



**MPMA Board of Directors Meeting – In-Person and Remote via Zoom
Crooked Pint Ale House Maplewood, MN**

11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Prior to Meeting:

MPMA Active and Allied members were notified of the meeting date and time, and that it was going to be both in-person at the Crooked Pint, and remotely via Zoom. A link to the meeting was provided, as well as a phone number to call if anyone had difficulties joining the meeting. The link is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3625407589?pwd=SGJxZGQvUUF3RXZVbU5ybjJ>

Meeting ID: 362 540 7589 Passcode: mpma

In Attendance:

In-person:

Todd Leyse, Adam's Pest Control
Dr. Mohammed El-Damir, Adam's Pest Control
Roger Mackedanz, MDA
Christine Wick, MDA/ASPCRO
Dr. Stephen Kells, U. of M.
Caroline Kohnert, Plunkett's Pest Control
Joe Watrin, Granite Pest Control
Kathy Watrin, Granite Pest Control
Rob Greer, Rove Pest Control
Matt Ferguson, Rainbow Pest Control
Nathan Heider, Spidexx
Kelly Rogotzke, DoneRight Pest Control
Jay Bruesch, MPMA

Remote via Zoom:

Mark Nelson, SiteOne
Travis Chambers, BASF
Christina Valdivia, Wildlife Management Services
Mike Weissman, Syngenta
Matt Eickman, AbraKadabra Environmental



Dr. Mohammed El-Damir, President called the meeting to order at 11:30 A.M., circulated the attendance sheet, and invited all in-person and Zoom participants to introduce themselves.

Roger Mackedanz, Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture introduced Christine Wick, the at-large representative of ASPCRO within MDA. Christine has great aspirations for her new position, and she will surely have the full support and fellowship of MPMA.

Roger discussed MDA's new Certification & Training plan, mandated by an EPA rule 2 years ago; the last plan is 42 years old! Not many of the C & T changes will affect the Structural PMP industry.

Certification Plans of states, territories, and sovereign Native American lands must be approved by Nov. 2023; among new requirements is a stipulation that all applicators must be at least 18 years old in order to obtain a license.

EPA defines "use" as anyone that handles, distributes, applies, mixes, or loads pesticides – anything involving an open pesticide container. This does not include warehouse staff, shipping departments, or anyone else that does not handle open pesticide containers.

MDA is not going forward with proposed language for the Minnesota legislature pertaining to its C & T plan until MDA has EPA's approval for its plan.

The biggest changes will affect private applicators, especially pertaining to a proctored exam.

MDA is looking at trying to outsource testing. During COVID, they tried to beef up testing locations, since people in non-Metro areas prefer not to come to St. Paul for testing. More testing locations are to come. One challenge MDA faces is that, considering MDA conducts testing at no cost, outsourcers often do not want to bid on the work.

Nathan Heider mentioned that Wisconsin already has a "fee paid" system; the big issue with MDA is absolute verification that the person taking a test is who they claim they are.

MDA wants more brick-and-mortar locations for testing throughout the State.

Concerning recent changes to the ACCRA surcharge on applicator and company licenses: based on statutory changes made during 2022, the maximum amount a company must contribute to cleanup of an environmental incident has gone up to \$550,000.00; MDA is required by the EPA rules to maintain a balance of reserve funds between \$2 million and \$6.5 million. \$3 million is the lower threshold determining when MDA would increase contribution amounts.

Under Minnesota pesticide law, all licenses must bear equal burden for supporting ACCRA. All license categories are now at their statutory cap, so there are no real changes here for Structural applicators – as well as for Structural applicators who also hold Commercial licenses.



The revised recertification process is a work in progress. More discussion on this will take place when Dr. Kells presents on this topic.

Dr. Mohammed El-Damir commented that there should be a way to simplify the process of moving an applicator license from one company to a new employer. Roger will look into it.

Dr. Stephen Kells, University of Minnesota provided an update on U. of M. activities and issues, including plans for the 2023 SPCA/Commercial conference and online training – specifically, on plans for self-paced online learning. MDA is leery of this method of offering learning modules or lessons, and challenges Steve to show them that it will work without any possibility that someone could cheat the system; and that data from learning sessions will be accurately and reliably captured and recorded.

Dr. Kells is still working on a final agenda for the 2023 MN PMP Conference in March; Bobby Corrigan is set up for two talks. The year 2023 will be the last year that Dr. Corrigan will be available as a Conference presenter. The U. of M. and Conference Planning Committee always look for the best presenters for specific topics; as the “old guard” retire from actively participating in conferences, there are newer experts coming online to replace them, so no worries there.

Concerning the online self-paced training that was offered during 2022, there were 1,079 applicators registered; of these, 909 people finished the General (Category A) session.

An online survey showed that 89.5% of those who responded to the survey were either satisfied or very satisfied with the 2022 Conference. This represented a jump by 10% over results from the 2021 Conference.

