

**Delaware Coalition for Open Government
Virtual Board Meeting by Zoom
Tuesday, January 3, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: John Flaherty called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Pre-board reports:

1. Treasurer's Report of November 30, 2022
2. Treasurer's Report of December 31., 2022
3. Minutes October 4, 2022, and November 15, 2022
4. Bank Statements of November and December 2022
5. Elected Officials Reception 2022 Report – Katherine Ward

PRESENT: David Breen, Letty Diswood, John Flaherty, Al Jackson, John Kowalko III, Coralie Pryde, Anita Rush, Nick Wasileski

DelCOG members: Sarah Bucic, Amy Roe, Cynthia Smith, Katherine Ward,

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. **Introductions:** Attendees introduced themselves and Flaherty welcomed everyone. David Breen was thanked for setting up DelCOG board meetings on Zoom.
2. **Meeting Minutes:** It was moved and seconded, to accept Draft #2 of the minutes of the October 4, 2022, and Draft 1 of the November 15, 2022, board meetings. Motions approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer Report:** Anita Rush gave the following Treasurer's Reports.
The current balances in the checking and savings accounts:
 WSFS checking account balance as of November 31, 2022, was \$3,511.55.
 WSFS savings account balance as of November 31, 2022, was \$2,777.03.
 Total account balance as of November 31, 2022, was \$6,288.58.
The current balances in the checking and savings accounts:
 WSFS checking account balance as of December 31, 2022, was \$3,508.27.
 WSFS savings account balance as of December 31, 2022, was \$4,777.06.
 Total account balance as of December 31, 2022, was \$8,285.33.

The Treasurer's report was adopted as read.

The expenses for reception and DANA will show up in January report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Inspector General Chapter Committee:** Wasileski reported the chapter for a forthcoming book authored by Robin Kent is being written and the first draft will be sent to Katherine Ward and John Kowalko. The final draft should be done by end of January 2023.
2. **Inspector General Committee:** The lead sponsors in the Del. House and Senate need to be confirmed before the final draft is written. Wasileski hopes we will have a bill for 2023.

- 3. LLC Committee Updates:** Wasileski has seen an article about the Delaware AG shutting down some LLS. They are then referred to Secretary of State to dissolve the entity.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1. Lead Free Delaware Update:** Amy Roe and Sarah Bucic provided the following information to bring everyone up to date on what is happening regarding Childhood Lead Poisoning prevention in Delaware.
 1. Minutes: There were some minutes adopted following the August AG opinion for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Advisory Committee's subcommittees, but we still have a lot that are not yet available. Amy submitted a FOIA request for FOIA procedures of DHSS and should have that back before your next meeting.
 2. AG Complaint was submitted due to a response from the DOE to a FOIA request that said the retention of emails was only 12 months, and that legal fees for redactions could be charged. There has not yet been an opinion from the AG.
 3. Amy will submit another AG complaint due to DOE claiming that payment for a FOIA was never made, even though payment was confirmed in November. Those documents still are not yet available.
 4. Lead-Free Delaware has submitted over 40 FOIA requests of various state agencies, school districts, and the EPA regarding the lead in the drinking water of public schools.
- 2. Reception for Elected Officials:** Katharine Ward noted that everyone was pleased with the venue, food, and attendance and also the recipients were delighted with the awards they received. A detailed report is listed at the end of these minutes.
- 3. FOIA Updates:** Flaherty has put together a list of bills to consider at the next board meeting. The bills he has listed are not specific. He also indicated that he would like to discuss the proposal to expand legislative hall which is a very expensive proposal. He will send details to the board shortly.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Selection of DelCOG President:** Flaherty moved to nominate John Kowalko, III to be president to fill out Keith Steck's term, seconded and approved unanimously. It was noted he is the right man for the job and Kowalko responded that he has very big shoes to fill.
- 2. NFOIIC Contact Person:** Wasileski had been the contact person the last few years and summarized what the job entailed. John Kowalko, III volunteered to be the contact as he said that he would learn as a new president and get a broader view of the issues other states are facing.
- 3. DelCOG 2023 Taxes:** Wasileski will pay the Delaware Franchise Fee as he has to do it online for 2022 and can get reimbursed. He also will file the IRS forms for DelCOG 501 (c) 3 (H) exclusions and get help from the treasurer.
- 4. H.B. 471:** This was referred to next meeting.

