

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – Wednesday July 28, 2022

Board Members virtually present: Kevin Banaszak, Ian Bartelmez, Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, B.J. Grassmann, Russ Olson, Todd Schaller, Pat Smith, and Bruce Urben

Also virtually present: Bruce Ross and Kelcy Boettcher

Unable to Attend: Dennis Fleischer and Joe Gonyo

Agenda:

- **6:33 PM – Meeting Convened**
- **6:33 PM – New Agenda Items**

President called for any new agenda items. George Ermert identified a request to be considered relating to the Association Bylaws. Bruce Ross stated that an Internal Grant Request from the Waukesha Chapter was inadvertently left off the agenda, and requested the BoD consider it while addressing the Ozaukee/Midland Wings request.

- **6:35 PM – Previous BoD Minutes**

The Board unanimously approved June's minutes.

- **6:39 PM – Financial Report**

As usual, Directors were afforded the opportunity to review the financial report, spreadsheets, and explanatory notes prior to the meeting. No questions regarding the financial report were asked; the BoD accepted June's financial report without modification.

Based upon slow ticket sales, George Ermert suggested the BoD rethink conducting a UTV Raffle in 2023. George Ermert asked for a return of investment (ROE) comparison between WWA Calendars and the UTV raffle (i.e., which yields the greatest return). Kelcy Boettcher reported that to date the 2022 UTV raffle is \$4,689 in the red, but that roughly \$2,680 in sales is forthcoming resulting in roughly \$2,000 in the red with only a month remaining before the raffle gets drawn (one month to break even, not including gas and time to tow the UTV between events) and realize no fiscal gain. The 2021 UTV raffle net revenue was roughly \$6,000. In contrast, if all WWA calendars sell, the Association stands to gross up to \$100,000. Calendar costs are roughly \$45,000, yielding a net revenue of up to \$55,000. Bruce Urben added that this is a recurring consideration and asked that it be included as an agenda item during the Board's first 2023 meeting.

Kevin Banaszak asked where Staff salaries were reflected in the financial reports and Kelcy Boettcher explained that wages are reflected on the WWA Income Statements P&L spreadsheet, spread across three categories of Administration, Fundraising and Program services as is typical for non-profit expense reporting. Ross noted that he submits a regular time sheet to Bruce Urben for review that shows how hours are spent.

Ian Bartelmez asked if the salaries could be rolled up for easier visibility by WWA's membership. Kelcy Boettcher explained that salaries are rolled up in the fiscal compilation visible to the Board. Ian Bartelmez stated that he has concerns regarding general memberships' ability to view overhead/salary costs. Russ Olson further clarified that a Non-Profit's Tax Form 990 shows all staff compensation and that 990s are available to non-profits. Further, that the 990 is more than adequate to show the WWA staff's annual compensation. George Ermert concurred with Russ Olson's statement and stated that as a lobbyist, he accesses 990s frequently. Bruce Ross accepted all comments and stated that perhaps the 2022 Annual Report could more clearly address that matter of staff compensation; while page 10 of the 2021 Annual Report reflects salaries as a rolled up expenses as discussed above.

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- **7:08 – Executive Director’s Report**

Bruce Ross presented a verbal Executive Director’s Report.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Contract Administration. Similar to the work WWA supports the USFWS through, Bruce Ross submitted a proposal for WWA to perform contract administration as a means to diversify WWA’s funding streams. The NRCS’s selection of another party made this a specific opportunity a moot point but identifying and applying for similar future opportunities can provide alternative funding streams.

WDNR MOU for Public Land Ecologist Update. Bruce Ross reported that the WDNR might be willing to reduce WWA’s 25% funding requirement for the position’s salary and incidentals in that the WDNR is more interested in getting the position manned and functioning. The 1 August meeting will look at workflow, number of acres capable of being managed, etc. Bruce reiterated that the WDNR still planned to announce the position at the end of August, probably at the Waterfowl EXPO. WDNR’s legal review is likely to take 2-3 months. Consequently, WWA may be looking at mid-November before hiring may occur. Peter Ziegler already stated that he can cover some of the workload while candidates are identified.

