

The Geological Society of Washington  
*founded 1893*

DRAFT MINUTES

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

APRIL 3, 2019

*Council Members Present*

Patrick Carr, council secretary  
Carl-Henry Geschwind, treasurer  
Megan Holycross, mtg secretary (phone)  
Graham Lederer (phone)  
Mark McBride  
Karen Prestegard, past president  
Michael Purucker, president  
Nick Pyenson  
Libby Stern  
Ester Szein, 1st vice president

*Council Members Absent*

Liz Cottrell, 2nd vice president  
Laura Helmuth

*Others Present*

Erik Hankin  
Brooks Hanson  
Ben Mandler  
Alex Speer

The meeting was called to order at 2:09 P.M. by President Purucker. The minutes of the October 24, 2018, meeting were approved without objection.

REPORTS

*Membership*

The membership report from Hankin is attached. In the calendar year to date there are 249 paid members. The renewal rate is 84 percent; at this time last year it was 82 percent. New memberships approved thus far this year is at nine (twelve at this point last year). Of those nine, seven have followed through and paid their dues. Hankin suggested that a one-step process would increase that rate; he will investigate a change to the forms.

Prestegard asked if we should be considering search engine optimization; after some discussion the general consensus was that we don't need a policy. McBride suggested connecting with the astronomy column in the *Post* for meeting announcements.

*Program*

Mandler is leaving the D.C. area to pursue a career in the wine industry. Purucker announced that Ryan Haupt (Smithsonian) and Abe Padilla (USGS) will be the program chairs for the remainder of 2019. Mandler is thanked for his years of service.

*Treasurer*

Geschwind presented his report, which is attached, along with the asset and profit and loss statements. The income from the AGU field trips and the expense of the website redesign haven't hit the accounts yet; both are less than \$1000. For the current year, he's tracking lower dues income and higher meeting expenses (i.e., beer) than expected, but also higher investment income. At the fall meeting, we will set the dues for 2020, so

we should keep this in mind. There is also a sense to relax the fiscal policy, which has previously been described as “fiddly.”

The motion arising from his report, to authorize the president to reserve dates for twelve meetings for 2020, passed without objection. The discussion noted that one meeting may have to be canceled, but it is easier to do that than to add one.

### *Finance*

Prestegaard indicated that the Finance Committee will meet in the next few weeks and thus has no report.

Hanson reported that the new AGU building is almost finished; everyone is invited to look around after the meeting. Per meeting costs to hold the regular Society meetings will be higher than expected because of the need to pay support staff (security, janitorial) to stay through the evening, and the need to have a liquor license, bartender, etc., for the refreshments.

### BUSINESS OF THE DAY

Mandler’s departure also leaves a vacancy in the chair of the nominating committee; Purucker will fill that. Other committee chairs will remain with incumbents.

Geschwind asked about the status of the AGI affiliate program; Mandler replied that the program is being revamped and has not been settled on yet.

Purucker suggested people think about potential field trips. He might be interested in leading one to one of the serpentinite quarries in Maryland. Prestegaard suggested Malloys Bay: the Charles County parks department offers guided kayak tours of the “Ghost Fleet,” hundreds of scuttled World War I-era ships. She also suggested Government Island in Stafford, where the Aquia Creek Sandstone was quarried for many of the buildings in D.C., including the Capitol and the White House.

Purucker also will take inputs for the Bradley speaker. He suggests Steve Nerem, from UC Boulder, who researches satellite altimetry and climate change.

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick M. Carr, Council Secretary

## Spring 2019 Geological Society of Washington Membership Report

GSW Council Meeting, 3 April 2019

Membership Chair, Erik Hankin, ehankin@agu.org

### Overall Membership

There are 249 paid members for the 2019 calendar year as of 3 April 2019. There are 46 members from 2018 who have yet to renew, yielding an 84% renewal rate.

### New Membership

Nine individuals have applied for new membership with GSW as of 3 April 2019, compared to 12 at this point last year. Seven of these individuals have followed through with payment and are now members of GSW, compared to 9 last April. Four of the new members are students or early career professionals. Three are regular metro area members.

### Barriers to Membership

The need to have prospective members apply and then pay after hearing they were approved appears to be a significant barrier to entry. Not because applicants are being denied, but because about 20% of approved applicants do not follow through with payment.

Since 2016 when I took on the role of membership chair, GSW has not denied a single applicant. Additionally, most professional societies allow prospective new members to pay dues when applying for membership.

I encourage the Council to explore this option as it could lead to a significant increase in the number of new members.

### Member Value Proposition

While the two-step new member process could improve new member numbers, it does not solve the issue of member retention. Renewal confusion ("I thought I paid my dues already" or "Whoops, I forgot") may play a role, but there is certainly the larger issue of membership value.

This is something we have recognized as an issue in Council.

What can we do to 1. Better identify the current value of GSW membership and 2. Improve upon that value?



Patrick Carr &lt;patcarr@gmail.com&gt;

## [Gsw-councilplus-l] GSW Board Meeting next Wednesday from 2-4 PM on Wednesday, 3 April, at AGU Hq

Carl-Henry Geschwind <geschwind@fastmail.com>  
To: gsw-councilplus-l@minilists.org

Mon, Apr 1, 2019 at 11:43 AM

Dear GSW Council members:

Attached please find my Treasurer's report for consideration at Wednesday's meeting. Please note the action items near the bottom of this message.