85.9% of participants loved the online option. Only a small percentage would prefer an “in-person only” conference. The allure of not having to require their employees to travel, plus the savings on hotel rooms, made this option attractive both for employers and their employees.

Steve’s survey showed that the first choice of most applicators was self-paced online training; the second most popular choice was the “Zoom” live-online option.

Steve and his team encountered problems that were caused by complexities not encountered in previous years: for example, browser incompatibilities caused some to be unable to complete sessions; and attendance monitoring was hit-and-miss. For example, people who hadn’t cleared their browsers for a long time experienced some problems.

Some people were using online lessons, or sessions, as a “podcast” while driving; passing multiple cellular phone towers caused problems with this.

Time and device monitoring was in place; however, 9 people very clearly cheated. It was



possible during 2022 to run 3 lessons at once, or open 3 browsers at once, fast-forwarding through lessons or otherwise circumventing actual participation in the sessions.

Dr. Kells and his team were able to repair most problems; it was necessary to require some learners to repeat sessions – and some of the cheaters were among those who needed to repeat sessions. E-mails were sent; extra time was granted; about 35 attendees had issues according to the reporting data that the U. of M. provided to MDA.

There were mistakes in registration; The U. of M. is fixing the system so that the 2023 Conference can proceed as currently planned.

As with all new things, there were some gaps here and there; these were eventually resolved.

With the current requirements, the U. of M. will adjust how they set up registration. Radio buttons chosen from a menu will register learners for a particular category.

Dr. El-Damir asked: Why so many numbers? Why not one number for Structural and Commercial? Roger Mackedanz answered that MDA has to have accurate validation.

Dr. Kells reported that, regarding new requirements, he has a meeting on Oct. 19 to get MDA's questions answered.

There are 3 ways the program can be taken:

“Live”

“Live online” (Webinar format)

“Study at your own pace”

An in-person conference will be offered in 2023.

The comment was made that the phrase “Engagement will be required; questions should be asked” (not the exact language) in the new EPA rules would work in a small group; but with hundreds of people – up to a thousand – we can't assure that level of participation. Maybe clicker-type engagement monitoring would help to accomplish this (necessary software is available for cell phones). Todd Leye replied that MDA's Gurinderbir Chahal said that individuals answering questions wasn't really a requirement.

Roger Mackedanz clarified this issue: MDA would like to increase interaction; but individuals will not be required to answer questions.

Dr. El-Damir suggested that perhaps a pass/fail quiz at the end of the conference might serve the purpose of ensuring that participants remain engaged, and that they pay attention. However, this would be difficult to implement.

Jay Bruesch asked, what if a participant does not have a compliant cell phone? Dr. Kells replied



Minnesota Pest
Management
Association

6563 Bracken Drive Minnetrista, MN 55331

that allowances would be made in such cases.

Dr. Kells' software engineer said that we will be able to offer video or image-taking for Webinar-format sessions. For Zoom-based lessons, it might be necessary to offer 20 sessions from March through the end of April. They'd record the first one, and there would be pauses in between.

There will be a requirement that participants in Web-based sessions have an image taken using the person's license card; then, attendees would have to have their Web cameras turned on during the entire session.

Dr. Kells favors self-paced online programs, and will continue to push for them. This learning format is the most convenient and easiest for applicators. Besides the registration picture, the guidelines require that, when someone signs in, they have their picture taken; at the end before they sign out, they must again have their picture taken. There will be some difficulties from a software-engineering standpoint. Dr. Kells proposes to capture a second image during each presentation. His team will have to store around 15,000 images. Taking only one picture at a random time during the session might also do the job of ensuring that learners stay in front of their computers and engage in the content.

Joe Watrin pointed out that the proposed system punishes everybody because a few bad apples try to cheat the system. Joe said that online training can be difficult for a 9-person company like his. Roger Mackedanz reminded the group that the U. of M. is the only sponsor opting for self-paced online learning. The U. of M. will have to show MDA that this will definitely work. If it doesn't work perfectly, it may be that we have to go back to either in-person events or sessions delivered via Zoom – but not online and self-paced. MDA is very nervous about self-paced learning sessions. Dr. Kells said that he has sought consultative help from outside of the U. of M. system, because the "U" does not have the IT capacity to do this. The consulting firm he is using is called VoiceHive.

Roger Mackedanz still thinks that Dr. Kells is pursuing a very difficult target.

Somewhat off-topic: Dr. Kells mentioned that there is no financial impropriety or improper financial interest on the part of the U. of M.

Christine Wick, MDA/ASPCRO, suggested that in addition to photo and ID card, it might be advisable to go one step further: Allow managers, who should be assumed to be honest, to help with verification of face/ID. In the field, they could get applicator IDs and driver's licenses.