Waterfowl EXPO Update. Bruce The EXPO Steering Committee agreed to support \$8-9,000 of the WDNR Ecologist position’s salary and incidentals, if the Waterfowl EXPO hits planned budget. WWA’s share of the position’s salary could be as low as \$8,000-\$10,000 (per year).

- **7:19 PM – Association Bylaw Review Update**

Dave Elwing consolidated comments from the past month’s Bylaw review. Mike Depies recommended a slight adjustment to the verbiage that addresses the Annual Meeting (Article IV, Section 1) to require the meeting be conducted during the 1st Quarter of the new FY/CY, and that the purpose of the meeting be expanded to include “reviewing the state of the Association (including fiscal reports).” Based upon general agreement with that language George Ermert motioned (B.J. Grassmann seconded) that the Association Bylaws be adopted as modified. The Board unanimously adopted the Bylaw revisions. The Bylaws will be posted on the WWA webpage

- **7:46 PM – Wood Duck Box Program**

B.J. Grassmann reported that the Habitat Committee will develop plans to secure \$3-4K for this year’s wood duck box program. The committee is looking for 20+ donors or one to several large donors to source the funds needed. B.J. asked each Board member to identify at least two potential donors for the committee to reach out to. Dave Elwing notified the BoD that while Drexel Building Supply was more than happy to help fund a local project like the Jackson Marsh handicap blind project, they are not interested in being the statewide wood duck box sponsor, but that Dave is also pursuing a private donor for the same reason. Ian Bartelmez asked for clarification as to whether the Habitat Committee is looking for lumber, and if it is lumber, do we have a dry location to store it. B.J. confirmed that we have the storage facilities, and that they’ve spoken to sawyers with limited success. Ian Bartelmez suggested contacting Menards. Bruce Urben stated that his sawyer would donate ½ of the wood we need as long as WWA purchases the other half from him. Ian asked if the sawyer would enter a contract with WWA to provide 100,000 board feet. Bruce Urben said that he would check with the sawyer. George Ermert suggested that the Habitat Committee tie up loose ends before progressing much further with the sponsor marketing effort, so the Association knows what it is looking for (single/limited number of large donors vs. many small donors, cash of vs. lumber donations, etc.). To that end,

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a planning meeting between the Executive Director, Habitat Committee, Marketing Committee, and the Development Committee will occur in the near future.

- **7:37 PM – Pittman-Robertson Policy Effort**

George Ermert informed the BoD that the Policy Committee prepared a letter to each legislator that co-signed HR 8167 to revoke Pittman-Robertson. Glenn Grothman and Tom Tiffany co-signed, but Representative Grothman already announced that he will pull his signature from HR 8167. The Policy Committee drafted letters to all legislators that opposed HR8167 and thanked them for their decision to vote against it. B.J. Grassmann motioned (Ian Bartelmez seconded) that the Board approve the letters as written by the Policy Committee. The Board unanimously passed the motion.

- **7:46 Annual Report**

Bruce Ross thanked the Board members for their review and comments relating to the 2021 Annual Report. George Ermert acknowledged the effort and quality put into the 2021 report, but suggested the Association consider having a professional graphic artist help on the 2022 Annual Report to make it stand out even more. Dave Elwing motioned (B.J. Grassmann seconded) that the 2021 Annual Report be accepted as written and presented to the Board. The Board unanimously agreed to accept the 2021 Annual Report as written and presented.

- **7:50 PM – Internal Grants**

Bruce Ross asked the Board to consider two internal grant applications: 1) Cedar Creek/Midland Wings request for \$2,000 for a handicap accessible, multi-use blind and boardwalk at the Jackson Marsh, and 2) Waukesha Chapter's request for \$1,000 to erect a split rail cedar fence at the Paradise Valley Wildlife Area to control parking.

