



**MPMA Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, April 18, 2023**

Moe's American Grill Mound, MN

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

In-person:

Matthew Eickman, Abra Kadabra Environmental
Rusty Binkley, Rockwell Labs
Rob Greer, Rove Pest Control
Dr. Mohammed El Damir, Adam's Pest Control
Kathy Watrin, Granite Pest Control
Joe Watrin, Granite Pest Control
Travis Chambers, BASF
Morgan Manderfield, Ecolab
Todd Leyse, Adam's Pest Control
Keith Gordon, Vesperis
Brian Elm, Vesperis
Lane Zimmerman, Rainbow Pest Experts
Nathan Heider, Spidexx
Caroline Kohnert, Plunkett's Pest Control
Troy Timermanis, Bear Pest Control
Christine Wicks, Minnesota Department of Agriculture/ASPCRO
Joelle Olson, Ecolab

Remote via Zoom:

Roger Mackedanz, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Jake Plevelich
David Johnson, Catchmaster
Bob Hansen, Bob the Bugman

Matt Eickman, President

Matt called the meeting to order at 1:30 am; passed around an attendance sheet; and invited attendees to introduce themselves. There were a few new faces at this very well-attended meeting.

A motion was proposed and a vote taken to approve the July 2023 meeting minutes; the minutes were approved as written.

Dr. Stephen Kells, U. of M.:

1. Summary of 2023 MN conference as it stands
2. Feedback from the use of video monitoring
3. Planning for 2024 MN SPMC



Some of this was skipped over pending the next meeting; parts of it were addressed as part of the discussion of other topics.

Travis Chambers, BASF:

Travis shared Allied members' feedback from the 2023 PMP Conference; there were some concerns.

The vendors thank MPMA for the opportunity to represent their companies at this event. Travis and the other vendors support MPMA and Minnesota PMPs, and he asks that we not "shoot the messenger;" he is only sharing what he and other vendors had to say about their experience at the Conference. Travis is assured that the vendors' concerns will be listened to in the spirit in which they were offered.

Pre-COVID-19, the Conference was in-person only; all Minnesota-licensed PMPs were required to attend. There were a large number of attendees (1,000 or more) at the Conference, and it lasted 1 ½ days. Since COVID-19; this has changed and there are now fewer attendees, plus it's only ¾ of a day. This significantly cuts into the amount of time vendors have for interacting with PMP attendees, and the number of people they can see. Yet the fee for participating in the Conference remains the same. *(Responding to this concern, Executive Director Jay Bruesch comments that MPMA did consider lowering Conference fees for vendors, but decided to leave those fees as-is. The Association's operating expenses [which are paid for in part by member dues and vendor booth reservations] have not changed, and the cost of renting the Conference venue and engaging an event planner have not gone down by much. Surely, the ballroom we used for the 2023 Conference cost less to rent than an entire auditorium; but other costs associated with the Conference (planning the event, advertising the event, paying some of the presenters, time donated by the planning committee, and all the expenses involved in running a professional association have either stayed the same, or gone up. In spite of this, we have in the past few years chosen not to impose any increase in Allied membership dues or booth reservation fees. We'll surely consider Allied members' concerns the next time membership fee structure comes up. Allied members are asked to contact Jay Bruesch if concerns remain unanswered regarding this issue.)*

Vendors asked, "Why does the Conference have to take place on a Monday, and why the first Monday of March? Our Allied members are competing with Kansas and Colorado meetings the same week." *(Dr. Kells, who is the sponsor of the Conference (U. of M.), said he'd look into these questions when meeting with the planning committee. It may be that attendees prefer Monday because they can then use the previous Sunday for travel, thus reducing the amount of time they lose for servicing their clients. This is up in the air for the time being.)*

Some vendors felt that communication was not good this year; hotel blocks were announced late, after most vendors had made their travel plans and hotel reservations. Vendors would like a block of rooms reserved at a better rate, and would appreciate sooner notice. *(Dr. Kells commented that there were some complexities this year that resulted in late announcement of a hotel agreement. For 2024 and going forward, vendors can expect that the requested improvements in communication will be made.)*



