**Board Members virtually present:** Kevin Banaszak, Ian Bartelmez, Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Todd Schaller, and Bruce Urben

**Also virtually present:** Bruce Ross and Kelcy Boettcher

**Unable to Attend:** Dennis Fleischer, B.J. Grassmann (leave of absence), Joe Gonyo, Russ Olson, and Pat Smith

**Agenda:**

* **6:36 PM – Meeting Convened**
* **6:37 PM – Previous BoD Minutes**

The Board unanimously approved May’s minutes.

* **6:39 PM – Financial Report**

Directors were afforded the opportunity to review the financial report, spreadsheets, and explanatory notes prior to the meeting. Bruce Ross and Kelcy Boettcher incorporated explanatory comments to better differentiate EXPO funds from WWA general funds, as previously directed by the BoD. Bruce Ross reported that WWA remains ahead of budget.

George Ermert asked why the recent golf outings and Valley Shoot were not reflected. Kelcy Boettcher explained they are due to post in the upcoming report. The Valley Shoot and Southeast Wisconsin Outing are expected to come in above budget, but the South Central Wisconsin (Beaver Dam) tournament fell below projections.

George Ermert also asked why the Duck Calling and Duck Carving Contests continue to be reflected as WWA revenue streams as opposed to EXPO funds. Kelcy Boettcher explained that budget lines reflect monies received for online registrations via WWA’s network and did not reflect any EXPO sponsorship monies. Bruce Urben further explained that these remain WWA events that simply occur at the EXPO. Because hosting these events at the EXPO requires renting space for the events, as does event advertising and managing them, he acknowledged a crossover of funding streams exists. (EXPO 22 paid this year’s advertising costs - roughly $750).

Todd Schaller suggested that the Board determines what WWA wants to manage/maintain responsibility for regarding these two events before any further separation of funds. The Board directed Bruce Ross to examine what budget items are rightfully WWA’s and which others need to be accounted for by the EXPO. The Board agreed that no decisions were expected prior to this year’s EXPO, but there is an expectation to resolve the matter prior to EXPO 23.

* **6:50 – Executive Director’s Report**

Bruce Ross presented a verbal Executive Director’s Report.

***Chapter Re-charter Initiative.*** Based upon May’s discussions, the Re-charter Ad Hoc Committee restructured the Tiered Charter Benefits Matrix to address the impacts on fiscally productive chapters which do not also perform education or habitat mission-focused events. The proposed solution is reflected in the bifurcated matrix provided as a read-ahead for the Board meeting. The matrix was accepted with one further modification to reflect Tier 3 chapter eligibility for advance event funding and event administrative support “as approved by the Executive Director” versus no advanced funding and limited administrative support. George Ermert motioned to approve the matrix with the modifications discussed with the condition that the Board revisit the matter in twelve months, June 2023. Kevin Banaszak seconded the motion. Votes in favor of the motion were unanimous.

***WDNR MOU for Public Land Ecologist Update.*** Bruce Ross reported that the first meeting with WDNR’s Eric Lobner and his team occurred last week. Meetings are scheduled for every two weeks; Wednesday 22 June is the next meeting. Eric Lobner expressed a desire to have “an agreement in principle” by August 2022 and to announce the partnership at EXPO 22. Bruce Ross indicated that the EXPO Steering Committee discussed the possibility of using EXPO funds to pay for a portion of the ecologist’s salary because the position furthers wetlands in Wisconsin. Eric Lobner favors the EXPO’s support. Based upon discussions with the WDNR, it appears the ecologist position will be focused on Eastern Wisconsin, with the exception of supervision of the state wild rice program.

George Ermert asked what amount WWA might be required to source if EXPO or other funding did not materialize. Bruce Ross stated $16,500 per year (roughly ¼ of the position’s salary, travel, and other expenses) for a two-year period. Mike Depies asked if the EXPO Steering Committee discussed the possibility of funding a portion of the salary, and Bruce Ross confirmed they had and that the EXPO Steering Committee was strongly supportive of the idea.

