

Kansas Water Congress Reorganization meeting

Blue Earth Room, Flint Hills Discovery Center, Manhattan, Kansas
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 2 p.m.

Meeting Notes.

Mark Rude started the meeting at 2:07 p.m. by thanking everyone for attending and for their interest in the Kansas Water Congress reorganization.

Purpose, History, Corporate Structure, and Strategic Planning Options - Mark Rude, GMD3

Kansas Water Congress has been around for 21 years. It is a non-governmental, nonpartisan entity to associate with regarding Kansas water and water-related policy. Allowing people to voice their concerns, participate, and learn. KWC is a non-profit organization that is fee-funded.

Dave Brenn helped form the Kansas Water Congress and has stepped back from the lead. This meeting aims to get a feel for the need to re-establish a Kansas Water Congress or a similar group. The KWC website is no longer available, but a new temporary website is at kansaswatercongress.org.

No bylaws exist; however, Articles of Incorporation are detailed and posted on the temporary website. Representative Ward Loyd wrote the Articles of Incorporation and added an extensive preamble. Mark read a snippet from the preamble: "Members join to dedicate themselves to the task of securing full development, protection, and management of our available water resources... equity of access and usage must apply statewide to every resident and right holder." There is room to remake the KWC based on the vision and expertise involved, and an overview of the official full board of mostly vacant positions was reviewed.

The Board of Representatives

The Board of Representatives is composed of 29 members selected by and from geographic divisions:

One Representative from each of the following:

- Geographic Division (12)
 - Cimarron Water Basin
 - Lower Republican Water Basin
 - Lower Arkansas Water Basin
 - Marais des Cygnes Water Basin
 - Missouri Water Basin
 - Neosho Water Basin
 - Smoky Hill-Saline Water Basin
 - Solomon Water Basin
 - Upper Arkansas Water Basin
 - Upper Republican Water Basin
 - Verdigris Water Basin

- Groundwater Division (5)
 - Western Kansas GMD1
 - Equus Beds GMD2
 - SW KS GMD3
 - NW KS GMD4
 - Big Bend GMD5
- Governmental Division, (1)
 - which is a full-time employee or official of a county or state government.
- Financial Division (1)
 - Serving as a full-time employee or as an officer or director of a financial institution
- Energy and Mining Division (1)
 - Serving a full-time employee or officer of an energy or mining firm
- Recreational and Wildlife Division (1)
 - With a significant involvement in water-related recreation or wildlife preservation or where water benefits said recreation or preservation.

Two Representative from each of the following:

- Statewide Agricultural Division (2)
 - Serving as a full-time farmer or rancher, reside in the area west of US Highway 81 and the other east of US Highway 81.
- Municipal Division (2)
 - Serving as a full-time employee or official of a city or town, one must reside in the area west of US Highway 81 and the other east of US Highway 81.
- Professional Division (2)
 - One a professional engineer registered in the State of Kansas, and the other an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Kansas.
- Industrial and Commercial Division (2) (excluding financial, energy, and mining firms)
 - Serving as a full-time employee or officer of an industrial or commercial firm

Policy Formulation: under the Articles of Incorporation, there is a 2/3 majority vote of the board requirement to take an advocacy position on policy or legislation.

The initial steering committee consisted of David Brenn, Harland Priddle, Ken Frahm, Richard Reinhardt, Robin Jennison, Paul Tobia, Sen. Janis Lee, Chris Wilson, Rep. Ward Loyd, Hannes Zacharias. Mark was able to get in touch with some. The current Board Members include Dave Brenn, Kent Lamb, Chris Wilson, Robin Jenison, and Ken Frahm, and all contacted favor passing the torch to a newly reorganized board to lead such an organization.

GMD3 has put up \$14,632 this last year for the KWC to be the Kansas NWRA (National Water Resources Association) member, with Randy Hayzlett and Clay Scott attending NWRA board meetings representing Kansas.

If re-established, KWC (or other name through board change to the articles of incorporation) Committees that need to be formed and active are the Executive Committee, State Affairs, and Federal Affairs.

General Membership Meetings should be held twice a year, winter and summer. There was no summer meeting in 2023, but it is the aim of the reorganization group, at this point, to have a winter meeting on February 6, 2024. Unsure if there is an active member list. There needs to be some points of contact for collaboration. We will use the Topeka Congress address, the temporary website, and email until June 2024 or so.

Discussion

Shannon Kenyon with GMD4 stated they pulled out of the KWC because they didn't feel they were getting the bang for the buck. She does feel that Kansas needs representation at the National Level.

Do we already have a structure that could get us to the National level, by Water Authority or something else?

Mark offered that the Water Authority is a political entity not designed for open nonpartisan statewide member association, participation, and leadership to build consensus on water issues similarly. The Congress attendees learned last February from Doug Kemper, Executive Director of Colorado Water Congress, that they formed their CWC because the fundamental core need was a statewide consensus to support their congressional delegation and voice at the federal level on federal policy affecting Colorado, recognizing the nonpartisan nature of water concerns. Since the state already had state government, the need was a nonpartisan statewide engagement for a statewide consensus-built platform and voice affecting state water concerns and their non-government collaboration with sister organizations in neighboring states. Kansas is not that different in this regard.

City of Hays Manager: Toby Dougherty Believes the Kansas Water Congress is essential. We all touch water in one way or another, be it in different capacities. If you look at the framework, it's broad and vast; we all work within our own area/framework. The Kansas Water Congress provided a venue where everyone could talk broadly about issues facing Kansas.

Tim Boese with GMD2 agrees there needs to be National Representation.

It was suggested that invoices should probably be mailed out for 2023 with information. This would keep the operating funds and the membership base active while a steering committee builds the leadership to rebuild a board and association.

Other discussions occurred.

The consensus of the group was to consider a steering committee. Let them plan what the KWC could look like that is their only job, and then they step aside. KWC may need a complete overhaul to become a prosperous and vital organization that benefits associates and Kansas.

Toby Dougherty volunteered his time.

Dan Devlin added there is outstanding leadership out there.

With the interest and concerns expressed, Mark and Patty committed to capturing and posting meeting notes and inviting people to a steering Zoom meeting soon.

Notes of the meeting will be available on the Kansas Water Congress website.