

Minutes of the First 2015 Council Meeting
Mineralogical Society of America
Saturday, 18 October 2014
Hyatt Regency Vancouver Hotel, 655 Burrard Street
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6C 2R7

Attending:

Steve Shirey, President
David Vaughan, Past-President
Howard Day, Treasurer
Andrea Koziol, Secretary
Edward Grew, Councilor
Kirsten Nicolaysen, Councilor
Abby Kavner, Councilor
Matthew J. Kohn, Councilor

Not present:

Wendy Panero, Councilor
Isabelle Daniel, Councilor
Becky Lange, Vice-President

Visitors:

J. Alex Speer, MSA Executive Director
Rachel Russell, Managing Editor, *American Mineralogist*
Keith Putirka, Editor, *American Mineralogist*
Christine Clark, former Councilor
Kim Tait, former Councilor

Note: Motions and Council action items are presented in *italics*; SoC = sense of Council

ITEMS

[1] Call to order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Steve Shirey at 2:52 PM. All present introduced themselves.

[2] Approval of 2014 business matters 1 through 6, listed below.

1. 2014 Budget

Approve 2015 Proposed Budget included in the Treasurer's Report, with any modifications as a result of more recent Council-approved actions (Section 4 Appendix B, in the Treasurer's Report for the Third 2014 Council meeting).

H. Day led discussion of this item. He reminded Council to look at the treasurer's report summary, Section 4 Appendix B page 1 of the Blue Book for the 2014 Third meeting. In the worst case scenario, the budget projects a deficit of \$91 K for 2015. The budget deficit reflects increases for *American Mineralogist*. There are increased costs for the newly implemented RapidEdit and Journal Production

System software, more pages per volume, and staff going from 30 hours to 40 hours with additional increase in benefits. This is not sustainable in the long run.

A Speer suggested that we watch and see how DeGruyter does with increasing subscription sales among institutions, especially those with users outside the earth sciences. If this is not as successful as hoped, MSA will have to start to consider business models whereby the journal can be supported by its readers and is less dependent on institutional subscribers. He noted that he and Rachel Russell will watch the numbers. M. Kohn asked about Rapid Edit, and R. Russell explained the system. There is a charge per manuscript page, so as submissions go up, amounts go up. Lowering the acceptance rate of the journal would address this. E. Grew queried about longer manuscripts. K. Putirka answered that currently the editors are rejecting data-rich short papers and actually recruiting longer papers. The authors are asked to use a supplementary database as much as possible.

H. Day made one more point – MSA is supporting Mineralogy 4 Kids (M4K) at \$10 K per year. A. Speer noted that the M4K website recently had a new all-time high of 2,416 sessions in one day.

M. Kohn moved that the 2014 Proposed Budget be approved. A. Kavner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Authorization for the Treasurer and Executive Director to Conduct Financial Affairs of the Society

The MSA Treasurer is authorized to conduct the financial affairs of the Society. J. Alexander Speer, Executive Director of the Society, is authorized to write checks and make other forms of payment and transfers on the Society's accounts as directed by the Treasurer and Council actions.

M. Kohn so moved. A. Kavner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Acceptance of Committee Appointments for 2015 Council Year

Approve suggested Committee member and chair assignments and other appointed posts (Section 7, Report of the Committee on Committees to the Third 2014 Council).

Discussion of the Membership Committee was deferred until later in this meeting.

It was moved by K. Nicolaysen that all Committee appointments except the Membership Committee be accepted. M. Kohn seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Appointment of Editors for 2014

Ian Swainson and Keith D. Putirka are appointed Editors of the *American Mineralogist*. Ian Swainson is appointed Editor of the *Reviews in Mineralogy and Geochemistry* and *Monograph* series. Andrea Koziol is appointed the MSA Event Editor for *Elements*. Kenneth W. Bladh is appointed Editor of the *Handbook of Mineralogy*.

H. Day so moved, K. Nicolaysen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Authorization of Mail and Telephone Ballots

Mail, telephone, e-mail, and Internet ballots may be used whenever necessary and allowed to conduct the affairs of the Society.

There was a short discussion, to amend this authorization to include video conference calls such as Skype.

M. Kohn so moved, A. Kavner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Conflict of Interest Policy

One requirement of the new IRS Form 990 is that MSA have a procedure to review MSA's Conflict of Interest Policy with Council, have every Council members sign a Conflict of Interest Information Form annually (copies will be brought to the meeting) and that there is a record that this has been done.

All Councilors were informed of this by S. Shirey and signed the required forms.

