



July 2019 NEWSLETTER

The Group

PO Box 75223

Seattle, WA 98125

www.backflowgroup.org

OFFICER CONTACT INFORMATION

CHAIR: Jeff Kobyk jeff.kobyk@edmondswa.gov	City of Edmonds	425-275-4514
VICE CHAIR: Brian Gumke bgumke@nud.net	Northshore Utility District	425-398-4419
TREASURER: Dennis McLaughlin d.p.mclaughlin@outlook.com	Retired BAT	206-364-9531
SECRETARY: Katarina Hirai khirai@slwsd.com	Silver Lake Water & Sewer District	425-659-2304
PAST CHAIR: Mick Holte mholte@rentonwa.gov	City of Renton	425-430-7207
WEBMASTER: Open Position		

July's Group meeting was held at Coal Creek Utility District. Thank you, Carla Snyder, for hosting this month. The meeting was called to order at 10:07am by Chair Jeff Kobylk, introductions were made and those in attendance were: Debbie Cooks City of Kent, Vice Chair Brian Gumke Northshore Utility District, Heidi Hiatt City of Kirkland, Past Chair Mick Holte City of Renton, Chair Jeff Kobylk City of Edmonds, Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin Retired BAT, Carla Snyder Coal Creek Utility District, Chris Sutton Backflows NW, Jesse VanDorn Backflows NW, and Secretary Katarina Hirai Silver Lake Water & Sewer District. The Group Treasurer Dennis reported the Group's account balance as of July 17, 2019 was \$20,287.78 with the costs being June meeting refreshments of \$39.93 and updating of the website by Word-ware of \$131.25. Income this month included the renewal of four web ads for a total of \$400 and interest of \$9.04.

The meeting began with discussion regarding when membership dues are due along with membership policies. It was suggested that the Group adjust the timeframe of when membership dues are due to correspond with the Group's annual seminar. It was requested that paying for next year's membership dues be an option on the seminar registration form to give members an easier way to pay their membership dues, so they don't lose connection with the Group in the subsequent year.

The next item discussed was the open Webmaster position. With the loss of Wednesday Smith as the Group's Webmaster, the Group now must pay a vendor, Word-ware, for any updates to the Group's website, including memberships. Therefore, memberships will be updated only once a month until the Group fills the Webmaster position. If you are at all interested in becoming the Group's Webmaster, please contact Dennis McLaughlin for more information. No experience is required, training takes only 1 hour, and your membership dues are waived for the year.

Seminar planning, the main topic for the July meeting, was discussed next. Doors will open at 5am to allow vendors to set up their tables and registration will begin at 6:15am. Once Past Chair Mick Holte confirms he has bios for each speaker and a copy of the presentations, he will submit the information to Washington Certification Services to secure the 0.6 CEUs for the seminar. Secretary Katarina Hirai proposed that the Group include a bio of Peggy Barton in the seminar handouts to inform attendees on her accomplishments and contributions to our industry. Past Chair Mick Holte volunteered to contact Debbie Diggins and Bill Bernier about creating a writeup about Peggy's career. Door prizes were discussed. Chris Sutton suggested the Group purchase a Mako electronic test gauge as a door prize as it is fancy enough, new enough, and creating enough buzz to help entice attendance. Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin expressed concern over the cost of acquiring this door prize. Vice Chair Brian Gumke proposed the Group set up a raffle at the seminar for the test gauge at \$5 a ticket so the Group could offset some of the cost of this enticing door prize. Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin reminded Group members that all participating vendors will be required to provide a minimum of a \$50 door prize for the seminar. Past participating vendors have usually provided door prizes in excess of the \$50 minimum. The discussion then moved to how the Group might entice water purveyor attendees as the electronic test gauge would entice BATs. Most water purveyor's attend the seminar for the CEUs and the presentations. Debbie Cooks proposed that the Group highlight in the seminar invitation email that the CEUs received from attending the seminar come at a low-cost compared to other CEU options. Heidi Hiatt suggested the Group try to find a famous guest speaker for the seminar to entice attendance. This may be something the Group could explore for next year's seminar.