***EXPO Update.*** Bruce Ross meets with Bast, Durbin and Don Kirby on 20 June to discuss professionally organizing future EXPOs. Professionally organizing refers to managing advertisements, booth booking, managing EXPO spaces, etc. Doing so will alleviate some of the EXPO’s demands on the Executive Director’s schedule.

Bruce Ross informed the BoD that EXPO 22 is fiscally sound, and that if the EXPO hits projected attendance levels, the Steering Committee expects to net $20-24K. The EXPO already holds $20K from EXPO 21. EXPO 21 anticipated 1,000 attendees and realized roughly 2,700; EXPO 22 is targeting 4,000 attendees.

***2023 WWA Class A Raffle Calendar Update.*** Bruce Ross showed the Board what the final product for 2023’s calendar looks like. It features twelve hand-carved decoys by twelve different carvers. The photographer that staged and took the photos did so pro bono. Bruce Urben informed the Board know that the FMV for the photos was about $7K.

George Ermert asked if a better calendar accountability system existed to mor efficiently track calendar inventory this year. With only two months remaining before calendars start going on sale, George was adamant that a process needed to be developed and instituted. Bruce Ross informed the Board that one had not, but that he will take the matter for action and provide an update to the Board prior to calendars being distributed for sale.

***Centralizing Files.*** WWA does not have a centralized file storage (Google Drive, SharePoint, etc.) for committees and the State Staff to store files. Not having such a capability poses a risk for lost files. No decision was expected; the topic was brought forward as a point of awareness.

***HRP Invoicing.***Bruce Ross and Kelcy Boettcher developed a revised invoice to better capture HRP’s activities. Bruce Ross presented it to the BoD. HRP (Peter Ziegler) is supportive of the new invoice.

***Annual Retreat.***The BoD discussed a face-to-face retreat at Camp Ne-Pee-Nauk (along the north side of Lake Puckaway, between Princeton and Montello) during May’s meeting. The dates are 23/24 September. Potential activities include a pheasant hunt, marsh tour, and wild game dinner on Friday and a potential business agenda to begin mapping 2023 committee plans and goals and focusing the BoD on identifying funding streams beyond banquets, bashes, and Class A raffles.

* **7:45 PM – Committee Updates**

George Ermert pointed out that it was already 7:45 and a number of agenda items remained. After a brief discussion the President chose to forgo committee updates and asked that each committee record distribute meeting summaries/recaps to the full BoD. Going forward, committees shall adopt this procedure and the Board will hear committee updates by exception.

* **7:46 PM – Draft Annual Report**

WWA’s draft annual report is on the Board’s secure webpage. The annual report’s target audiences are potential donors, sponsors, and WWA’s general membership. The report’s stated purpose is to inform the audience what the Board’s and the Association’s annual goals and accomplishments are. The draft report is ten pages; Bruce Ross acknowledges that ten pages is too long and requests Board members’ input to refine the product. All Board Members are asked to review the draft annual report and provide written feedback to Bruce Ross via email NLT 27 June.

* **7:50 PM – Association Bylaws Revision**As directed by the Board in May, the President, the Executive Director, and the Secretary initiated a review of the Association’s Bylaws. The current Bylaws (finalized in 2016) do not accurately reflect the way WWA operates. Copies of the current Bylaws, a working draft with proposed changes highlighted by Microsoft’s “track changes” feature, and a “clean” working draft are posted on the Board’s secure webpage. All Board Members are asked to review the working draft and provide written feedback via email to the Secretary (Dave Elwing), NLT 1 July.
* **7:53 PM – Risk Management Discussion**As the Executive Director, Bruce Ross introduced the concept of periodically reviewing how the Association does business and whether such actions pose any operational risk to the Association. Topics for this evening’s discussion are: 1) Is the Association susceptible to “single point of failure” risks; 2) What are the potential impacts of an inflationary economy upon the Association’s ability to meet 2022 budget goals; and 3) Is there a need, in light of the recent spree of gun violence, to assess the Association’s policies regarding tactical firearms and pistols at events?