[3] Items tabled from the Third 2014 Council Meeting

Discussion started with item 23 from the Third Council meeting:

The officer/committee organization of MSA and the BlueBooks can often obscure overall trends. A few seemingly disparate threads:

- The Short Course Committee developed an advertisement to be run in Elements soliciting new proposals (Section 19 Appendix F). Committee members were also encouraged to contact colleagues who might be interested in proposing courses. What the committee did not report is what prompted these actions. There are no short courses/Reviews volumes in the pipeline for after 2015. Also unreported is the increased competition – the regularity and popularity of the European Mineralogical Union (EMU) Schools and accompanying Notes in Mineralogy volumes, the ease of organizing short course at GSA now and, more recently, a move in this direction by the Goldschmidt Conferences.
- Lecture Program Administrator reports 48 requests for MSA Distinguished Lecturers to visit various institutions in 2014-2015. This number is down significantly from the two previous years, which totaled 71 and 62 requests respectively (Section 21(b)). One can speculate that the drop in requests is a result of more groups offering Lecture Series. The Mineralogical Society started a lecture series in 2007, COMPRES a Distinguished Lecture Series started in 2008, and GSA its Distinguished International Lecturer.
- MSA Liaison to the GeoScienceWorld (GSW) Board of Directors describes the successful launch of *Geochemical Perspectives* (impact factor of 8.25) by the European Association of Geochemistry (EAG) as well as the new EAG journal *Geochemical Perspectives Letters*. The aims of the new journal are: (1) to publish short, topical articles that report important advances in geochemistry; (2) Initially, 2 issues per year, increasing to 4 issues and more with demand; (3) Free, open access; no page charges; (4) color graphics strongly encouraged; (5) Rapid publication, on the web and in print; (6)

Print version sent to all EAG members. It is noted that this new journal may challenge *American Mineralogist* Letters (Section 17(a)).

The success of *Geochemical Perspectives* and start of *Geochemical Perspectives Letters* are not matters of happenstance and luck. The EAG publishing program was designed from the outset as long-range and to game the current publishing environment.

- GSA's MGPV Division newsletter reports a spurt in membership, from 1,382 in 2013 to 2,059 in 2014 (Section 29(j), page 9). GSA instituted a policy wherein students can join their first Division at no cost. This dramatically increased MGPV membership for 2014. Students have gone from about 30% of the membership to 60%. This means more members to serve, but no increase and an actual decrease in income to do so. However, the GSA MGPV Division and its areas of interests are the main beneficiaries of a \$1.5 million bequest from James B. Thompson Jr.

- GSA has started money-raising for a \$100,000 E-an Zen Fund to support public interest geology. E-an was past president of both GSA and MSA.

The common thread here is that MSA exists in an aggressively competitive world where, except for taking inspiration from successful MSA programs, little deference can be expected to be shown MSA.

A discussion of how MSA might better operate and focus in this environment is warranted. There have been some changes in MSA programs. The best example would be the *American Mineralogist*. There are a number of behind the scene changes to be more competitive, including electronic access to the journal with membership. This would be a most outwardly visible move seen as aggressively competitive by other societies and publishers.

A. Speer introduced these common threads. In his opinion, MSA is a bit passive and used to being the only game in town, especially for short courses. This is not true anymore, with other short course programs starting up. Other new competitors are the EAG journal, which may affect the Letters submitted to *American Mineralogist*. In addition there are other Lectureship programs. This is the environment today, and MSA must work in this environment.

A. Speer also reported on PLOS's (Public Library of Science) PLOS One. "Lightly reviewed" articles are published here for \$1200 an article, whereas the charge for articles published in their more rigorously reviewed, flagship journals such as *PLoS Biology* and *PLoS Medicine* is \$2,750. Other societies or organizations may look into this type of publication approach. MSA and Council have discussed a data journal in the past, and this may be an area where MSA should be more aggressive.

Discussion ensued. R. Russell and A. Speer noted that MSA does not plan to become a data repository facility, but provide a new way of publishing for authors with data who need a citable reference. Questions were raised about quality. A. Speer replied that the data should have a good description, not be just tables of data. He thought there would be a way for MSA to publish data with quality and with context. K. Putirka reminded

Council of recent hoaxes in publishing that involved several journals. If data articles are lightly reviewed, this could leave MSA open to similar problems.

A side conversation started on the MSA lecture series. M. Kohn asked if we wished to compete or collaborate with other societies? A. Speer replied that a society should have well-recognized signature programs such as the MSA lecture series, otherwise there is little reason for individuals to belong to or to support the organization.

