Western Central Chapter

American Planning Association

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2019

Attendees: Jeff Bollman, AICP, President; Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Treasurer; Megan Nelms, AICP, Secretary/Wyoming State Director; Lysann Zeller, South Dakota; David Heinold, Webmaster; Randy Johnson, AICP, Professional Development Officer; Sandy Rohde, North Dakota; David D., Montana

Agenda:

1. Minutes

Randy moved to approve the minutes from July & October 2018 as presented. David seconded. All voted aye, motion carried.

1. President’s Report

Jeff attended the APA Legislative Summit in December in Austin, TX. It was the first time APA has put on something like this and there were about 20 chapters at the summit. There were many directors from the larger state chapters, especially with the location of the meeting in Texas. There were a few smaller chapters, as well as some from New England and other parts of the country. They discussed a lot of partnership possibilities and one that stuck out to Jeff was the AARP, especially during legislative sessions, as they have been big into advocating for affordable housing. They are a potential partner many planner may not think about.

The Connecticut chapter has a really good policy guide they have put together for their legislature called “Start With Planning” with ideas on how to approach state legislatures. It is on their website and he recommended we check it out. Discussed the different ways to convey information and how it is better to try and “tell a story”. People seem to remember and understand issues better if you can tell a story with it.

Jeff has copies of all the presentations from the summit and overall thought it was a good conference. It was very valuable to get with other chapters to discuss state legislative issues and have time to talk about it and what others do, being specific to state policy planning issues versus national ones. APA has also put together template letters people can use to send out to governors, incumbents and incoming. He sent those out with the meeting agenda, but each state can review and do with them what they wish.

Jeff, Allison and Andrew have met a few times to work on the chapter work plan and performance evaluation criteria. The main thing we lacked was having a work plan. Jeff looked at some of the example work plans APA uploaded and kind of tailored ours to those and modified it. He sent it with the meeting agenda and is looking for feedback.

The intent is that we would review it each year. Some things may stay the same, but each year we’ll have to work on some goals or things to change. Randy said he felt it was very comprehensive and Megan agreed. She discussed the APA Division work plans she and David had worked on and said this looked on par with those. David’s only suggestion was to add potential dollar amounts to each work plan, as they do that on Division plans. We’re not sure what to expect upon review by APA, but we will see what they say.

Megan moved to approve the work plan as presented, Randy seconded. All voted aye, motion carried.

We do have to do an annual report and it was decided to do a “year end” wrap up email each year from the president. The email will mention chapter plans for the upcoming year. Jeff thinks we might get dinged on is that our annual report isn’t “exciting” or doesn’t have a lot in it. There was discussion on perhaps next year changing our communication styles from just emails. David mentioned he could also put any emails/enews on the website.

For our 2019 meeting schedule we selected 5/6, 7/15 and 10/7. Jeff will send out meeting invites for each of those dates.

1. Treasurer’s Report

Bethany gave the update. It was a slow year and not a lot of transactions. We had a few more job ads and all states, except for South Dakota submitted for their conference grant money. Main expenses were travel dollars for the president. She has a preliminary budget for us to go over later. David said that SDPA probably just didn’t need the support this year, but Megan said she will check with Amber Vogt and the SDPA Treasurer.

1. Budget

Jeff gave a general overview of last year’s budget and said he used that to frame this year’s, with some small modifications. He did add $150 for the WPR rep travel to go to WPR meetings, as well as some money for executive board travel because he would like to have an in-person board meeting at some point this year to work on the work plan, budget, etc. For president travel, he does not expect to use all the budgeted amount. He had talked with Lynn Jorgensen at APA about CPC grants to help smaller chapters with travel costs to leadership meetings and he will apply and hopefully get some of those.

It was noted that we left webhosting costs as a hold over from last year. Now that APA hosts our site, we don’t need to budget those dollars. There is also some PDO travel money as Randy has asked for some assistance to attend the conference this year in San Francisco. We also budgeted for PDO travel last year, but Randy says he tries to go every other year since its so costly. Randy let the board know that APA offers 10 complimentary PDO registrations each year in a lottery type fashion and he was chosen this year, so that is a great cost savings for him this year.

There was general discussion about the budget. For the past two year, we have put in a line item for member scholarships for training with $1,000 but no one has ever applied and we haven’t done much with that. There was a thought that it could somehow be directed towards the new planner initiative. Megan stated she thought we should keep it in. She recalled we were going to work on a scholarship application but have never gotten to it. She will try to get something put together for the next meeting.

Are revenues look good. Modifying the dues structure didn’t change much and has kept revenues pretty stable.

Allison moved to approve the 2019 budget. Megan seconded. All voted aye, motion carried.

1. PDO Report

Randy gave a PDO. Eight chapter members took the November AICP test and six passed. For the May test there are six currently signed up. Randy also discussed the new AICP employer letter. It is a template chapters can send to employers of those who recently passed the AICP test congratulating them. Randy said he will find out the recent test takers employers and send the letter. Randy will email Jeff the six names and get addresses. Randy will also send out the scholarship announcement for the May test and said if board members know of anyone who could use it, to let him know right away.

1. Website Update

David put the young planner initiative material up on the website. Jeff has been going in and doing small edits and testing things out. He recently went in and updated Charles’ information. He said it is nice that anyone can go in and make basic updates and its very user friendly. Lysann asked about googling western central chapter and how our old site still returns as the top link. Megan explained Google’s organic search criteria and said we all need to frequently google “western central chapter” and click on the new site. Lysann asked if we could take down the old site domain completely. David will check on that.

1. Western Planner Representative

Megan gave a short WPR update. The annual conference is scheduled for September in Santa Fe, NM. Next year it will be in Bismarck, ND. Planning is going well. Fund raising and donations are also going well for WPR. They are looking for a new editor.

1. Young Planners Initiative – Mentorship Program Update

Lysann said that South Dakota did do a young planner event at their fall conference and had about two dozen people attend. They got positive feedback and it was even suggested to make it longer. She doesn’t know exactly what the next steps are to follow up, but it went well. Megan asked if it was actually “young people” or just newer planners. Lysann said she wasn’t sure on age ranges, but she will review the sign-in sheet. David from MAP asked if they had any materials to distribute or anything. Lysann said she would share the materials they put together, but they basically just did a mixer type event, with an ice breaker introduction and then breaking into smaller groups to match up mentors and mentees. They really wanted to focus on helping people get to know each other and network.

Allison said she would work with Lysann to set up a short debrief call. Montana sent the young planners material to the listserv, but it didn’t really go anywhere or pick up focus for MAP. It would be good to debrief on how it went in South Dakota and how others can tailor off of that.

1. State Reports
	1. Wyoming

Megan gave a Wyoming update. They are working on their Spring conference for May. They have a couple new board members. The Wyoming legislative session is also starting soon, so they will work on that.

* 1. South Dakota

They are working on training for elected officials, like County Commissioners and City Council and promoting that. The board also approved $20,000 in scholarships for training opportunities, things like taking the AICP test, a class, webinar, etc.

* 1. North Dakota

Sandy had to leave the call early.

* 1. Montana

David gave a fall conference update. He said it went very well. Their board has 7 of 11 board members up for election this year, so they will be working on board continuity and getting some new blood. Their legislative session just started but there are not many planning bills this year. MAP is really going to work on board vitality and organization. They are looking at hiring an administrative assistant to assist the board. They had hired a legislative lobbyist, but that didn’t go very well, so going to refocus those dollars. Also looking at updating their website and having a 2019 fall conference in southwest Montana.

Adjourn

 The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2018 at 3pm. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm (MST).