At the Conference, no mention was made from the podium that attendees should visit the vendors during the morning break. *(Conference planners will address this concern in the future; however, it is true that vendor booths were located alongside the break provisions, so attendees did have the opportunity to visit vendors during the breaks.)*

Allied members were disappointed that there was no “What’s New” technical presentation in 2023. *(Dr. Kells noted that he tries to schedule such a presentation, usually given by Marc Bramhall, on an every-other-year basis rather than annually, in order to make room for other content and for topics required by MDA. Incidentally, some people were wary of offering the “What’s New” technical topic to the same person every time it is on the agenda. The fact is that Mr. Bramhall is viewed as having a unique skill in this regard: not many people are able to fit the vast amount of information Marc presents into a standard time frame for a presentation, and few if any other people have volunteered to take this topic on. Marc gets the job done, inside of the allotted time, and gives useful information on a variety of vendors’ product and service offerings. He does not advertise his company.)*

One way of addressing the concerns about having the same person cover the “What’s New?” topic would be to add a lightning round to each year’s Conference, allowing vendors to describe what new or unique things they are bringing to the table that year. This idea was duly noted and will be considered when the planning committee meets on September 7, 2024.

Allied members suggested that MPMA could offer a premium sponsorship program for vendor companies: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Special signage would express MPMA’s appreciation and thanks for these levels of support. Possibly, vendors at higher levels might get more time onstage to present information about their companies and their product and service offerings. *(Food for thought; the planning committee will look at ways to implement such as system of sponsorship.)*

Dr. Kells commented that the Conference’s educational portion is managed by MDA and the University of Minnesota; the rest of the Conference is managed by MPMA and thus is not within his sphere of influence. Thus, MPMA will have to fix some of these problems.

As for concerns about lower numbers of attendees due to the fact that Conference content can now be accessed online, Dr. Kells stated that there is very strong drive for online options for training and educational events – not only in Minnesota, but in other states as well. Once the online platform became available as a result of COVID-19, Pandora’s box was opened and it would now be difficult to go backwards. There is an opportunity for vendors to submit a video about their companies and products; but Dr. Kells only received 3 or 4 videos from vendors. Submitting video content would give vendors more time in front of attendees, since everyone is required to take part in the event either in-person or online.

Vendors would have liked to have seen their technical people onstage as presenters. *(Dr. Kells will make this happen; the planning committee thanks the Allied members for making this offer.)*



On the subject of vendor presence in online content, someone mentioned that, during the time of COVID-19 quarantine and distancing rules, the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) offered a “virtual vendor booth” at its annual PestWorld virtual convention. It remains unclear whether vendors thought they benefitted from this.

Again, don’t shoot the messenger: Dr. El Damir said that he’d like to see Allied members’ technical and sales representatives in his office more often. That is certainly one way for Allied members to have high-quality time in front of key decision makers.

Joe Watrin, Granite Pest Control, mentioned that he is staunchly in favor of having service technicians attend the Conference in person; he understands that coming to the Convention Center and attending in person is a hardship. But making this sacrifice was one thing that has made the Minnesota PMP Conference an excellent training and educational event in the past, and Joe is reluctant to let go of this unique feature of the Minnesota Conference.

MPMA President Matt Eickman challenged the group to clearly define what its goals are when planning a Conference, and then take action accordingly.

Matt asked: Can we table this for a time when a committee could discuss these concerns? He asked for volunteers for an ad-hoc committee to organize and conduct this discussion to the satisfaction of MPMA and its valued Allied members. This committee should send a report on their meeting to Jay Bruesch so that their information can be added to the minutes of today’s meeting, or shared with the membership in some other way. The committee will consist of Matt Eickman (Abra Kadabra Environmental), Todd Leyse (Adam’s), Caroline Kohnert (Plunkett’s), Rob Greer (Rove Pest Control), Rusty Binkley (Rockwell Labs), Keith Gordon (Veseris), and Nathan Heider (Spidexx). Thanks to all these individuals for stepping forward and offering to help.

