

**Delaware Coalition for Open Government  
Virtual Board Meeting by Zoom  
Tuesday, March 7, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** John Kowalko, III called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

**Pre-board reports:**

1. Treasurer's Report of February 28, 2023
2. Minutes February 7, 2023
3. Bank Statements of February 28, 2023
4. Treasurer Report February 28, 2023
5. Filing receipt for Form 990-EZ, Return Year: 2022 from Wasileski
6. The DC open Government Coalition flyer for Open Government Summit
7. UD History Department sponsored a Zoom event featuring Hal Weitzman and a discussion about his book What's the Matter with Delaware? Recording of the event.

**PRESENT:**, Letty Diswood, John Flaherty, John Kowalko III, Coralie Pryde, Anita Rush, Cynthia Smith, Nick Wasileski

**Absent:** David Breen, Al Jackson

**DelCOG members:** Will Garfinkel, Bill Herron, Sharon Kwiatkowski, Amy Roe, Katherine Ward,

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. **Introduction:** Kowalko welcomed board members and DelCOG members and guests.
2. **Meeting Minutes:** It was moved and seconded, to accept Draft #2 of the minutes of the February 7, 2023. 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 February 28, 2023, was \$3,853.27.  
    WSFS savings account balance as of February 28, 2023, was \$4,778.33.  
    Total account balance as of February 28, 2023, was \$8,631.60.  
**The Treasurer's report was adopted as read.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Inspector General Chapter Committee:** Ward gave a summary of the chapter and the process followed by DelCOG for the benefit of the new people present. Kowalko, III thanked committee members, and especially Ward and Wasileski, for their commitment and volunteer time working on this project. The chapter was sent to the project director last week, and they are reviewing two other chapters before DelCOG's chapter..
2. **Inspector General Committee:** Flaherty and Ward reported that a new bill will be introduced by two legislators. Will Garfinkel, a retired Delaware state employee who had a position in the state similar to an inspector general. The position of inspector general is unique because it has broad

jurisdictional powers. He gave a brief summary of his activity and the money his agency/group recovered.

8. **LLC Committee Updates:** Wasileski reported that UD History Department sponsored a Zoom event featuring Hal Weitzman and a discussion about his book *What's the Matter with Delaware?* He sent the link to the recording of the event to DelCOG board and committee members. It is about 1 1/2 hours and worth a listen.
  
3. **FOIA Committee:** John Kowalko, III reported:
  - a. **HS1-HB 34** that requires school boards, including charter schools, to permit public comment on each agenda item presented for a vote at a school board meeting has passed the House. And heads to the Senate.
  
  - b. **HB 293 has passed the-----***(I did not find anything on it for current session)-*
  
  - c. LEOBOR legislation – DelCOG will work in partnership with ACLU and other organizations.
  
  - d. HB 471, 2022, (last session bill number) if passed would have exempted info regarding bird disease from disclosure under FOIA. A new bill will be introduced and DelCOG will oppose the bill.
  
  - e. HB 44 This bill would require a new set of guidelines for a defined group to do the stateside redistricting process in Delaware.
  
4. **Sunshine Week 2023 Event Committee:** Ward provided a detailed plan for this forum which would focus on the Need for an inspector general in Delaware.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Lead Free Delaware Update:** Amy Roe gave a summary of activities surrounding this issue.
  - a. A petition to review the Child Lead Poisoning was sent to the Joint Finance Committee. They agreed to the request.
  - b. In January or last December, the Department of Justice made a determination to prevent Delaware nurses to get access to childhood poisoning data that lists information on kids. So the nurses have no way of knowing if their student/kids need to be screened, etc. So, Roe is stuck and does not know what to do next!
  - c. DelCOG members present discussed joining a complaint with Lead Free Delaware to EPA regarding lead poisoning protocol in schools. *(I have no vote listed here if we agreed.)*
  
2. **Nepotism Bill:** Flaherty has updated Rep. Morrison, Dist. 27, and the initiative will be deferred to the 2024 legislative session..
  
3. **National Police FOIA Project:** This was moved to the next board meeting.
  
4. **HB 39 Police Fund:** Kowalko, III reported this bill has not moved. It is the House Appropriations Committee since January 19, 2023.

5. **DelCOG Outreach:** Kowalko, III has met with Ward to plan how to reach out to more members and the public. He also has taken part in the general membership meeting of the NFOIC on Zoom.  
Ward confirmed that the annual dues to NFOIC have been paid.

## OPEN FORUM

1. Cynthia Smith has sent an email with ideas about whistleblower protection and about people who can speak on the issue to the members of the board.  
Link: <https://whistleblower.org/supporting-science-whistleblowers/>
2. Amy Roe noted that the city of Seaford is considering allowing business owners to be able to vote in its local elections- including those who do not live in the city.  
Link to article:  
<https://publicintegrity.org/politics/state-politics/state-integrity-investigation/delaware-gets-f-grade-in-2015-state-integrity-investigation/>
3. Check out **Delaware Call** article No. 3. Misty Seeman has written about the need for reform and good background information.
4. Ward encouraged people present who are not members yet of DelCOG to join and noted it's FREE!

**The next DelCOG Board meeting will be Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom.**

Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Letty Diswood, Secretary

## Report from Katherine Ward

1. The Sunshine Week Committee consists of John Kowalko, Mark Fowser, Will Garfinkel, Cynthia Smith, Katherine Ward, Nick Wasileski. Her report is listed at the end of these meeting minutes.
2. The committee has met 3 times in the last couple of weeks to determine details about the program:
  - Format: It will be a Zoom meeting
    - We will talk with Dave Breen re orchestrating/managing the Zoom hosting details.
    - Mark Fowser will handle questions we've developed as well as those that come from the audience at the meeting and will funnel them to the moderator.
  - Date: To be chosen from Mon., April 17; Tues., April 18; Wed., April 19, and possibly Mon., April 24, depending on the availability of the panelists.
  - Time: 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
  - Focus: Inspector General - the need for an IG in Delaware.
  - Title for SW Event: Discussion underway but ideas welcome and needed in immediate future.
  - Panelists to fill specific roles (those who have committed if known):
    - Moderator – DelCOG President, John Kowalko.
    - Inspector General Expert – Stephen Street, Longtime Louisiana IG, and immediate past president (4 2-year terms) of the national Association of Inspectors General.
    - Legislators who may be sponsoring IG legislation this session:

- Sen. Laura Sturgeon.
  - Rep. Mike Smith (co-sponsor of the 2022 HB 405 that came close).
- Member of the press: To be invited in the next day or two. Charlie Megginson, Delaware Live and Amanda Fries, The News Journal/delawareonline.com as backup.
- Member of a community organization that experienced the need for an IG: Amy Roe, lead role (with Sarah Bucic) in Lead-Free Delaware.
- Sponsors: To date – Delaware Coalition for Open Government & Delaware Press Association. The League of Women Voters may be joining us for this event as well. We will be soliciting co-sponsors in the immediate future. Suggestions are welcome.
- Publicity and social media campaign. The Invitation with a registration link to be sent as soon as possible once the date is set and panelists have committed. In that regard, please send me the first and last names and email addresses for those to receive an invitation. A media advisory will be prepared and sent to members of the press. Information will be posted on Facebook.

Take a few minutes for suggestions for:

- a title for the event.
- names of possible co-sponsoring organizations.
- send names of individuals and their email messages to [delawarepress@aol.com](mailto:delawarepress@aol.com).