

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Board Members in virtual attendance: Ian Bartelmez, Mike Depies, Andy Ducato, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Jim Freck, Joe Gonyo, Todd Schaller, Pat Smith, Bruce Urben. Excused: Dennis Fleischer and Russ Olson.

Also virtually present: Bruce Ross and Kelcy Boettcher

Agenda:

- **6:34 PM – Meeting Convened**

- **6:35 PM – Financial Report**

Kelcy Boettcher provided a recap of the financial reports previously distributed to BoD members. Highlights included a loss of \$27,000 incoming revenue (\$5,000 better than budgeted); recapped that Waukesha's February Hellcat Class A raffle netted just over \$2,900 (about two times better than expected); Executive Director salary increases IAW last month's BoD approval, noted that grants and state duck stamp money will be forthcoming and will be used to replenish funds being used to pay invoices received/incoming for subcontractor restoration work. BoD members will see drops in the unrestricted income balance as Deferred Chapter Credit Cards are used to pay for firearms used in Chapter Class A raffles. An unbudgeted revenue sources include \$540 Alliant Energy matching gift via Andrea Larsen (Marshland Beaver Dam Chapter) and \$400 memorial donations from Carl Halvorsen's funeral/memorial.

George Ermert asked if the financials reflected drops in any other areas. It was noted that membership funds dropped because of the inability to conduct face-to-face (F2F) events.

Bruce Ross informed the BoD that he applied for the 2021 PPP forgiveness as of March 17, and although he anticipates no problems, he reminded the Board that the approval process is a minimum of 150 days. George Ermert pointed out that the PPP grants provide a false funding cushion that will not be available in future years.

- **6:40PM – Executive Director's Update**

Bruce Ross informed the BoD that a new insurance carrier was secured after our previous carrier decided to no longer cover organizations that deal with firearms (new carrier is Philadelphia insurance). Bruce identified a Habitat Database Designer and Software Engineer (potentially pro bono) to will build the framework to capture "Peter-type projects," but with the capability to expand to include all AWA sites, Partner projects where we are not the lead but actively participated in, and wood duck box projects.

As the Communications Committee Chair, George Ermert asked to be informed about upcoming projects far enough in advance to make FB posts to increase awareness and event volunteer numbers. A lengthy discussion followed regarding Covid-related (State imposed) gathering restrictions, goal attainment vs volunteer management relative to available time and resources needed to complete a task. The ultimate goal remains state-wide AWA growth and publicity. As part of the overall discussion, Bruce Urben asked about how do we get word out to AWA leaders to get feedback and event information to George.

Bruce Ross stated that efforts continue to identify a statewide AWA coordinator. He also informed the BoD that WWA's request for \$50,000 from the state duck stamp program was approved. George asked if that is the amount we requested and how that compares to previous

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years. Bruce responded that we received what we asked for and explained that the amount could be higher if we had more projects in the queue (projects justify requested amounts).

- **7:05 PM – EXPO Update**

Bruce Ross provided an EXPO planning update. In general the EXPO is meeting the planning goals and Bruce is pleased with the progress and load sharing by other EXPO partners and noted strong support by Wisconsin Waterfowl Federation, DNR and UW Stevens Point. The EXPO's pro bono marketing is also going well. Bruce recapped the events as: Main Stage speakers, Smaller classroom venues (science-based discussions, etc.). Outdoor dog demonstrations will include Calling competition, Youth Zone (DU-run), Archery and clay shooting (dependent upon ammo availability).

Todd Schaller is heading the Volunteer Sub-committee. More will be addressed during the April BoD meeting relative to overall EXPO volunteer needs (broken out by Partner areas of responsibility and volunteer numbers), WWA's overall commitment (including Andy Ducato's point about how to get volunteer need/word to Chapters to increase organizational buy-in and visibility), and what the BoD-manned booth participation will target/look like (Membership drive? Class A raffles? Education? Some combination of all of these? etc.).

