Business Meeting Minutes, Fall 2016 Meeting

*Block Island, Rhode Island*

Jamie Vaudrey calls the business meeting to order. The reading of the minutes was waived by the attendees.

1. Officer reports
   1. From Sara Grady (as President-Elect)
      1. At the CERF board meeting a couple of issues were brought up:
         1. Regarding a social media strategy: CERF needs to have one, but there must be some caution in the approach. We want our attendees to use social media, but we don’t want them to put out information that the presenter doesn’t want put out.
         2. The board is developing a new strategic plan: the plan is pretty much put together and will be rolled out at the CERF meeting in Providence in the fall of 2017.
         3. CERF will be instituting some form of mentorship program in the fall and Sara would like to pilot this at our 2017 NEERS Spring meeting. We will solicit student input in the survey to figure out what the needs might be.
         4. The Affiliate societies have tables at the NEERS meeting. Sara wants us to think about this. Should we provide handouts? Swag? Maybe update the poster? Sara asked for any ideas for what we can do to make the NEERS booth more exciting.
   2. Courtney Schmidt’s Treasurer’s Report
      1. The 2016 report, as presented, looks more flush than it is, because it reflects the income from the fall meeting but not costs.
      2. NEERS recently invested in a triangle (for credit card payments) and a laptop. This paperless payment has made things much better.
      3. Courtney included the list of sponsors (University of New England, Maine Sea Grant, Bates, New Hampshire Sea Grant, YSI/Xylem, WHOI Sea Grant, CERF, MIT Sea Grant, Normandeau, Judith Pederson, Hilary Neckles) in her presentation and thanked them.
      4. The York Meeting lost money, but this loss was balanced out by other meetings that turned a big profit. The meetings that are less-centrally located tend to lose money.
      5. There were 118 registrants for the Spring 2016 meeting (37 students, 63 members, 18 nonmembers) and 75% pre-registered.
      6. Reminder to register (abstract “registration” isn’t an actual registration)
   3. Jamie Vaudrey (as President) wanted to bring up the idea of online voting for future elections.
      1. One of the big pros is that the whole membership can vote, even if they can’t attend the meeting.
      2. The primary con is the cost of $15-30 per election (depending on the online service we use). In conversations with others about this at the meeting, it has been suggested that we lose the excitement of in person voting.
      3. The plan would be to send out email to members in good standing, well in advance of the meeting, and provide them with a voter registration id. We would also email those whose membership have lapsed and suggest that they renew their membership so that they could register to vote.

Online voting would require a change in our constitution: *“ELECTIONS: Elections of officers shall be by simple majority of the members present and voting at an election business meeting, which normally will be held in the fall of even- numbered years. Voting will be by secret ballot, which shall be counted and destroyed by the out-going Executive Committee. Only the names of the elected officers shall be announced. In case of a tie, the out-going President shall cast the deciding vote. AMENDMENTS: Amendments to the NEERS Constitution shall be circulated to members by an efficient and effective manner at least three weeks prior to meeting dates. Adoptions of these amendments shall be by two-thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting.”* [*http://neers.org/documents/society\_documents/NEERS\_Constitution\_2008.pdf*](http://neers.org/documents/society_documents/NEERS_Constitution_2008.pdf)