Jay Bruesch, Executive Director: Financial report.

Jay Bruesch reported on revenues and expenses that were recorded between the time of our January 2023 meeting and today’s date.

MPMA had **\$17,066.99** in revenues between January 18, 2023 and April 18, 2023. Revenues consist primarily of Allied and Active membership dues; vendor display booths at the annual PMP Conference; and Conference admission fees for Active members.

Expenses between January 18, 2023 and April 18, 2023 were as follows:

- Executive Director base salary, cell phone and Internet allowances for January, February and March 2023: **\$2,880.00**
- Special projects supplemental pay for February 2023 (for legislative work) **\$1,340.00**
- Special projects supplemental pay for March 2023 (for legislative work) **\$680.00**



- Total expenses from July 19, 2022 – October 17, 2022: **\$4,900.00**

As of this reporting, MPMA has **\$35,955.66** in its Wells Fargo Initiate Checking™ account, and **\$16,788.30** in its Business Market Rate Savings account, for total assets of **\$52,743.96**.

By way of comparison, MPMA had **\$22,070.50** in its checking account at the end of January 2023, and **\$16,784.23** in its savings account, for total assets of **\$38,422.76**.

A vote was taken to approve the financial report; the report was approved as written.

Old Business:

Todd Leye reported on recent meetings between MPMA and legislators, largely pertaining to legislature before the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate. Most notably, bills have been passed by the House, and narrowly defeated in the Senate, that would preempt State authority to regulate pesticide use, and that would give that authority to all of the 153 cities in the state. Thus, each city could have its own rules for applicator training, licensing, certification, and recertification; each city could have its own rules pertaining to pesticide use practices in, around, and near structures. If preemption is rolled back in this way – either soon or in the future – it would severely impact the ability of pest management professionals to do the important work of protecting public health, property, food, and peace of mind. We'd have to abide by the rules of each city in which we were working at any given moment, and change our practices to obey the rules of another city when we crossed the line into another municipality. This would be maddening, and would not serve any useful purpose. Those who live in small towns can easily imagine the pandemonium this would create: think of your own city's City Council. Are they equipped with the personnel, expertise, and funds to handle pesticide regulation, applicator monitoring and investigation? They most certainly are not, and pesticide policy would be at the whim of whomever is on the Council. Meanwhile, every home-and business owner would be able to purchase the same products we use at any big-box hardware outlet, local hardware store, grocery store or online; and they would use these products willy-nilly, usually ignoring label directions.

Thus, it is important that we as an industry closely monitor legislative action having to do with preemption, and educate our state's legislators about the consequences of changing the status quo. Only the states – under the leadership of the Environmental Protection Agency – have the wherewithal to regulate pesticide education, training, licensure and use.

MPMA has met with numerous legislators to educate them on who we are as an industry and as an Association – and to ask them to oppose any legislation that comes their way that gets in the way of the State doing its job, as FIFRA instructs. We have meetings scheduled with more



legislators, and will fight this fight until we are confident that the rollback of State preemption is defeated once and for all. That might take a while.

New Business:

Rules of order for meetings: We discussed how MPMA meetings could be more effective, orderly and fair if we resumed our past reliance on Robert's Rules of Order for conducting meetings. We are not going to be fanatical about this, but by being more careful to call for motions, vote on issues, and announce the results of the vote, we will be more effective as an Association, and clearer on communication.

We also discussed the need to promote one Board member, and to replace Christina Valdivia on Board. Christina has moved on to other pursuits, but did not provide any details about her plans. One candidate, Ecolab's Morgan Manderfield, has stepped forward to volunteer.

Going forward, Morgan Manderfield joins the Board, and Lane Zimmerman will in all likelihood replace Rob Greer of Rove Pest Control as a Director. Rob Greer has advanced to another capacity within Rove, and no longer has the time to serve on the Board.

Next meeting:

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M; unless other notification is given, the venue will be Moe's American Grill, Mounds View. Members may also attend via Zoom.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn; a vote was taken; and President Matt Eickman declared the meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.