers updated that their group has held two meetings so far. They are organizing a reconnaissance trip scheduled for March 18th, with 11 participants confirmed. Their efforts include liaising with sponsors and communicating with the National regarding PWX. National has revealed plans for a Get Acquainted event at the aquarium on Sunday, while the Chapter Reception and Dinner on Monday with a business casual dress code.
- o. **Program:** Nichole Davis has been exploring various venues for the Summer Conference 2025, gathering quotes from locations across the Region. Two venues, Water's Edge in Connecticut and Mt. Washington Resort in New Hampshire, have been the focus of detailed discussions. Schaeffler informed Davis and the Board that the Red Jacket expressed interest in hosting future events. Davis suggested that Water's Edge in Connecticut would offer a smoother planning process for the 2025 conference. Roy mentioned that a contract and deposit would be required to secure the venue and emphasized the urgency of finalizing arrangements with Water's Edge to ensure the venue is locked in. He also highlighted the importance of keeping the event affordable. Bazinet noted that while there were 125 rooms available last summer, Water's Edge has 95 rooms, and the food and beverage minimums are quite high. In response to concerns about accommodations for additional attendees, Garro, who recently visited Water's Edge for a Holiday event site check, mentioned that there are other lodging options and Airbnb properties nearby. Garro agreed to share his contact at Water's Edge with Nichole Davis. Yanulis vouched for Mt. Washington Resort as an excellent venue, noting its popularity and the positive experiences of other organizations he's affiliated with that have hosted conferences there, underscoring its strong appeal. Benevento highlighted the reality of rising costs across the board, emphasizing that the investment is justified by the quality of educational sessions, the food, and the availability of engaging activities. He also stated that people should negotiate and try to get better pricing for the Chapter events. Yanulis chimed in, noting the lack of complaints about pricing for similar events, suggesting that attendees see the value in these experiences. Roy proposed that securing the venue should be a priority, recommending that the details be finalized and presented to the Board for a decision on the deposit, suggesting that this could be done through an electronic vote if necessary.
- p. **Holiday Event:** Garro mentioned their attention is on the southeastern part of Connecticut, specifically targeting areas around Westbrook and Mystic. They explored Water's Edge as a potential venue but found it to be on the expensive side. The team considers Mystic a convenient location for the event and is arranging a site visit there in the near future.

5. Approval of Consent Items

Above Consent Items were approved on a motion by Lawlor/Mattscheck.

6. Action on Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

7. Other Business and Correspondence

PWX 2029: National rotates PWX across the 3 zones, east coast, west coast, and central every three years and National asked if we would like to host PWX in 2029. It is a very significant event to organize. Looking at \$125,000 to \$180,000 to fundraise for the event, that funding can only be used for PWX. We would need 400 volunteers. Prior to this meeting, Otero sent the information packet that National shared with us. Stinson stated this is a great experience and opportunity, however it's a big lift and you need so much energy and time to put this on. Who here today will be here for the long haul? He has worked on two of these 1992 and 2010 steering committee chair for the entire event and has helped other Chapters with PWX. In 2030 you'll still be closing things out. In 2010 we were together for 7 years, Yanulis, Connors, DeMaio, Bombara, Collins, Hultgren, Berrett, Benevento, Garro, Piacentini, and others. We had strong

connections in Boston. Picking a chair is key. Boston is not cheap, who would be the big donors? For the 2010 event we raised \$450,000 with a goal of \$550,000. We had 450 people for the Chapter Dinner. He said for 5 years he worked 7 days a week with many meetings. Picking the chair is very important, that person needs to take others opinions. Merson stated you have to be in it for the long haul, long term commitment. You have to stay engaged with a lot of energy. There is a lot of behind the scene things to take care of and you need to be prepared. It is a great opportunity connecting with other Chapters and Regions. Yanulis stated it would take more than 4 years to raise that money, 400 volunteers, parking and feeding them. It's a lot of work but fun once you get there. Roy said that if we don't do the PWX in Boston in 2029, there is another option to host an event which is the Snow Conference with 1 year of planning, much smaller committee. Leger wondered what the benefit is to host PWX with so much work and money to raise. He gets that it's a great event but working 7 days a week doesn't seem enjoyable. Stinson said a lot of it is pride. Yanulis said there isn't a benefit, Leger is right with working 7 days a week, it's so much work. Webb stated in 2016 we hosted the National Snow Conference and it was a lot of work but nothing compared to PWX. Connors stated that we no longer have City of Boston connections. Roy said while reading the room, there is no strong interest in hosting PWX in 2029.

Vermont Death Benefit: Last Wednesday Zach testified in regards to the Vermont Death Benefit. He brought in testimony, and they are willing to take any written testimony, let her know if you have anything. She forwarded the S235 and S310 this morning to a few people to review. The biggest question was definition was emergency personal and who is included in that. There is a video posted to YouTube from that day. Blodgett did a great job but there were a few questions he couldn't answer. It would be good to review the video and see how we can better prepare ourselves. Otero and Merson was on and they aplicated the support. Merson said it was there first reading of this legislation so it's got a way to go. May not go out this first year. He said Blodgett did a great job and thanks him for his time. New Hampshire was successful with their legislations. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut are still working on this.

Federal WIPPES Act: Point of interest for Government Affairs and advocacy. There is a simple process to stay involved. You can go online to our website and find letters to send to legislators. When sending letters, you do get a receipt that it was submitted. When they receive a lot of letters, they deal with volume, the more volume they see the more likely they will pursue it. He would like more time at the next meeting to go over this as this meeting is running longer than anticipated.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Schaeffler/Otero.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Otero
Secretary-Treasurer