



# WE NEED YOU!

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT- A WIN-WIN!

BY MARILEE ENUS

I still remember my very first NH Public Works Association Board of Directors (BOD) meeting, just days after joining UNH T2 and the world of public works a few years ago. I'd made the leap from human resources in the technology industry into an exciting new opportunity with public works but was experiencing a case of "new-kid-nerve" in those early days. My head clouded by acronyms and an alphabet soup of public works professional groups -APWA, NHPWA, NHPWMA, NEAPWA, AASHTO - I wondered if I'd ever sort it out and make sense of "what's what" in public works. I've since had the incredible fortune of continuing participation with NHPWA BOD, as well as the NH Public Works Mutual Aid BOD, and additional work groups with AASHTO, NEAPWA, and other public works partnerships and associations. In fact, it is very likely through participation in these groups that I now "speak the language" of public works far more fluently than I imagined possible. The benefits of participating in a professional association Board do not stop there for me though, so I wanted to share a little bit about what I've gained with the hopes that you too will consider joining a Board or Subcommittee to support public works. Many of our local association boards, committees, and sub-groups are seeking new members, including with NHPWA, NHPWMA, and NEAPWA.

*Here are a few reasons I recommend YOU jump onboard a board...*



### **Develop New Skills and Build Existing Ones**

Participating on a Board allows you to leverage your existing skills to support and champion the industry, but also to gain new skills. Through Board and committee work you might plan a training event, develop a newsletter article, support research on a public works issue, support the budgeting and treasurer functions, develop advocacy and fundraising skills, or develop new marketing, administrative, and meeting facilitation skills, to name a few! If you're looking to gain experience in Business, Marketing, Project Management, or Leadership- look to a Board!

### **Expand Your Professional Network**

The time spent at Board meetings, association events, and in other efforts will introduce you to new peers who support, inspire, and drive your industry. Through a broad network, you will gain new ideas, develop new skills, become aware of important topics in public works, and learn about new technologies that you can in turn share with your own team to improve performance and effectiveness. Board members share a mutual passion as champions, advocates, and supporters for Public Works!

### **Improve Diversity in Thoughts and Perspectives**

Many non-profit Boards have limited representation from the "under 40" crowd or are under-represented in other areas. Fresh ideas, new voices, and alternate viewpoints can help an association stay relevant - and valuable- to a broad audience in fast-changing times.

### **Add Your Voice to Important Issues**

In addition to expanding your access to others' perspectives, participating on Boards and Committees is an opportunity to add your own voice to the dialogue. Lifelong learning is all about give-and-take; collaborating with others will introduce you to their perspectives while also allowing you to share your own. Whether it's on issues impacting transportation, advocacy for public works needs, emerging technologies, or many other topics- spending time with others in your field will undoubtedly expose you to new information and perspectives, but also gives others an opportunity to learn from you! Board members also carry new information forward to their own teams and networks, facilitating ongoing transference of ideas and keeping transportation & public works moving in a forward direction.

### **Gain Confidence**

For me, one of the greatest outcomes from participating on Boards and in subcommittees through my career has been the opportunity to gain confidence and grow my voice. Through working with different personalities, across organizations of varied scope and size, I've been able to not only share my perspective and ideas, but also learn to negotiate, communicate comfortably with people outside my immediate circle, and be confident in my contributions. The knowledge I've gained in these small groups, once a month on Zoom or in a conference room, is carried with me day in and day out, making me a more knowledgeable and effective contributor to my team, UNH T2, and the public works profession.

**IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT JOINING A BOARD OF DIRECTORS, A SUBCOMMITTEE OR WORKGROUP, OR SIMILAR, I'D BE HAPPY TO CHAT WITH YOU ABOUT THE AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES I'M AWARE OF. PLEASE REACH OUT! MARILEE.ENUS@UNH.EDU**