Dr. Kells asked MDA to get the names of cheaters if possible, such as the four employees that one of the PMP firm owners caught cheating – and promptly fired. Dr. Kells would like to publish reports of incidents of cheating (but not individual names).

MPMA President Dr. Mohammed El-Damir suggested that, since time was growing short, we



should suspend discussion on C & T for the time being, and proceed with the agenda.

MPMA Newsletter:

MPMA Secretary/Treasurer Jay Bruesch provided a very brief update on the MPMA Newsletter for October 2022 – the second edition of this new and very successful MPMA venture. Christina Valdivia was recognized and thanked for her excellent work on newsletter layout, giving the publication a professional appearance and a highly readable format. Brava, Christina!

Jay needed to purchase a new computer, because Microsoft is discontinuing its support of computers with Version 8 and older, and suspending updates and security patches. He asked, how has MPMA handled this in the past? Is there any compensation, considering that this computer is used principally for MPMA business? Todd Leyse moved to have MPMA reimburse Jay for the entire cost of the computer, which came to \$769.99. The motion was seconded, voted upon, and approved by a near-majority vote.

Secretary/Treasurer Jay Bruesch humbly thanks MPMA for this generous allowance.

Financial:

Secretary/Treasurer Jay Bruesch reported on revenues and expenses that were recorded between the time of our July 2022 meeting and today's date; and provided a brief outlook for revenues in 2023.

MPMA had **\$2,070.60.00** in revenues between July 19, 2022 and October 17, 2022 of 2022 (from one Allied sponsor firm's advertisement) and expenses between July 19, 2022 and October 17, 2022 as follows:

- Secretary/Treasurer salary, cell phone and Internet allowances for July, August and September 2022: **\$2,780.00**
- Reimbursement to Secretary/Treasurer for floral arrangements for Mike Fresvik, Gary VandeLinde and Gene White: **\$313.90**
- Total expenses from July 19, 2022 – October 17, 2022: **\$3,093.90**

As of this reporting, MPMA has **\$20,011.17** in its Wells Fargo Initiate Checking™ account, and **\$16,778.90** in its Business Market Rate Savings account, for total assets of **\$36,790.07**.

By way of comparison, MPMA had **\$21,644.28** in its checking account at the end of July 2022, and **\$16,778.48** in its savings account, for total assets of **\$38,422.76**.

Fortunately, membership renewal season will soon be upon us, and our bank accounts will receive a welcome cash infusion from Active and Allied membership renewals; and from new memberships, booth rentals, and newsletter ads. MPMA offers its sincere thanks to all Allied and Active members for their support of this organization and assurance that MPMA will



6563 Bracken Drive Minnetrista, MN 55331

continue to positively represent the Minnesota pest management industry before the public, the legislature, and the regulatory sector. We enjoy a unique and productive environment of cooperation and mutual support between industry, our valued suppliers, and government.

Old Business:

Todd Leyse has been added to Jay Bruesch's as a signer on MPMA's Wells Fargo banking transactions.

New Business

Todd Leyse made a motion to induct Dr. Bobby Corrigan into MPMA's Hall of Fame, and to present him with this award at the 2023 PMP Conference. The motion was seconded, voted on, and approved unanimously. Dr. Corrigan has been a legendary presence and top-rated presenter at Minnesota PMP Conferences for many years, and his passion for sharing his rodent management expertise has been invaluable to our industry in Minnesota, as well as throughout the country and around the world. He surely deserves the honor of membership in MPMA's Hall of Fame.

The question was asked, should MPMA have its own physical location, versus meeting in venues like the Crooked Pint? This issue was set aside for the time being.

Board lineup for 2023:

Matt Eickman will advance to the office of President of MPMA, beginning on January 1, 2023; Dr. Mohammed El-Damir will be Past President. Two Directorships are now unfilled. Nathan Heider was nominated as a Director, and was approved by unanimous vote. Christina Valdivia, who had earlier volunteered to serve as a Director, was also nominated, voted on and unanimously voted into the office of Director. Christina will take Lance Watrin's place in the Board's succession roster of Directors. (Lance has asked for a temporary suspension of his membership on the Board, due to his currently heavy workload and busy schedule; he will be eligible for consideration as a Board member at a time of his choosing.) Nathan Heider will have four years of much-appreciated service before advancing to President. Nathan, welcome to MPMA, and welcome to the Board of Directors! This might be the first time anyone has accomplished both of these things at the same time.

Next meeting:

MPMA's next meeting will be Tuesday, January 17, 2023; 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. at the Crooked Pint Ale House, 1734 Adolphus St., Maplewood, MN 55117. Members may also attend via Zoom.

Adjourn President Mohammed El-Damir asked for a motion to adjourn; this motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned at about 1:10 P.M. Thanks to all who participated, and special thanks to Todd Leyse for setting up the Zoom session.