The EXPO Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) generated a good bit of discussion relative to several EXPO partners' hesitation to sign. George highlighted the fact that an MoU is a legal document and urged a formal review (lawyer). Bruce Ross emphasized the MoU's purpose was to protect WWA from incurring financial losses by seeking agreement: to prohibit deficit spending; establish WWA as the overall coordinator; to treat the EXPO as a not-for-profit event; to maintain EXPO accounting and banking practices separate from WWA's normal accounting and banking procedures; and maintain insurance coverage through a special policy that solely covers the EXPO.

- **7:43 PM – Committee Updates**

Habitat Committee (Jim Freck presented): Annuals goals include: Grow a comprehensive project list, spread the word through partnership with Outdoor News, and a photojournalist on the committee, expand upon common ground with Pheasants Forever and the State Farm Bill biologist, and populate the Habitat Database once available. Another key committee focus is increasing project visibility relative to chapter committees, and local legislative bodies.

Education Committee (Andy Ducato presented): The committee reviewed its mostly-Covid-canceled 2020 agenda to establish 2021 goals. Two primary focal points for 2021 include: Resume "Learn to Hunt" program (awaiting DNR guidance/requirements) and creating a "How to" library to assist chapters and individuals tackle things like wood duck boxes.

Development Committee (Dave Elwing presented): The initial meeting resulted in creating two sub-committees (Funding Sources and Chapter Development). Funding Sources (Chaired by Russ Olson) will focus on securing long-term financial independence through sustained giving options (recurring monthly donations, estate planning/planned giving, mandatory resource distribution, etc.); Means to increase Corporate sponsorships (cash or in-kind-giving); and Philanthropic gifts/grants. The Sub-committee will produce print material explaining these methods, identify distribution methods for them, and develop incentive mechanisms. The Chapter Development Sub-committee discussed means to grow, shore-up and preserve strong performing chapters by creating methods to develop chapter interaction, mechanisms to share lessons learned, and

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create Chapter Assistance contact teams. A suggestion to establish a Zoom-based monthly state-wide chapter chat room brought a great deal of BoD discussion relative how to incentivize participation and how to help chapters realize they need help. Andy Ducato suggested that each chapter should have representation on each state-level committee (increases awareness, of committee relative to statewide or chapter-centric issues and concurrently getting feedback/assistance from peer chapters). Ian brought up a number of points relative to how we can help chapters with low committee numbers. Bruce Urben suggested Andy & Ian get with the Development Committee prior to the April BoD meeting. Development Committee recurring meetings will be the 1st Wednesday of each month from 2:30-4:00 PM.

Policy/Advocacy Committee (George Ermert presented): Committee remains proactive relative to increasing the State Duck Stamp sales cost by \$5.00. WWA sent a formal letter to the Governor; WWA's waterfowl partners sent a similar, consolidated letter one week later. Actions like these are resulting in WWA being recognized as a positive leader in state policy and decision making.

Communications/Membership Committee (George Ermert presented): George reported that WWA's Facebook activity (hits, views, shares, and likes) increased by 1,000 from this time a year ago (2,500 to 3,500). Working with Outdoor News on the Wood Duck Box Challenge brought 17,000 FB shares across multiple states. Committee is working on "swag finalization" (hats, etc.).

- **8:18 PM – Executive Committee Update**

Bruce Urben reported the Executive Committee did not meet in March due to lack of pressing agenda items. The Executive Committee will hold an ad hoc meeting next month if required; the next scheduled Executive Committee meeting is May 17 at 1:00 PM.

- **8:00 PM – President's Recap/Action Items**

Bruce Urben did a recap of tonight's agenda and action items. Action items include:

- 1) Provide AWA project information to Communications Committee (George) to increase public awareness, chapter activity, and volunteerism. (Jim Freck for action)
- 2) EXPO MoU requires an attorney's review prior to WWA's signature (Bruce Ross for action)
- 3) BoD requests a more in-depth EXPO volunteer requirement presentation at April's BoD meeting (Todd Schaller for action)
- 4) Development Chapter will provide updates relative to chapter committee membership growth and incentivization (Ian Bartelmez & Andy Ducato get up with Dave Elwing; Dave Elwing has report for action)
- 5) Committees need to finalize 2021 Action Plans and present them to the BoD (All Committees for action)

- **8:26 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

The next board meeting will be Wednesday April 21st from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm via Zoom.