Discussion then moved to the upcoming Group picnic at Redmond Perrigo Park on August 21st. Chair Jeff Kobylk volunteered to be the chef for the barbeque. On display at the picnic this year, the Group will have items from the storage shed that are available to Group members for use. Chair Jeff Kobylk and Vice Chair Brian Gumke will meet with Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin to gain access to the storage unit and decide which items to display at the picnic. The menu for the picnic was discussed with options being hamburgers, hot dogs, steak, chicken or Dutch oven casseroles. The meeting attendees decided that Vice Chair Brian Gumke would make three different kinds of barbeque chicken (teriyaki, buffalo, and BBQ) and Chair Jeff Kobylk would make his Dutch oven lasagna. Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin will purchase chips, soda, water, and cookies. Other Group members are

encouraged to bring a potluck dish to the picnic, but it is not required to attend. The Group is hoping Kathy Caldwell will bring her exemplary potato salad.

With the planning for the picnic concluded, Vice Chair Brian Gumke brought the discussion back to seminar planning as there had not been a decision made on the Group purchasing the electronic test gauge for a door prize. It was proposed that the Group wait until mid-August to make this decision since at that time the Group would be able to estimate seminar attendance. However, this would not allow the Group to advertise the raffle for the test gauge on the initial invitation, which would be optimal to entice attendance. Chris Sutton proposed the Group update their registration form as it looked "old". He suggested it was an optimal time to make changes as the Group could "relaunch" itself with a "new and bright" look, while highlighting the new seminar location, and the test gauge raffle.

The discussion then moved to how the Group could entice more members to the monthly meetings. Past Chair Mick Holte suggested that an announcement be made at the seminar to inform attendees about the upcoming planning meeting on December 18 at the City of Kirkland to encourage more participation and establish more varied meeting locations. Please mark your calendars now and join us; lunch is provided. Treasurer Dennis McLaughlin stated he has a list of all the meeting topics discussed over the last 25 years and some of those topics would be good to revisit for the benefit of the new CCSs and BATs. Chris Sutton proposed that there are also emerging issues the Group could discuss that veteran members would benefit from. Other proposed ideas from Chris Sutton to enliven the Group and increase monthly meeting attendance were the Group could provide lunch (or meet at a restaurant so attendees could purchase lunch), offer free gauge calibrations, or provide a guest speaker. Debbie Cooks expanded that these items were great at getting members to show up to a meeting, but the Group needs to also keep members coming back through new, interesting, and engaging presentations. Heidi Hiatt suggested the Group enlist a keynote speaker that is not necessarily associated with the industry, like comedian John Keister or Jubal Flagg. Past Chair Mick Holte then brought up a good point that though these all were great ideas, they all required a level of dedication and time from a member to achieve and the Group has a difficult time finding members willing to be officers due to the time commitment.

Past Chair Mick Holte then moved the discussion to fire line consumption as his city had installed new electronic meters on the fire lines in his jurisdiction and they were registering consumption. He wanted to know if anyone had a customer letter that would address this type of occurrence. Chair Jeff Kobylk advised he had such a letter and would send it to Mick to review. There was further discussion that this consumption may be due to backflow assembly repairs, or the assembly leaking, or unauthorized use. Carla Snyder requested that BATs testing in her district (Coal Creek Utility District) complete the detector read on the test form as that would alert her to low flow consumption through the assembly. Chris Sutton advised that detector readings should be verified by the water purveyor before taking action as many testers are not trained to properly read a detector meter.

The last item discussed was when the first invitations for the seminar should be sent out by the Secretary of the Group. Past Chair Mick Holte suggested the first invitations should be sent the first week of August, with a second invitation being sent the last week of August, and a third and final reminder being sent the middle of September. This schedule was generally agreed upon by the attending members. Vice Chair Brian Gumke made a motion that the Group purchase a Mako Electronic Test Gauge to be raffled off at the upcoming seminar with raffle tickets costing \$5 each and that the raffle be advertised in the seminar invitation. Past Chair Mick Holte seconded the motion. The motion carried with 6 votes for, 0 against, with 4 abstaining. Secretary Katarina Hirai requested Chris Sutton send marketing materials for the test gauge to her so she may include them in the seminar invitation. She also volunteered to update the registration flyer for the seminar to include the raffle and update the look, as suggested earlier in the meeting, and provide it to the Executive Board before August 1st for approval. The Secretary was also directed by the meeting attendees to sign up for a free mailChimp account to determine if this would allow most, if not all, of the seminar invitations to be sent at once.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.

The next meeting will be the Group's Annual Picnic at Redmond Perrigo Park located at 9011 196th Ave NE in Redmond starting at 10am. Come join us for good food, good company, and a good time.

Hope to see you there!

Katarina Hirai
2019 Group Secretary