

The Geological Society of Washington
founded 1893

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

MAY 13, 2020

Council Members Present

Pranoti Asher
Patrick Carr, council secretary
Liz Cottrell, 1st vice president
Bill Craddock
Beth Doyle, meeting secretary
Carl-Henry Geschwind, treasurer
Graham Lederer
Larry Meinert, 2nd vice president
Julia Nord
Michael Purucker, past president
Ester Sztein, president
Bev Walker

Council Members Absent

Nick Pyenson

Others Present

Jamie Allan
Ann Benbow
Erik Hankin
Ryan Haupt
Kori Newman
Abe Padilla
Alex Speer

The video- and phone-conference meeting was called to order at 4:03 P.M. by President Sztein. The minutes of the October 23, 2019, meeting were approved as amended without objection.

REPORTS

Treasurer

Geschwind had technical difficulties, so Sztein presented his report, which is attached. The projection for the end of the fiscal year is almost \$5,000 under budget, mostly because of the shift to virtual meetings due to the pandemic. Had we had held twelve meetings, however, we would still be seeing the trend of diverging expenditures and revenue that we've been watching for a few years. The conservative nature of the invested funds proved a successful strategy—balances in the accounts are approximately the same as a year ago.

Sztein noted that speakers at the virtual meetings are obviously not enjoying dinner at the Cosmos Club and that Callan Bentley had suggested inviting them to dinner at some later date or giving them a small honorarium. Geschwind had concerns about the latter for tax reasons. Further discussion raised concerns about scheduling and the potential size of a dinner party; Padilla noted that most of the speakers thus far are outside the DC area.

Cottrell moved that for virtual presenters, we offer a one-year membership to the Society for themselves or a person of their choosing, if feasible for tax, legal, and related reasons. This passed without objection.

Membership

Hankin presented his report, which is attached. There are 229 paid members as of May 13th, with a 82 percent renewal rate. There have been fifteen applications for new membership; only six have followed through with payment.

This revived the discussion of the two-step application/payment process. The impetus for the policy seems to have been to vet potential members for the GeoCare Benefits Insurance Program, which provides medical, life, disability, and other insurance for earth science professionals. Speer noted that it was popular in Oklahoma and Texas and that in the 1990s we had a significant population of corresponding members for that reason. On the subject of a procedure and infrastructure to refund a denied applicant, Craddock suggested that the first year's worth of dues be labeled as the application fee to obviate the need for a refund.

Carr moved to develop a one-step application process with an application fee equal to one year of the appropriate dues, with the fee applied to the first year's dues on successful admission. This passed without objection.

BUSINESS OF THE DAY

Cottrell asked if we should reconsider our affiliation with AAPG. The president, Mike Party, when asked in a May 3rd interview about the low rates of recognition for women for AAPG awards and fellowships, responded in part by saying that he "couldn't imagine a female geologist going out in the field" in remote areas (to include Texas). Allan will attend the House of Delegates meeting on June 7th; he will report on the discussion.

Nord noted that she has trouble recruiting George Mason students to attend (in non-pandemic times) and asked about live streaming or other suggestions. Your secretary will note that a discussion of live-streaming in 2018 raised concerns about diminishing the value of informal in-person interactions as well as copyright constraints on figures used in speakers' talks. Haupt also noted that AGU has the capability to live-stream, but that the Cosmos Club both does not have the capability and has a policy against it.

Hankin suggested a survey of the membership to ask what members want out of the society. Allan will find the results of the survey from 2016 for a starting point.

Sztein announced that Bentley will be leaving for Piedmont Virginia Community College near Charlottesville. The sense of the Council is that his contributions to the Society have been significant and that he will be greatly missed. Sztein will look to do something at the Annual Meeting. Purucker volunteered to assume the web content and social media duties. Sztein is also seeking a volunteer to chair the Nomination Committee.

Carr moved to ratify the action by President Sztein to hold Regular Meetings of the Society by videoconference when possible for the duration of stay-at-home orders for the area, continued unavailability of a meeting venue, and the comfort of the Council,


following her proposal by email to the Council on March 11th and subsequent discussion. This passed without objection.

Carr also mentioned that currently we can't hold a virtual Annual Meeting if the stay-at-home orders continue that far. He will consider steps, including a letter to the DC government recommending an executive order permitting one.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick M. Carr, Council Secretary
and approved by the Council, October 7, 2020.

From: **Carl-Henry Geschwind** geschwind@fastmail.com 
Subject: [Gsw-councilplus-l] GSW Treasurer's Report to Council 5-5-2020
Date: May 5, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: Sztein, Ester ESztein@nas.edu, gsw-councilplus-l@minlists.org



Dear y'all:

Attached please find my GSW Treasurer's Report, to be discussed at the GSW Council meeting on 5/13.