OPEN FORUM

1. Kowalko, III noted that he has received a resignation letter from John Morgan. Morgan stated that because of time constraints with his teaching schedule and other commitments it was time to resign from DelCOG's board of directors.
2. Amy Roe will do a petition to review the programs dealing with childhood lead programs in the state.
3. Cynthia Smith asked if we had any plans for Sunshine Week. It was briefly discussed and most agreed that we should plan something maybe for March or better April, because of time constraints.
4. Kowalko, III noted that with his new job dealing with violence prevention among youth he will have more time starting in February to start thinking/working on our priorities.
5. Ward continued discussion of Sunshine Week which is 3/19 – 25, 2023. We need to start now to plan, and we can do a program any time all through April. Send any ideas to her asap. Suggestion followed to focus on the Inspector General legislation.
6. Diswood urged that it was time to expand the board as we need to grow, because we can become too insular.

The next DelCOG Board meeting will be Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom.

Adjourned: 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by Letty Diswood, Secretary

Elected Officials Reception 2022 Report

by Katherine Ward, Event Organizer

The 2022 Elected Officials Reception took place at the Ed Oliver Golf Club on Dupont Road in Wilmington, Delaware on December 5, 2022, from 5:30 to about 8:15 p.m.

The reception took place in both the Dover and the Wilmington Rooms. The hors d'oeuvres and beverages were set up in the Dover room, and some of the hors d'oeuvres were passed by EOGC staff throughout the evening, and the cash bar and the book signing with John Riley were set up in the Wilmington Room.

Letty Diswood and several other members, who assisted her, arrived early, and placed decorations on the tables. The room was festive with tables covered in white linens and alternating red and forest green napkins. Red vases containing white flowers sat on central round mirrors that also held three lighted votive candles in clear glass vases. The large tables with chairs were set for 10 people; a few high tops were available for those who wished to stand. Glasses of ice water were set on all tables.

Letty and Cynthia Smith were at the registration table to welcome the guests, receive entry fees, and give them pens to make name tags. There was no charge for individual sponsors or the elected officials.

There were 20 sponsoring organizations and individuals. Printed signs thanking them were placed in several locations, and a PowerPoint that named them ran on a loop projected onto a screen set up by the podium at the front of the Dover Room.

During the program for the evening, all sponsors were acknowledged once again, and all elected officials in attendance were introduced. Delaware Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long spoke for a few minutes about the importance of open government. Two awards were given: the DelCOG Government for the People award was

given to the Campaign to End Debtors' Prisons, and the DelCOG Distinguished Journalism award was presented to Amanda Fries, the watchdog reporter for The News Journal/delawareonline. Comments by Meryem Dede about the impetus for the work and achievements of the Campaign to End Debtors' Prisons and by Amanda Fries about the importance of a free press were enthusiastically received by the crowd.

Of the approximately 100 people who registered to attend, about 70 attended and there were several who had not signed up in attendance as well. Guestimate: 80 in attendance.

Costs: \$1833.28 They consisted of food, beverages, cash bar, gratuities, materials to create and frame the award certificates, and name badges:

Receipts: \$1410 Came from sponsorship fees and entry fees.

Of the slightly more than \$400 deficit, DelCOG and Delaware Press Association are each shouldering half.

Many thanks to all who helped with the planning, set up, and take down of the event, and to treasurer Anita Rush for keeping careful track of the income and expenditures. It was gratifying to see not only an attractive venue with good food enjoyed by a group of people supporting open government and First Amendment rights (and responsibilities), as well as to see those in attendance not only engaged in lively conversations with each other and with our elected officials throughout the evening but also well pleased with the awards given.