K. Nicolaysen pointed out that others are already in the data journal field. Shouldn't we start an initiative we are uniquely ready to address? Perhaps topics such as applied mineralogy, or extractive industries?

A. Speer said that any new journal has to be profitable. He gave the example of AGU's *Journal of Geophysical Research (JGR)*, which, decades ago, dramatically increased in size and required authors to pay page charges. No doubt there were concerns about that approach at the time, but one would have to say that today *JGR* is a large and successful journal. The question was raised, if we had such a data journal, what need would such a journal fulfill? What would it be called?

K. Nicolaysen suggested that Council needs a proposal, with some detail on organization. A. Speer replied yes, we are not ready to decide on such a journal at this Council meeting.

H. Day suggested the title *Earth Materials Data*. Such a title covers several fields. A. Speer listed several examples of data that would not be publishable in today's environment, yet would benefit the field by being published in some form. R. Russell suggested that some manuscripts rejected from *American Mineralogist* could fit into such a journal.

S. Shirey suggested that a homework assignment for all of Council is to think about this and email back and forth about this now and again. A. Speer wrapped up discussion by reminding Council to keep in mind all topics raised in this discussion and be aware of changes in the "environment" surrounding MSA. S. Shirey suggested an *ad hoc* committee to further consider a MSA data journal. R. Russell and A. Speer agreed to be on such an *ad hoc* committee. It was noted that Pamela Burnley had previously expressed interest in a data journal. Discussion ended with no Council action.

[4] Items from the Management Council Meeting.

There were two items to discuss: 1. A written guide for management procedures and 2. The Membership Committee.

1. A written guide for management procedures

H. Day started this discussion on the first point. A written protocol or procedure for the Executive Director's position would be helpful. This has been mentioned by the MSA's auditors more than once. A. Speer replied that a written document may not be terribly useful, as things change constantly, though a timeline of duties or calendar of events might be a way to start such a document. R. Russell keeps notes on her duties, and there are Handbooks for each MSA committee and office, updated annually, so much of the society operations are well documented.

S Shirey queried whether a bookkeeper needed? A Speer noted that his bookkeeping workload had increased over time, for example, in preparing for the audit, DOL 5500 form for MSA's retirement programs, or the IRS 990 form. Payroll on the other hand is done by a payroll service, taking care of withholding and government forms. He estimated that a half-time person would be needed. Expenses could be shared with the Clay Minerals Society and *Elements* magazine. Someone will be needed within the next two years to deal with the workload and to ease the transition with a replacement Executive Director. H. Day noted that MSA will need a source of income to support such a person. Perhaps our investment strategy should be revisited, and some funds should be invested less conservatively. It was agreed however that a meeting of the FAAC (Financial Advisory and Audit Committee) was needed for further discussion. S. Shirey said he will call such a meeting.

2. The Membership Committee.

A. Speer reviewed the background of the committee, which was started after the successful Meteoritical Society effort of some years ago. He suggested that the reformulated committee contact lapsed members as the most profitable way to improve our financial standing.

Kim Tait volunteered to chair the Membership Committee. S. Shirey will ask Becky Lange to oversee the reconstitution of this committee.

[5] The future of MSA. The Fall 1996 Council asked that an agenda item on the future of MSA be included at each First Council Meeting.

S. Shirey started discussion on this topic. He sees mineralogy through a petrology lens, as described in his first President's Letter in *Elements*. There is a shrinking amount of mineralogy education in college education. But we start with minerals in looking at rocks. He suggested starting a series of one page information sheets on the importance of minerals, and he would write the first one. An example would be inclusions in diamonds, from the small scale to implications on the large scale.

A. Speer suggested that these might be published with a Creative Commons license that would make them more readily reproducible without the need to seek written permission. K. Putirka suggested that such an information sheet be published in *American Mineralogist*.

Vigorous discussion followed. K Tait agreed with publication in *American Mineralogist*. She suggested that only members write these contributions. A suggested title could be “Mineral Matters”, such as, “Mineral Matters: Olivine”. New contributions could be announced in *Elements* magazine and on the MSA Facebook webpage. S. Shirey suggested that there be a top down organization, with invited authors. He visualized that these contributions would not be technically peer-reviewed but subjected to informal review by the author’s colleagues, with a final review by *American Mineralogist* editor K. Putirka. After discussion, it was concluded that our target audience included our colleagues, undergraduate geology majors, students in introductory geology courses, and interested high school students.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Adjournment

Motion to approve by M. Kohn, seconded by H. Day. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea M. Koziol, Secretary