

**Delaware Coalition for Open Government
Virtual Annual Meeting by Zoom
November 15, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER: John Flaherty called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Pre-board reports:

1. Treasurer's Report of October 31, 2022.
2. Minutes October 4, 2022
3. Annual Report
4. Joint Complaint: Delaware WIIN Grant formal complaint to the EPA.
5. Letter to Secretary Magarik and Sec. Holodick from legislators regarding lead found in school building water supply.
6. Letter from Sec. Holodick in response to the above letter from legislators

PRESENT: David Breen, Letty Diswood, John Flaherty, Al Jackson, Coralie Pryde, Anita Rush.

ABSENT: John Kowalko III, John Morgan, Nick Wasileski, excused absence.

DelCOG members: Sarah Bucic, Mark Murowany, Maria Pagan, Katherine Ward, Nancy Willing, Robin Kemp, James Martin, Jim Parks, Rep. Michael Ramone, Amy Roe, Frank Sims, Cynthia Smith,

GUESTS: Rep. John Kowalko, Jr.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. **Introductions:** Attendees introduced themselves and Flaherty welcomed everyone.
2. **Meeting Minutes:** It was moved and seconded, to accept Draft #2 of the minutes of the October 4, 2022, board meeting. Motion approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer Report:** Anita Rush gave the Treasurer's Report for October 31, 2022.
The current balances in the checking and savings accounts:
 WSFS checking account balance as of October 31, 2022, was \$3,411.00
 WSFS savings account balance as of October 31, 2022, was \$2,776.98
 Total account balance as of October 31, 2022, was \$6,288.55.
The Treasurer's report was adopted as read.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Reception for Elected Officials:** Katharine Ward gave a brief summary of arrangements for the reception and noted that there is still time to submit names for the two awards: *The Government For The People Award* and *The Distinguished Journalism Award*. The following DelCOG members will meet to decide nominees to receive the awards: Flaherty, Ward, and Wasileski. Reception will also feature a book signing by John Riley, whose latest book, *How He Played the Game*, is a first-place state and national award-winning biography of Ed "Porky" Oliver, after whom our reception venue was named. Flaherty thanked Ward for her work in planning the reception.

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. They are asking DelCOG to sign onto the filing of a Joint Complaint to EPA Regarding Lead in the Drinking Water of Public Schools.

18 Groups have signed on to the Joint Complaint to EPA Regarding Lead in the Drinking Water of Public Schools: The complaint specifies the mishandling by DOE and DHSS of the testing for lead in drinking water, including the failure to follow the 3Ts, the lack of communication to parents, teachers, and school districts, the failure to provide guidance on blood lead testing/screening, and the delays in shutting off problem taps.

Organizations filing the complaint are ACLU of Delaware, Black Mothers in Power, Central Delaware NAACP, Delaware Coalition for Open Government (DelCOG), Delaware Concerned Residents for Environmental Justice, Delaware Nurses Association, Delaware Poor People's Campaign Coordinating Committee, Delaware Press Association, Delaware School Nurse Association, Environmental Training Program of West End Neighborhood House, Health Committee of the Delaware State Conference of NAACP Branches, Latin American Community Center, Latino Initiative on Restorative Justice, Lead-Free Delaware, Network Delaware, New Castle Prevention Coalition, Sierra Club Delaware Chapter, and Sussex Health and Environmental Network (SHEN).

DSEA Files Complaint to EPA: Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), the union representing 13,000 teachers, specialists, nurses, secretaries, custodians, food service workers, transportation workers, and paraprofessionals in Delaware's public schools, has directly contacted the EPA to formally request they investigate the fidelity to which the Delaware DOE has complied with the terms of the grant they were awarded regarding lead in the drinking water in public schools.

A motion for DelCOG to sign on to the Complaint to the EPA was seconded and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Selection Process for DelCOG President:** Katherine Ward discussed that a replacement for Keith Steck, who had to resign for health reasons, needs to be decided. The bylaws state that it is up to the Board to nominate a president and approved by majority vote. It was decided that board members send any nominees to John Flaherty in time for the next board meeting scheduled for January, Tuesday 3, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. *(note I am not sure if date that was confirmed at the meeting)*

DelCOG 2022 Annual Report: John Flaherty had submitted the report to the DelCOG board and membership before this meeting by email. (Report attached in separate email)

Guest Speaker: Rep. John Kowalko, Jr. (retired)

Notes of some points made:

The threat to good government is the *Delaware Way* and that there is a need for an inspector general in this state.

The FOIA should be used to allow the public to gather information, however it is used by agencies to limit the public to gather information. FOIA excludes emails of legislators' communications. It is used to hide communications between legislators and other entities.

He mentioned the change to the Medicare health care system for state retirees that is now being litigated.

He encouraged DelCOG to put the inspector general bill forward again in a bipartisan way. And there is the opportunity to bring in the organization Rise Delaware who could provide support to pass this bill. DelCOG should not be discouraged and move forward with the inspector general bill.

Q and A followed.

Flaherty thanked Rep Kowalko for his 16 years of dedicated service in the Delaware General Assembly and his work for open government and many other issues. And that he will be greatly missed by all of us.

OPEN FORUM

- Nancy Willing has confirmed that the Civic League for New Castle County will be a cosponsor of the reception for elected officials.
- James Martin thanked Kowalko for all the years he worked on open government issues.
- Cynthia Smith reported on her work to end racism in DC.
- Dave Breen was thanked for helping DelCOG with the set up for Zoom meetings.
- Rep. Michael Ramone noted that Rep. Kowalko had been extremely impactful to curtail *the Delaware Way* and thanked him for his work.
- Kathrine Ward thanked Amy Roe and Sarah Bucic in their persistence and efforts regarding the lead in water issue.
- Maria Pagan commented on the proposed bio gas plant that is being considered in Sussex County and that violations were made during the process of permitting etc.

1. The next DelCOG Board meeting will be Tuesday, January 3, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom.

2.

Adjourned: 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by Letty Diswood, Secretary