**NEERS Business Meeting**

Fall 2018 Meeting, October 26-27, in New Bedford, MA

**-The President, Sara Grady, called the meeting to order**

**- The Treasurer’s Report was given by Courtney Schmidt**

The NEERS checking account contains $27,673, the CD has $20,395, the student endowment CD has $32,601, and the savings account has $3,862. Courtney also thanked our Spring 2018 Sponsors: CERF, CIRCA, Xylem/YSI, ONSET, AECOM, CEI, WHOI Sea Grant, and the Boston Mal Club. Overall, the Spring 2018 meeting lost $7,959 but had 228 registrants.

**-The Secretary’s Report was given by Autumn Oczkowski**

The Spring 2018 meeting was overwhelmingly rated as excellent and felt that the meeting was well-organized and that their goals for attending the meeting were met. There were some comments about the screen being too low and too small. People attend NEERS meetings to catch up with friends, to network, and to find out what’s going on with New England research. In our exit survey, we asked attendees about their favorite meeting snacks. No surprises here, NEERSians want healthy food. Fruit and granola were among the top requests. A number of survey respondents thanked the meeting organizers for a job well-done!

**-President’s Initiative**

The concept of the “President’s Initiative” was introduced to the membership, where the Executive Committee is suggesting that we make a pool of money available to the NEERS President for the President to use to develop new initiatives or use for the betterment of NEERS.

In general, there was agreement that this was a good idea.

Peg Pelletier asked how much money we were talking about? Maybe $2-3,000ish over two years. We will also include a place on the registration to donate for specific efforts. Robert Buchsbaum asked if this would be interest off of an endowment? Courtney Schmidt clarified that no, it would come from donations and from the annual profits that NEERS makes. Again, the question of how much money to allot to this initiative was brought up and Susan Adamowicz said that $4,000 would be a lot. Hilary Neckles also agreed that it would be good to have some security in how the money is spent by having the Executive Committee approve things. Sandy McFarlane made a motion to approve the initiative and Kathryn Ford seconded it. The motion was to enable the Executive Committee to investigate and implement this idea.

**-NEERS meetings once a year.**

 Jamie Vaudrey introduced this idea and made it clear that we are just starting a conversation that would go over 2 years. Sara explained that the idea would be that NEERS would only hold a spring meeting and that we would have a webinar or workshop in the fall. Anne Giblin pointed out that it would be difficult to give out the Stickleback award over video conference.

Hillary asked what led to this conversation and others on the Executive Committee pointed out that the same few people were hosting most of the meetings and that the burden was primarily falling on them. Also, replacing one meeting every two years (the fall meeting on years alternate to CERF) with a workshop or webinar could be a green option.

It was suggested that we ask for feedback on the meeting survey.

Tristan Taber pointed out that the student posters and presentations were very low this fall. A lot of students are just starting their work in the fall and don’t have results to present.

Dave Burdick said that one of the positives about having NEERS meetings twice a year is that it is wonderful to have the ability for our students to present both times.

Sue Adamowicz said that she has been on the Executive Board for a number of years and this isn’t the first time that this has come up.

Sandy MacFarlane said that one of the benefits of the two meetings, which we do partially out of tradition, is that we have tended to go up and down on participation. There is a core group of people who come to most of the meetings but many of the others are attending because it is more geographically convenient.

It was brought up by others that Sara Grady has been on the organizing committee for the past 3 meetings. It is more and more difficult to find people to host the meeting. It shouldn’t just be the same few people that organize all of these meetings.

Peg Pelletier pointed out that this topic has been brought up in the past and quickly rejected. For other New England-based societies, the meetings are once a year because it takes a while to get the research done. Still geographically moving around. It is a lot of money and a lot of time to host two meetings.

Shri Verrill pointed out that it is important to also consider the IPCC report and make efforts to be green.

Eliza Moore brought up aspects of geography. We do move meeting locations around and host smaller meetings at our northern and southern ends. But, the size of the meeting doesn’t directly translate to profit because it depends on the venue. Courtney pointed out that the Block Island meeting is expensive because we have to cover every meal. In contrast, Avery Point is inexpensive because Jamie Vaudrey is faculty.

Jamie identified two points: 1. if we were to do away with the fall meeting, it may make the spring meeting longer. So we may have to add a half day to compensate for the additional talks. 2. We are not talking about getting rid of a fall gathering, rather substituting a career development opportunity for everyone, like an R workshop or a communications webinar, for example. Ed Dettmann asked about associated costs. Jamie said that it could be included in fall registration. Someone else suggested that every other year they’d have the meeting in the same place and then rotate it on alternate years.

Sandy: if there is a time when abstracts are not forthcoming, do we beat the bushes or doing something different just for the heck of it. Something to get people to the meeting, even if it isn’t how we usually do it? A different way of handling a meeting. Sara Grady said that she thinks that we could do something. But, in this case, for example, she couldn’t also organize that too. Tay Evans confirmed that, yes this is possible, but we still need to have a great local committee so that they can come up with these ideas.

Kathryn Ford is hearing that people still want to get together. But, she is also hearing that we need some people to help shoulder the burden. That is more of the central conversation. Cathy Wigand pointed out that if it’s a workshop you might get different people who are excited about developing it and who might want to take on a smaller load.

Again, it was iterated that we need a general membership survey to get feedback from all members.