Kevin Banaszak and Ian Bartelmez questioned if the BoD needed to vote on the requests if they were supported by the Habitat Committee. Bruce Ross confirmed that, by the procedures the Board agreed upon when instituting the internal grant initiative, all projects required BoD approval.

- 1) *Cedar Creek/Midland Wings Internal Grant.* The chapters worked with WDNR to identify a suitable location and conducted initial site preparation. Based upon the WDNR -approved design, lumber costs are projected to be \$4813.40. Materials such as hardware screen, hinges, and brushing materials are not included in that price. Drexel Building Supply will donate \$2,500 and Adaptive Sportsmen will donate \$2,000. Any excess funds will be returned to the WWA treasury. Maintenance will be accomplished as part of Cedar Creek Chapter's AWA agreement, B.J. Grassmann motioned (Pat Smith seconded) that the Cedar Creek/Midland Wings internal grant and handicap blind request be supported. Ian Bartelmez asked for clarification if the Board was approving the project or the funding. Pat Smith stated that approving the funding equated to approving the project. The motion passed with eight votes in favor and one abstention (Ian Bartelmez abstained).
- 2) *Waukesha Chapter's Internal Grant.* Waukesha Chapter requests \$1,000.00 to erect split rail fencing around the parking area at the Paradise Valley Wildlife Area. Total costs are forecasted as \$1,023.00. Mike Alaimo was unable to attend the BoD due to the death of his mother. The Board asked questions regarding maintenance responsibilities for the fencing. Kevin Banaszak concurred that a boundary around the parking area was needed, especially when the area is being heavily used; in the past vehicles parked in non-designated areas resulting in property damage. Based upon ongoing experience working for the Kettle Moraine Northern Unit, Dave Elwing expressed surprise that the WDNR would not be using

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boulders instead of split rails due to need to frequently, especially if boulders area readily available. George Ermert stated that if one needs to purchase boulders, rather than relocated them from on site, the boulders are likely to be significantly more expensive. Bruce Urben confirmed that based upon his years with WDNR, he too was of the opinion that boulders would be a better choice. The Board wants to support this project, especially in light of Mike Alaimo's contributions. Ian Bartelmez motioned (Dave Elwing seconded) that the Board wait until Mike Alaimo can be contacted to provide the information needed to make an informed decision. The Board voted unanimously in favor of waiting.

- 3) *Support of School Shooting Programs.* Bruce Ross brought this matter before the board in light of the recent \$2,000 donation b the West Allis Chapter to the New Berlin High School Shooting Team. Support for external organizations is allowed under the internal grant program. The West Allis Chapter made similar donations during previous years, as have Rhinelander and West Allis. These donations were done prior to the BoD adopting the Internal Grant Program. The recent Waukesha was initiated prior to the Internal Grant Program being finalized and adopted by the Board. The purpose of raising the discussion with the Board was to discuss how future external donations can be done and still be in accordance with the Internal Grant Program as adopted. Bruce Ross noted that the West Allis Class A effort to support the donation was underway when the internal grant program was in discussion by the Board, and that singular effort could be considered grandfathered. The Internal Grant Program allows for raffles or direct donations that support high school teams, but the request is intended come through the Education Committee and said donation can only be presented to the team after the fiscal/calendar year and WWA is determined to be fiscally solvent enough to accommodate the grant.

Bruce Ross offered that such support requires controls as allowed by the Internal Grant Program and that the Association cannot support an external organization before itself. It would be permissible under the policy for any super goal chapter to request up to \$500 to use as a donation or to purchase a firearm for a Class A (which may yield more than a \$500 donation for the chapter/shooting program, as shown in the West Allis example).

