

# Minutes of the First 2018 MSA Council Meeting

Saturday, 21 October 2017  
Sheraton Seattle Hotel  
1400 6th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101 USA

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## Attending:

Michael Brown, President  
George Harlow, Past President  
Mickey Gunter, Vice President  
Thomas Duffy, Treasurer  
Bryan Chakoumakos, Secretary  
Peter Nabelek, Councilor  
Sarah C. Penniston-Dorland, Councilor  
Jay Ague, Councilor  
Donna Whitney, Councilor

## Not Present:

Rajdeep Dasgupta, Councilor  
Sarah K. Carmichael, Councilor

## Visitors:

J. Alex Speer, MSA Executive Director  
Rachel Russell, Managing Editor, *American Mineralogist*  
Rebecca Lange, Past Past President

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

## ITEMS

3:54 PM, Meeting called to order by Michael Brown. Jay Ague and Donna Whitney welcomed as new councilors.

## Budget

[1] Approve 2018 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 2017 Council Meeting).

[2] 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.

Acceptance of Committee Appointments for 2018 Council Year

[3] Approve Committee member and chair assignments and other appointed posts (Section 7, Report of the Committee on Committees to the Third 2017 Council).

#### Appointment of Editors for 2018

[4] 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*

#### Authorization of Mail and Telephone Ballots

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

*George Harlow moved that the 2018 Proposed Budget be approved, that the MSA Treasurer and Executive Director be authorized to conduct financial affairs of the society, that the 2018 amended Committee appointments be accepted, 2018 Editor appointments be accepted, and that the Society is authorized to use mail and telephone ballots, items [1]-[5] above; Sarah Penniston-Dorland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

#### Conflict of Interest Policy

[6] 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.

*Councilors and Officers signed new conflict of interest statements.*

#### Any Items Tabled from the Third 2017 Council Meeting

[27] *Succession Planning - Accounting Manager*. The Executive Director took Rubino & Company up on their offer to provide a job description to handle the accounting for MSA. Jenny Herrera provided a description of what she termed a "Finance Manager" (Section 3, Appendix H). What she did was to describe, from a professional's standpoint, what financial tasks the current Executive Director does for the society as part of his responsibilities. It was startling to read, but he realized it captures that aspect in words other than the position description of the MSA Executive Director supplied to the MSA Management Committee.

In terms of pay, Jenny suggested using the *2018 Robert Half Salary Guide for Accounting and Finance Professionals* (there will be a copy at Council). There are no nonprofit industry listings the guide, and salaries across the board are (very) high. Perhaps the closest are a “General Accountant” with average salaries of \$45,000 to \$90,000, depending on experience or an “Operational Support” (=bookkeepers) with average salaries of \$34,000 to \$60,000. The guide indicates a “local market variance” of +32% in the northern Virginia area, and MSA benefits would add about another 25%.

The Finance Manager position she described would be expensive, and anyone good would soon move on because of career advancement or a pay that MSA could never afford. Jenny told me that in her private discussions with each MSA Treasurer she has stressed that MSA has been getting a bargain in a twofer Executive Director/ Finance Manager. We discussed that the next step is for Council to decide how will the current Executive Director/ Finance Manager job responsibilities be apportioned between two positions – ranging from [1] Finance Manager\* as described in Appendix H and an Executive Director who is the required public face of the Society or thinks big thoughts and travels to a number to meetings to tell others about them to [2] an Executive Director still significantly involved in the hands-on operation and finances of the society with a part time book keeper to handle the paper and number shuffling.

To help in the discussion, the current job description of the MSA Executive Director in in Section 3, Appendix K. Staff descriptions are updated annually and supplied to the Management Committee. The Executive Director fills three roles: accounting, office management, and executive director:

- In the accounting role, the Executive Director is responsible for preparation as well as the efficiency and accuracy of all Mineralogical Society of America (MSA) financial records and reports.
- In the role of office manager, the Executive Director ensures that effective office and accounting systems and procedures are developed, implemented, and maintained on a continuing basis and that the MSA Business Offices operates within approved budget guidelines.
- In the role of executive director, the Executive Director is accountable for the effective and efficient planning and oversight of all programs and strategic planning of the Mineralogical Society of America as defined by Council through the management and/or coordination of the human resources of the Society, including staff, officers, committees, and other volunteers.

Current MSA finances cannot afford scenario #1. MSA is a small society, despite its outsized footprint in the field, and is a significant business enterprise. I would think it requires someone familiar with and actively involved in MSA operations.

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\*any Finance Manager would not handle all aspects of MSA finances. For fraud oversight of MSA’s cash flow, the Administrative Assistant and Accounts Coordinator would still handle their current financial responsibilities. Both are significantly involved in the monies coming in and going out.  
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*To move ahead with an MSA Accounting Manager position, Council needs to decide how will the current Executive Director/Finance Manager job responsibilities be apportioned between two positions. Basically, what will be the*

*expectations of the Executive Director?*

*Michael Brown suggests that we spell out the division of responsibilities between the new part fund accountant (bookkeeper), the executive director, and the account manager (Everett Johnson). The accounting tasks listed by the Executive Director in that job description will become the tasks of a part-time fund accountant. A part-time person should be sought immediately by the Executive Director.*

*Successor to Executive Director, i.e., replacement for Alex Speer, needs to be made within one year. Michael Brown suggests a committee of past-presidents to be the search committee to make a short-list. The hiring decision would be made by the Executive Committee or a subset of at least 3 members of that committee. Timing of the process should allow interviews and selection by Fall 2018. Advertising on the MSA Talk would get the word out. Interviewing would need to be completed in Sep-Oct time frame. CV & vision statement for application. 3 reference letters needed for short list. On site interviews at Chantilly. Geoscience experience, administrative experience, physical science degree. Scientific publishing experience beneficial. Michael Brown will draft the position description.*

[28] A late submission by the MSA Liaison to the Geochemical Society (Section 29(h) concerns the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Geochemical Society (GS) currently being negotiated between MSA and GS:

- suggestions as to what issues need to be considered between MSA and GS and included in the MOU
- produce a similar MOU with EAG?

Future of MSA

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

*Items [28] and [7] above were not explicitly addressed.*

Adjournment

*Mickey Gunter moved that the meeting be adjourned, George Harlow seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

*Respectively submitted,*

*Bryan Chakoumakos, Secretary*