

**Delaware Coalition for Open Government
Virtual Board Meeting by Zoom
Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

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

Pre-board reports:

1. Minutes of December 6, 2023
2. Minutes of November 7, 2023
3. Bank Statements of December 31, 2023,
4. Treasurer's Report of December 31, 2023
5. DelCOG Agenda January 9, 2024
6. Intro Letter to senators from Liam Schofield – Ban the Box.
7. Proposal for \$113 million makeover of Legislative Hall
8. Sam Waltz letter to DelCOG regarding holding board meetings in person.
9. John Flaherty authorization to represent DelCOG lobbyist.

PRESENT: David Breen, Letty Diswood, John Flaherty, Al Jackson, John Kowalko III, Sharon Kwiatkowski, Coralie Pryde, Anita Rush, Cynthia Smith, Nick Wasileski.

Absent:

DelCOG Members: Connie Merlet, Rep. John Kowalko, Katherine Ward.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. **Introduction:** John Kowalko III welcomed board members, DelCOG members and guests.
2. **The agenda** was amended to reappoint the current Board of Directors of DelCOG.

A motion to appoint the following directors to the DelCOG Board: David Breen, John Flaherty, Coralie Pryde, Cyntia Smith, and Nick Wasileski was seconded and approved unanimously.

A motion to appoint Sharon Kwiatkowski as director to the DelCOG board was seconded and approved unanimously.

3. **Board Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the board meeting minutes of December 6, 2023, and of November 7, 2023, were seconded and approved unanimously.

DelCOG Advisory Board members are Cortez, David Finger and Karen Peterson, Rep. Kowalko (retired), and Katherine Ward. At the next board meeting the advisory board will be discussed.

4. **Treasurer Report:** Anita Rush reported.

The current balances in the checking and savings accounts:

WSFS checking account balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$3,263.99.

WSFS savings account balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$7,787.77.

Total account balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$11,051.76.

The Treasurer's report was accepted and filed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- 1. Inspector General Chapter Committee:** Nick Waseleski – John Flaherty was to meet with various legislators on the first day of the legislative session about the IG bill and seeking sponsors for this bill. He will go to the legislature for three days this week. He was unable to meet with Senator Sturgeon and will schedule a new date to meet with her.

Katherine Ward has drafted an OP Ed to be reviewed and will be sent to the board when finished.
- 2. Inspector General Book Chapter Committee:** Katherine Ward reported that the draft is done and will be sent to Kowalko III for review before it is sent to the University of Colorado.
- 3. FOIA Committee:** John Kowalko. III reported that no meeting was held in December. He hopes the committee will meet shortly to set up priorities for the coming year..
- 4. LLC Committee Updates:** Nick Wasileski reported that in January 2024, the Federal Corporate Transparency Act will go into effect. This requires Beneficial Owners to report to the Federal Treasury if they own 20% of the corporation.
- 5. Bylaws and Procedures Committee:** John Kowalko III reported that the committee will review the bylaws and policy and procedures manual to clarify DelCOG’s internal process for how, what and when items should occur. A conflict-of-interest section needs to be added to the bylaws, and the committee will meet shortly. Connie Merlet volunteered to serve on this committee.
- 6. Website Committee:** John Kowalko III reported that DelCOG has a new website DelCOG.org. Email addresses still have to be set up for some board members. Ideas are welcome. A blog might be set up for the public and to share information. Please check out the new website.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1. Lead Free Delaware Update:** Amy Roe was not present, but she has published an annual report that has been widely distributed.
- 2. Police Radio Encryption – No report.** Comments by Kowalko III that New York police are doing inscription on police radios.
- 3. Organizational Development:** Kowalko III noted that the work right now is focused on updating the Bylaws and Policy and procedures manual.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. SB 13 (151st GA):** John Flaherty reported that “Ban the Box” legislation was passed in 2020 which prohibits employers to ask about persons having been arrested etc. in the first round of job applications. It turns out that the spirit of the law is not being followed and people with criminal records years after completing sentences are unable to acquire jobs and also access to college and education. John Flaherty would like to lobby the legislature on the lack of implementation of this law. He will find out if there is an entity who has oversight over this this law.

A motion to follow up on implementation and oversight of this law and its enforcement was seconded and approved unanimously.

2. **Clean Water:** Al Jackson expressed his concern about how a large amount of funds have been distributed and used to help municipalities, and the public to clean up Delaware's polluted water supply. He suspects the private sector may have too much influence on the process. Al will pursue this on his own at this time.
3. **DANA Membership Renewal:** Wasileski noted that DelCOG has not made use of the resources this organization provides in the last 6 years he has served on DelCOG's board. A motion to renew DANA membership was seconded and approved unanimously.
4. **Zoom and In-Person Meetings:** John Flaherty discussed a letter sent by Sam Waltz that suggested DelCOG board meet in person, rather than meeting only on Zoom. Discussion centered on convenience, the organization is statewide and driving at night to meetings from Kent and Sussex County takes time, gas, and a waste of volunteer time and costly for the volunteers. We can have in-person meetings for possibly annual meetings or Sunshine Week.
5. **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Kowalko will start on this item and Letty Diswood will send him a sample of the conflict-of-interest policy of the LWVDE.

6. OPEN FORUM

- A. Nick Wasileski has paid the \$25 fee for Delaware's Franchise tax. Nick will do the IRS 990 Easy tax filing. The NFOIC invoice for membership has not been received yet. An audit review of DelCOG's books will be needed shortly.
- B. **Sunshine Week 2024 Committee:** This event is usually held in March-April. The committee members are Nick Wasileski, Cynthia Smith, John Kowalko III, Connie Merlet and Katherine Ward. A meeting will be held shortly.
- C. **Proposed Expansion of Legislative Hall:** John Flaherty discussed the plans and how costly it would be and questioned the need for a tunnel for legislators and staff at an enormous expense. There is a need for more office space, however, and other options should be pursued. He will do some research on it and share it with the board.

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. by zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m..

Submitted by Letty Diswood, Secretary