Ian Bartelmez stated the Class A raffle that West Allis conducted and that resulted in the \$2,000 donation fit within the parameters of WWA's Class A license, to which Bruce Ross responded, "It depends upon how the team uses the money." Ian Bartelmez became agitated and then asserted that he felt that whenever the West Allis Chapter (he) did anything, the Board was against him. Ian Bartelmez threatened to resign from WWA and, in return, WWA would lose two of its best producing events (the Waukesha Bash and the State Shoot) because he would no longer run them.

George Ermert concurred with Ian Bartelmez and stated that he sees no problem with continuing the donation, which in this instance, can be attributed to the chapter attaining Super Goal status in 2021.

Bruce Ross reiterated that what has changed is that the Board enacted the Internal Grant policy. The donation may indeed be within the spirit of the Internal Grant Program, but to maintain consistency with the Internal Grant Program - a program voted on by this Board- future donations need to come through the Education Board and then to the BoD before funds can be handed over to an external organization. Pat Smith asserted that he did not see this discussion as being personally directed at Ian Bartelmez or the West Allis chapter and that Ian should not take it that way nor make personal remarks against others on the board. Pat Smith also stated that when he was doing chapter-level work, his chapter made

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donations to the VFW and used raffles to generate the funds. Pat further stated that in his opinion WWA does not need another level of scrutiny to approve such a donation, especially not if the cost of the gun is covered and WWA is not losing money.

Bruce Ross reiterated that “West Allis does great stuff” and assured Ian Bartelmez that this discussion was not intended as an attack on him. He stated that many issues were raised, but it comes down to whether the (internal grant) policy applies or not?

Bruce Urben asked if any other BoD members had comments. No new comments were raised. Mike Depies stated that “all chapters have to be consistent, and the Internal Grant Policy opens an avenue to support shooting programs while providing transparency.”

George Ermert asked if a vote was needed. George Ermert suggested that given the drop off of directors over the call, that the question of requiring chapters to go through the internal grant process, if called, would not pass.

Ian Bartelmez motioned that “any donation, which falls within the purview of Class A requirements, and which meets WWA goals, and is within the parameters of the Bylaws should no longer be subject to the Internal Grant Program.” Ian Bartelmez was asked to repeat the motion three times for the Secretary to capture the full motion, as each time, Ian restated it, he changed the verbiage. Pat Smith stated that he would second the motion if it was clearer as to why this did not fall under the Internal Grant Program. The discussion continued, but without achieving clarity. Pat Smith rescinded his second and Ian Bartelmez rescinded the motion.

Bruce Urben asked if the discussion should be brought back to the next Board Meeting or if a small group should meet and discuss the matter prior to coming before another Board Meeting. George Ermert stated that he believed that a small group discussion would be a better (and more productive) route. Bruce Urben accepted the suggestion and tabled the matter for the time being in light of the fact that no clear resolution seemed forthcoming, and a number of the Board Members dropped off the call.

- **9:02 PM – New Business - Increasing the Number of Executive Committee Members as Allowed by the Bylaws**

At the beginning of the Board meeting, George Ermert identified a request to be considered relating to the Association Bylaws. In reviewing the Bylaws, George Ermert realized that up to two Board Members who were not already WWA Officers (Executive Director, President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) or the Past-president could be added to the Executive Committee. George Ermert went on to state that he believed a broader perspective could be gained by having additional membership. Dave Elwing asked who was interested in becoming an Executive Committee member; only George Ermert expressed interest in filling such a commitment. George Ermert motioned (Kevin Banaszak seconded) that an additional Director be brought to the Executive Committee as allowed by the Bylaws. The motion was unanimously accepted. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for 19 September. (Postscript: An ad hoc Executive Committee met on 8 August and unanimously voted to bring George Ermert onto the Executive Committee; the length of his term of office remains TBD.)

- **9:12 PM – President’s Recap/Action Items**

In light of the late hour, Bruce Urben did not recap of the evening’s agenda, action items, and decisions.

- **9:13 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

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Due to a hectic August schedule, the next BoD meeting will be a conducted at Ne-Pee-Nauk Hunt Club on 23 & 24 September (details to follow via separate correspondence)