

**Delaware Coalition for Open Government  
Virtual Board Meeting by Zoom  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:** John Kowalko III called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**Pre-board reports:**

1. Minutes of January 6, 2024
2. Bank Statements of January 31, 2024,
3. Treasurer’s Report of January 31, 2024
4. DelCOG Agenda February 14, 2024
5. Al Jackson provided article “February is Black History Month in the United States. National Whistleblower Center (NWC) proudly shines a spotlight on the contributions of Black professionals who have influenced the whistleblower landscape and risked their careers and personal lives in the process.”

**PRESENT:** Letty Diswood, John Flaherty, Al Jackson, John Kowalko III, Sharon Kwiatkowski, Anita Rush, Cynthia Smith, Nick Wasileski.

**Absent:** David Breen, Coralie Pryde

**DelCOG Members:** Carol DiGiovanni, Alen Henney, Lynn Troy Maniscalco, Connie Merlet, Rep. John Kowalko, Warren Rosenkranz,

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

1. **Introduction:** John Kowalko III welcomed board members, DelCOG members and guests. All introduced themselves because there were a number of guests.
2. **Board Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the board meeting minutes of January 6, 2024, draft 2 was seconded and approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer Report:** Anita Rush reported.  
The current balances in the checking and savings accounts:  
    WSFS checking account balance as of January 31, 2024, was \$3,468.99.  
    WSFS savings account balance as of January 31, 2023, was \$7,789.09.  
    Total account balance as of January 31, 2024, was \$11,258.08.  
Wasileski reported the Delaware Franchise Tax had been paid and the IRS filing will be completed in a week. There was a \$300 deposit this month.

**The Treasurer’s report was accepted and filed.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Inspector General Chapter Committee:** Nick Waseleski – An update was given on the Inspector General chapter, stating that the book chapter is complete and will be sent to the University of Colorado for publication.

2. **Inspector General Legislation:** The team discussed their concerns about Senator Laura Sturgeon's recent actions and comments regarding the IG bill they are supporting. Sharon Kwiatkowski shared her impressions from a meeting with Senator Sturgeon's coffee hour, noting her tough handling of questions and doubts about the bill. The team expressed their support for the bill and planned to individually reach out to Senator Sturgeon to voice their concerns and emphasize public support for the bill. Connie Merlet also noted that her Senator, Dave Sokola, backs the bill and suggested there might be more going on behind the scenes with Senator Sturgeon's actions. Towards the end, the team decided to proceed with their plan to invite Senator Sturgeon for a talk to address questions from DelCOG members.
3. **The Inspector General Committee** discussed their plans for their next meeting. John K admitted he had neglected some duties in January and assured the committee he would catch up on them. They planned to meet with Senator Sturgeon and Representative Kim Williams to discuss bills. The meeting was rescheduled to Tuesday, the 13th, in the late afternoon or early evening. The committee also decided to encourage members to submit questions for the meeting. The meeting will be held by Zoom.
4. **FOIA Committee:** No report.
5. **LLC Committee Updates:** Nick Wasileski gave update for the benefit of new members mentioning that in 2016, DelCOG had expressed interest in the secrecy of Delaware limited liability companies that were enabling money laundering and other crimes. He mentioned that a bill was sponsored in 2017 but was stopped in committee. However, at the national level, the Corporate Transparency Act was passed a few years later, requiring all beneficial owners of LLC's and other corporate entities to register with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. Nick also mentioned that a bipartisan group of senators is requesting the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to set up a whistleblower protection and whistleblower awards program.
6. **Bylaws and Procedures Committee:** No update.
7. **Website Committee:** John Kowalko III no update other than continue to add new content.
8. **The Sunshine Week Committee** was still in the process of being formed, with John Kowalko, Cynthia Smith, Connie Merlet, and Katherine Ward confirmed as members. The topic of the Sunshine Week was left open for discussion.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Lead Free Delaware Update:** No Report.
2. **Police Radio Encryption:** Alan Henney provided an update on police radio encryption, specifically in relation to Delaware. He discussed the progress of the new radio system and the encryption of all law enforcement agencies, including state agencies. Alan also mentioned other states' plans for public access and media plans but noted that Delaware's process has been less transparent. He suggested reaching out to members of the General Assembly for potential solutions. The team agreed on the need for increased transparency and the importance of keeping the public informed.  
It was suggested that Henney write up something that DelCOG can sign onto, which Henney agreed to do.
3. **Organizational Development:** No report.

4. **SB 13 (151st GA):** John Flaherty reported that he will follow up with Senor Pickney on the “Ban the Box” legislation’s lack of implementation. The bill was passed in 2020 which prohibits employers to ask about persons having been arrested etc. in the first round of job applications.
5. **Clean Water:** Al Jackson apologized for getting mixed up about the Fresh Water Committee. He will continue to pursue how money is being spent.
6. **DANA Membership Renewal:** The invoice has been paid.
7. **General Assembly Renovation:** John Flaherty provided an update on the proposed renovation of the Delaware General Assembly, which is moving forward despite an article recommending against proceeding with a tunnel due to concerns about the low water table. John sought clarification on whether there was a platform for people to testify against the project. It was suggested that the Delaware General Assembly Joint Finance Committee would be the appropriate place. John agreed to find out when the hearing would take place and share this information with the team.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **League Day in Dover:** Letty Diswood discussed the League of Women Voters of Delaware letter requesting DelCOG to be a cosponsor of this forum “Democracy at a Crossroads: Facing Challenges of Disinformation and Misinformation.” Letty Diswood clarified that she was not benefiting financially will abstain from voting. A motion to provide \$200 for cosponsoring this event was seconded and approved with one abstention.

## **2. OPEN FORUM**

- A. The team also discussed upcoming events and meetings, including the Delaware Joint Finance Committee hearing where Cynthia Smith would be testifying in support of more funding for domestic violence.
- B. Nick Wasileski reported that he had sent out all donation receipts for 2023 and would handle federal tax in the coming weeks.

**The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, Marh 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. by zoom.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m..

## **Next steps**

- Follow up with Laura Sturgeon about the Inspector General Bill.
- Organize a coffee talk with Senator Sokola about the Inspector General Bill.
- Send out a Zoom invite for the Inspector General Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at 6 PM.

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- Consider adding a blog or update section to the DELCOG website.
- John will send an email about the committee meeting schedule today.
- Alan will talk to Walt Palmer about writing a letter to the General Assembly about police radio encryption.
- Letty will send out sponsorship information for League Day in Dover once details are available.
- John will send out an email to coordinate everyone's schedules.
- John will send out the schedule for the Joint Finance Committee hearings.
- Albert will send the report on Delaware's transparency and accountability to John Flaherty and the group.

Submitted by Letty Diswood, Secretary with help from AI.