Hilary Neckles also said that we can only have twice a year meetings if we have strong local committees. She pointed out that there was only one other meeting in the past 10 years that had low abstract submissions (this one). Peg Pelletier also suggested that, to get help with the volunteering we should specifically ask. If you don’t ask people they might not know that they can help.

Sandy, on that point, Hilary did develop a brochure of the timetable…. It was confirmed that yes, there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for organizing a meeting. Sara suggested that this might be helpful to include in the newsletter. Jamie clarified that all this information is available on the website. Jamie suggests that we summarize it a bit to make it appealing.

**-A fund for dependent care**

Sara introduced the idea of establishing some sort of funding resource for dependent care. The idea would be to either award a set amount of money or to reimburse additional expenses, up to a certain amount, incurred in extra dependent care costs associated with attending a NEERS Meeting. This can include additional childcare or eldercare. The idea would be to make it easier for members with financial restrictions (and additional responsibilities) to attend our meetings. These funds would be available on an ‘as needed basis’ up to a certain dollar amount. The goal is to bring people to the meetings that otherwise might not be able to attend and to improve the inclusiveness of our organization.

Anne Giblin asked if our description/definition is too narrow? Maybe it could be an “Obstacle Fund.” Someone else suggested calling it the Stuck Boot Fund. Jamie is in favor of the obstacle fund. Courtney clarified that this would all come out of the general NEERS pot. But asks how are we going to limit this? And whether anyone had any advice. Jamie asked if it would be possible for the membership to approve a one year trial run. Then the Executive Committee would report back to the membership on how it went and then the membership could vote and decide whether or not to make it permanent. Dave Burdick suggested that we can go with a set amount of money awarded with no questions asked, perhaps via lottery. Peg asked if it was reasonable to ask the applicant what their role is in the meeting, giving a priority to those who are presenting. People agreed that presenters should be given preference. And that we should have a two-year pilot, with a maximum of $600 per year and then see how it goes. The award will be $200 per person.

Courtney asked that people vote on a two-year pilot where we would offer $200 per Obstacle Award up to a total of $800/year, via a lottery system. The applicant will email the treasurer (as is the procedure for student travel awards), and a priority will be given to those presenting or playing a role in the meeting. $200 x 2 for each meeting. Jamie clarified that students should be able to apply. People must be members. Student can apply for (and receive) both travel and obstacle award. Tristan Tabor asked if you do receive this award, are you disqualified from receiving it again? Jamie says let’s not do that for the pilot.

Anne Giblin moved to make a motion and Robert Buchsbaum seconded. The membership voted yes to the two-year pilot.

**-Elections**

At this meeting, we are electing a Secretary and a President-Elect.

Our candidate for President-elect is Brett Branco.

Running for Secretary we have Peg Pelletier and Tristan Tabor.

Brett introduced himself and described how he was a professor at Brooklyn College, which is on the wrong side of the terminal moraine but AERS doesn’t want to claim him so he’s with NEERS. His first NEERS meeting was 20 years ago. Jim Kremer took his students up to the meeting in vans. Now, Brett wants to give back. Brooklyn College is one of the most diverse communities in the country and It would be nice to help try to increase the diversity in our NEERS community as well. Brett believes that it’s an upward mobility issue and a social equity issue. Diversity is valued at Brooklyn College and could be improved and valued here as well.

Peg Pelletier introduced herself as a researcher at the EPA’s Atlantic Ecology Division. Peg would like to give back to the NEERS community. Peg was a member of the Biological Advisory Committee and she was responsible for organizing and coordinating the meeting and responsible for organizing the meetings. She also served as a co-chair of the oral session committee at the last CERF Meeting and enjoyed her time with that.

Tristan Tabor introduced himself as a graduate student at the University of Southern Maine. His first NEERS meeting was in the Fall of 2016, but great network developed from that meeting. He acknowledged that while he would like to be a secretary, he might not be in the New England region forever.

Cathy Wigand then mentioned that she is a co-program chair with Tay Evans that and she would like to take on 2 people to work with her and Tay to help develop the program for the spring meeting. Cathy is rotating off and hope that someone will rotate on after that meeting.

Jamie Vaudrey asked if there were any nominations from the floor for either the President or the Secretary? There were none. Voting commenced, and Brett Branco was elected President-Elect and Peg Pelletier as Secretary.

**-Report about the fall CERF meeting**

Hilary Neckles reported that Mobile, Alabama is an awesome, beautiful, friendly, walkable city. One notable thing to report is that, following closely on the sexual harassment in the workplace report by the National Academies (<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24994/sexual-harassment-of-women-climate-culture-and-consequences-in-academic>), CERF is following the guidance provided in the document about what societies can do to combat this. CERF has now revised its code of ethics such that sexual and any harassment is defined as professional misconduct and is actionable and revised bylaws so that actions can be taken against people who violate the code of ethics. Sustained gender harassment has sustained negative effects and the CERF conference organizers are talking about the meeting becoming a more inclusive and welcoming event for everyone. Alan Young also pointed out that you need to check something when you become a member of CERF. But a lot of people are members of NEERS but not of CERF, maybe we should change our bylaws too.

**-Changing of the guard….**

Sara has appreciated her first two thirds of her presidency, but she must now pass the wand over to Sue Adamowicz.

**-Meeting adjourned.**