* + 1. We would need to add an amendment to our constitution. The President would need to give the membership at least three weeks’ notice prior to the next meeting, with the text of the amendment.
    2. From the Audience:
       1. Anne Giblin said that this is a great idea that will help retain membership.
       2. Veronica Berounsky agrees and, regarding the excitement of voting, that we’d still announce the winners at the meeting, so excitement loss is not a problem.
       3. Cindy Delpapa asked what we would do about nominations from the floor?
       4. Jamie said that this wasn’t considered.
       5. Veronica mentioned that we could do it by email.
       6. Then there was a collective agreement that no one can remember when that happened.
       7. Alan Young said that we could give a write in option.
       8. Steve Hale suggested that, when the notice is sent around, to also include the bios of the nominees.
       9. Jamie agreed that we would also send the bios out and that we could also have the options of write ins.
       10. Sara Grady said that we would create a best practices document for when this should occur and how it would happen.
       11. Ed Dettmann pointed out that while you could write a name in, but you don’t know if the person doesn’t want to serve.
       12. Some general discussion about whether we need two people to run for each office. There was a collective agreement that we don’t need two people, and in fact, we often don’t for the secretary and treasurer roles.
       13. Sara will be sending out the phrasing of the amendment of our constitution well in advance of our next election.
    3. The next meeting (Spring 2017) will be at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point. Jamie Vaudrey, Sara Crosby, Mike Whitney, and Craig Tobias will co-host the meeting. The meeting date hasn’t been set yet, but it will be determined and emailed soon to the listserv.
       1. Jamie requested that we let her know if there are any dates that need to be avoided when scheduling the spring meeting.
    4. The 50th anniversary of NEERS is coming up. It was suggested that maybe we would hold the 50th anniversary meeting in Salem to celebrate the birthplace of NEERS. BUT if anyone has any suggestions, they would be welcomed.

1. Committee Reports
   1. Webmaster’s Report: Brett Branco clarified the parsing of responsibility, where Jamie updates and populates the website and Brett manages the Wild Apricot end of things.
   2. Sara Grady as the newsletter editor: She will continue in her role as newsletter editor. Brett has offered to help out a bit. But if anyone else wants to help, that would be helpful. She is always looking for content. In particular, they would like to include items like what you’d see in an alumni magazine (updates, awards, interesting notes, etc.).
   3. Awards Committee: now consists of Sandy MacFarlane, Veronica Berounsky, and Steve Hale. The Past-President (Jamie Vaudrey) chairs the committee. Want to look at awards system: honorary membership and lifetime achievement and want to have different kinds of awards. If the NEERS members have ideas see one of the committee members.
2. New Business & Announcements
   1. Hilary Neckles as President-Elect
      1. Regarding the CERF Board: this board really wants to engage affiliates so that we’re working in partnership as a true confederation. Robert Twilley is pushing for this.
      2. CERF has been hosting a series of webinars that are well received and will continue in the future.
      3. The CERF board is looking to develop ways to help our members influence policy & management decisions.
      4. The board has also placed an emphasis on communication and how to communicate better.
      5. Susan Park and Lora Harris (both in attendance) are working with others on diversity issues and how to grow diversity of underrepresented groups in our CERF federation. Initiatives will be rolled out at the Providence conference like, for example, a special emphasis on underrepresented minority mentorship. Every affiliate will get funding (hopefully) to send an underrepresented person to the meeting, paid.
   2. Susan Park introduced herself as the CERF Executive Director. She shared with us how she presented her undergraduate REU research at the CERF meeting in 1997.
      1. CERF is a federation, one of its strongest resources is its affiliations. The new strategic plan will be for 2017-2021 (2021 is CERF’s 20th anniversary).
      2. CERF has four pillars: the conferences, the journal, the affiliates, and the members.
      3. CERF will have a new article type in Estuaries and Coasts on management application
      4. The CERF constitution needs to be amended to say that the President/president-elect/past president can serve on governing board. The constitution currently says that only affiliate presidents can serve on the board. Since the NEERS elections aren’t in cycle with the other affiliates, this hasn’t been strictly the case for us, as our president-elect serves on the board.
      5. For the upcoming CERF elections, we will be looking for a secretary and 3 members at large (one student member at large, one international member at large).
      6. Susan can be reached at spark@erf.org.
   3. As a final announcement from the audience, Veronica said that the field trip is on as planned and that if anything changes the meeting organizers will let you know.
   4. With voting there were no nominations from the floor.
      1. Sue Adamowicz was elected President
      2. Courtney Schmidt and Autumn Oczkowski were re-elected as treasurer and secretary, respectively.