Basically, we are doing surprisingly well given all of the economic turbulence, although long-term the financial situation is still challenging..

This report is for the fiscal year that will end 30 June 2020. Numbers are still projections, but there shouldn't be much activity for the remainder of the year.

As for inflows into the General Fund (which is in essence our checking account that funds our operations), I am now expecting member dues and contributions to be about 5% below last year (we also had an extra \$400 last year because of a field trip led by Dan Doctor at the AGU meeting), which is about our usual annual decrease in inflows due to our shrinking membership. During February and March it looked like we would be much below this, but collections picked up significantly during April.

As for outflows, we are benefitting this year because we are paying for meeting space for only 8 meetings, rather than our usual 12 meetings (no payments for the 3 virtual meetings, and AGU picked up the Cosmos Club tab for the November Bradley Lecture meeting because of the cancelled meeting space at their building). But even considering only the 7 meetings at the Cosmos Club this year, average cost per meeting was down (\$1,006 per meeting, as compared to \$1,117 per meeting in 2018/19), which suggests that attendees have moderated their drinks consumption this year and that last year's high drinks consumption may have been an anomaly.

Because of the much lower outflows, I anticipate needing only about a \$2,000 transfer from the Invested Funds to balance the General Fund - much less than the \$6,800 transferred last year.

In addition, despite all of the gyrations in the stock market, the balance in our Invested Funds (as of yesterday evening, 5/4/2020) is about where it was as of 6/30/19 - so the conservative funds that Odette James, our previous Treasurer, picked for us about 10 years ago have really proven their value.

If we had had our full 12 physical meetings this year, though, our cash outflows would probably have exceeded our inflows by about \$5,500 - about the same as last year. This is roughly 3% of our Invested Funds. If our membership dues and contributions keep shrinking at about 4-5% a year, and our expenses do not decrease, then in perhaps 5 years we might find ourselves in a situation where our cash deficit is 5% of our Invested Funds - which would be the limit of what is sustainable. Thus, over the long term we do still need to think about how to stabilize membership and/or cut costs.

--Carl-Henry



GSW Financial _____
Report...20.pdf

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
<http://lists.minlists.org/mailman/listinfo/asw-councilplus-l>

Geological Society of Washington

General Fund Activity		
	<u>FY19</u>	<u>FY20 proj</u>
Total inflows	12,557.66	11,547.50
Meetings	13,403.00	7,944.40
Speaker Dinners	1,762.81	1,419.00
Bradley Travel	575.80	993.24
Awards	385.00	385.00
Miscellaneous	<u>3,116.09</u>	<u>2,752.05</u>
Total outflows	19,242.70	13,493.69
Outflows less inflows	6,685.04	1,946.19
Bradley transfer	2,082.40	1,378.24
Endowment transfer	<u>4,675.90</u>	<u>567.95</u>
Total transfers	6,758.30	1,946.19

Invested Fund Balances		
	<u>6/30/2019</u>	<u>5/4/2020</u>
Bradley Fund	60,417.68	60,135.84
Endowment Fund	112,221.67	113,686.92

Spring 2020 Geological Society of Washington Membership Report

GSW Council Meeting, 13 May 2020

Membership Chair, Erik Hankin, ehankin@agu.org

Overall Membership

There are 229 paid members for the 2020 calendar year as of 13 May 2020. There are 47 members from 2019 who have yet to renew, yielding an 82% renewal rate – slightly lower than 2019’s renewal rate of 84% at this same time of year. Members from 2019 received three electronic renewal reminders and one paper renewal reminder.

Membership Type	Paid	Lapsed	New Members
MetroArea Members	157	34	4
NonMetroArea Members	51	5	0
Student Members	12	6	0
Early Career Members	9	2	2
Total	229	47	6

New Membership

Fifteen individuals have applied for new membership with GSW as of 13 May 2020. Only six of these individuals have followed through with payment and are now members of GSW. This attrition rate is much higher than usual.

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 usually about 20% of approved applicants do not follow through with payment (the rate is far higher this year).

The Council has discussed this topic at recent meetings, but there has not been a motion to amend our procedures for new membership.

Member Value Proposition

While the two-step new member process could improve new member numbers, it does not solve the issue of member retention. Society membership value was limited before the current pandemic and subsequent shift to virtual meetings. Without the guilt of drinking for “free” and access to quality networking, the GeoCare insurance is the only true value of GSW membership at this time.

The virtual meetings do open up GSW to a potentially much larger audience and could be a way to bring in more nonmetro area members (a membership group that has declined at a much higher rate than other over the last decade).

It may be time to survey the membership to better understand why individuals join and remain members of GSW as well as what services they would like to see from the society that are currently not offered.