There are two pages to the attached report. The first lists our assets. As of today our invested funds are nearly \$7,000 higher than they were last June 30 (and this despite a withdrawal of \$2,000 in September to finish balancing the books for FY 2018). This means that our assets are still very healthy, and we have a large cushion in case the stock market should tank.

The second page deals with inflows and outflows in the general fund, with three columns of numbers: the budget for the current fiscal year (from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019) that I presented to Council last October and to the membership at the annual meeting; my projection of how the current fiscal year will actually end up based upon the first nine months of the year; and my proposed budget for the next fiscal year (on the basis of 12 meetings).

Several things to note for the current year:

- (1) Membership dues will likely be somewhat lower than budgeted, with overall receipts ending up about \$150 less than budgeted (and about \$600 less than last year).
- (2) On the outflows side, the big discrepancy is that payments to the Cosmos Club will be about \$600 more than budgeted. Since the Cosmos Club has not raised its prices, this is entirely due to our members (and guests!) consuming more beverages per meeting than in the previous several years.
- (3) We were also supposed to get \$340 from the AGU as a contribution for a field trip our member Dan Doctor led at the AGU's fall meeting. Dan's contact at the AGU is still working on getting the money to us. I did not budget for it, so once this actually comes in (if ever), it will provide an additional boost for this year.
- (4) Because our invested funds are continuing to grow, I will be able to take nearly \$400 more out of them than budgeted (under our general rule that we can take up to 4% out of invested funds to pay for operating expenses).
- (5) The original budget showed that the amount we could transfer from the invested funds would be about \$900 more than our operating deficit. I now expect we still will have an excess amount of about \$700 (about \$1,050 with the AGU money). Thus, we will be fine for this year.

For next year, I anticipate that our dues revenue will go down a bit more, and expenses will increase somewhat (especially if we need to pay the full \$1,000 for Bradley speaker travel). On this basis, it is entirely possible that, even with the full 4% transfer from invested funds, we might fall around \$500 short. However, given that any deficit next year would likely be smaller than the surplus this year, I am not yet worried for fiscal year 2020 (that is, the year from July 2019 to June 2020). Beyond next year, of course, the outlook becomes much dimmer because of the continuing erosion in membership.

### Items for the Board to consider

1) At this meeting the Board will need to decide whether to authorize our President to reserve 12 meeting dates at the Cosmos Club for calendar year 2020. I would recommend that we go ahead with this, with the provisos that (a) one meeting in fall 2020 (which would be in fiscal year 2021) might be cancelled if the budgetary picture worsens and that (b) we might move meetings to the AGU building if meetings there can be held at a lower cost (I have no idea yet what the AGU proposal for meetings will look like).

2) At the fall meeting the Board will need to decide whether or not to raise membership dues for calendar year 2020. An initial exchange of ideas on this at the spring meeting might be helpful, although I think this will be greatly influenced by what the AGU proposes for meetings.

--Carl-Henry

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

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GSW-Councilplus-l mailing list

The GSW Councilplus list serv intended for GSW Council members and GSW Committee Chairs to receive and post messages.

[GSW-Councilplus-l@minlists.org](mailto:GSW-Councilplus-l@minlists.org)  
<http://lists.minlists.org/mailman/listinfo/gsw-councilplus-l>

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**Council report 2019 April.pdf**  
109K

## GSW Assets as of 31 March 2019

<u>Assets and Funds</u>	<u>6/30/2018</u>	<u>3/31/2019</u>	
Cash	8,756.73	9,854.68	
Accounts Receivable	-	-	
Accounts Payable	(600.70)	-	<u>Increase</u>
Vanguard Wellington	56,817.59	59,944.14	3,126.55
Vanguard Balanced	108,346.34	112,135.99	3,789.65
Total	173,319.96	181,934.81	
General Fund	10,261.25	8,999.90	
Bradley Fund	56,375.63	60,212.18	
Endowment Fund	106,683.08	112,722.73	
Total	173,319.96	181,934.81	

## GSW Profit &amp; Loss as of 31 March 2019

	FY19 Budget	FY19 Projected	FY20	
<u>Regular Revenues</u>				
Dues	8,855.00	8,645.00	8,200.00	
Contributions	3,825.00	3,877.77	3,750.00	
GeoCare Royalties	130.00	150.00	130.00	
Other	-	-	-	
Operating Revenues	12,810.00	12,672.77	12,080.00	
<u>Regular Expenses</u>				
Meetings	12,925.92	13,555.44	13,555.44	(avg. 1,129.62 per mtg)
Speaker Dinners	1,851.62	1,790.70	1,849.79	(avg. 179.07 per full dinner)
Awards	350.00	385.00	385.00	
Bradley Travel	600.00	575.80	1,000.00	
Admin Fees - MSA	1,600.00	1,550.00	1,600.00	
PayPal Fees	240.00	270.00	270.00	
DC Registration Fees	-	-	80.00	
AGI Fees	100.00	100.00	100.00	
Bank Fees	24.00	22.00	24.00	
Liability Insurance	764.00	653.00	653.00	
Regular Expenses	18,455.54	18,901.94	19,517.23	
Operating Deficit	5,645.54	6,229.17	7,437.23	
4% Fund Transfers	(6,522.35)	(6,917.40)	(6,917.40)	