***Single Points of Failure.*** Dovetailing off the earlier, albeit brief, discussion about centralized files, do entities within the Association (state-level committees, chapters, and WWA staff) have, or need, to consider continuity of operations in the event that a leader becomes incapacitated, dies, or resigns? How does WWA ensure forward progress? This applies to files and real property.

***Impacts of an Inflationary Economy.***Anticipating patrons with less discretionary funds due to the higher costs of living, what are some potential actions that WWA (state level and chapters) can take to lessen impacts upon our budget, and ultimately, upon WWA’s ability to conduct education and habitat missions? Bruce Urben suggested encouraging Board Members and Chapters review the results of last year’s survey to ensure our events deliver those things that respondents identified as “wants.”

George Ermert urged the Board to raise larger sums of money from other sponsors, grants, and foundations to identify more sustainable funding streams, similar to the recent successes with Vortex. George stated that during the two years he’s been on the Board, there has only been talk and no action on this matter. Bruce Ross agreed with George’s point and stated that WWA needs to deliver something tangible to potential funding sources to make them want to invest in WWA. Basically, we need to provide them the “why” they need to invest in WWA, as well as the “what’s in it for them” answer. Every Board Member “needs to own” this responsibility. Bruce Urben told the Board that this topic will be on the agenda for September’s gathering at Ne-Pee-Nauk.

***Gun Violence, Tactical Firearms, and Pistols.***Is WWA at risk by continuing to offer tactical firearms and pistols at events in light of the increased gun violence seen around the country and people’s perceptions? A frank, open, and at times heated discussion ensued regarding whether or not tactical firearms and pistols should be featured in future fund raisers as have been in the past. Second Amendment rights, preemptive actions without any state or federal mandates or restrictions and membership reactions WWA taking curtailing action, and loss of funding (tactical firearm raffles always sell out & are obviously popular by a segment of WWA members) were all touched upon. As the Executive Director, Bruce Ross received four enquiries as to why WWA, a hunting organization, features so many tactical firearms and pistols. Bruce Urben expressed his opinion that tactical firearms do pose a potential organizational risk and that we should limit them for the immediate future. Ian Bartelmez and George Ermert expressed strong opposition to walking away from tactical firearms and pistols, citing that everything WWA does is legal, falls within Constitutional rights, and that these items make money for WWA. At the end of the discussion, while potential risks may exist, the Board chose not to curtail availability of tactical firearms or pistols at future events.

* **8:24 PM – President’s Recap/Action Items**

Bruce Urben’s recap of the evening’s agenda, action items, and decisions includes:

1. Regarding Financials, we will resolve potential EXPO/WWA conflicts of interest and fiscal transparency after EXPO 22, but prior to EXPO 23.
2. The Board unanimously approved the revised Charter Benefits Matrix and agreed to revisit it in June 2023. With that approval, the Executive Director, the Regional Director, and the Secretary will begin contacting chapters and informing them of the Association’s chartering changes.
3. Bruce Ross will develop a process to track WWA Class A Raffle Calendar distribution by 1 August.
4. All Board Members are to review and provide written feedback regarding the Annual Report to Bruce Ross NLT 27 June. The draft Annual Report is on the Board’s secure webpage.
5. All Board Members are to review and provide written feedback regarding the working draft Bylaws to Dave Elwing NLT 1 July. The draft Bylaws are on the Board’s secure webpage.
6. Effective immediately, all committees are to provide written summaries/recaps of each committee meeting to all Board Members. Doing so eliminates the need to use BoD time to discuss routine meeting actions. Committee actions requiring BoD decision or guidance will be discussed during BoD meetings, by exception.

* **8:35 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

**Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting via Zoom at 6:30-8:30 PM on July 20th.**