

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Zoom Meeting – Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Board Members virtually present: Kevin Banaszak, Ian Bartelmez, George Ermert, Joe Gonyo, B.J. Grassmann, Todd Schaller, Pat Smith, and Bruce Urben

Also virtually present: Kelcy Boettcher and Bruce Ross

Agenda:

- **6:35 PM – Meeting Convened**
- **6:36 PM – Review/Approve July Board Meeting Minutes**

B.J. Grassmann motioned to accept the July minutes as provided. Kevin Banaszak seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- **6:38 PM – Review September Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Bruce Ross explained that the minutes do not need to be approved and opened up to questions. Todd Schaller reminded the board that George Ermert is now a member of the executive committee.
- **6:39 PM – Financials**

Bruce Ross gave a brief overview of the September financials, of note we are in the black and \$31,000 ahead of budget as of month end. Some of that is EXPO money but if events close out as expected/budgeted we should finish the year well into the black. Bruce Urben expressed his hope that any board members that sit on committees for events that have not yet reconciled out their events will please help their chapter complete their paperwork. Bruce Ross informed the board that to comply with standards they should be looking at the Executive Director's compensation on an annual basis to determine if it is appropriate—i.e., not overcompensated. Bruce provided the board with comparative salaries which are, at the low end, twice the rate Bruce is compensated and he would ask that the board confirm his salary is appropriate. For reference: FROM SCHED O: "FORM 9 90, PART VI, SECTION B, LINE 15A: THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMPENSATION IS DETERMINED USING COMPARABILITY DATA AND THERE IS CONTEMPORANEOUS SUBSTANTIATION OF THE DELIBERATION AND DECISION. THIS PROCESS WAS LAST UPDATED IN 2021." PROPOSED RESOLUTION: "The WWA Board of Directors considered the compensation of the Executive Director in comparison to other similar positions and deems it appropriate." Todd Schaller motioned to accept the proposed resolution as presented. B.J. Grassmann seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- **6:42 PM – ED Update**

Bruce Ross reminded the board that in June the board approved WWA to apply for a grant to provide contract administration services for NRCS. The proposal was submitted, considered and deemed competitive, but WWA did not receive the award, it went to Ducks Unlimited. We have closed the loop with old chapters that have gone stale. Prairie du Chien is the only chapter in that category that chose to renew their charter with WWA at the lowest category and have been informed they cannot hang in that category for more than 2-3 years; the chapter does not wish to focus on fundraising events but instead their chapter's youth hunt. They have contributed their \$1000 this year and are in compliance with their charter. The next step is to get out to the currently active chapters an updated charter to sign and he expects to complete that by year end. He will also send a letter out to those whose charters will not be renewed. Bruce Ross gave an update on the wood duck box stock that had been depleted. We now have 1500 board feet of lumber at Blackwell school that produces the boxes and kits for us, in a few weeks we'll have 2500 which is enough to make 250 wood duck boxes or kits. WWA solicited for a sponsorship and found a sponsor that contributed \$5000 to WWA via the Natural Resources

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Foundation of Wisconsin through The Wisconsin Bird Fund - A Legacy Fund of the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus. This will pay for about 5000 board feet of lumber which is about 500 wood duck boxes and if we sell enough boxes we should be able to sustain the program moving forward via this donation. We hope to have 30 kits/boxes available online by the holiday shopping season and survey the chapters for their needs. Bruce Ross, Russ Olson and Kelcy met with the Planned Giving in a Box rep and a Planned Giving postcard and a year-end giving letter will be going out in November to the “top 200”, a list of consistent donors within WWA. To date we have not received any bequests that we know of and have been told that the average gift is close to \$70,000. George Ermert noted that to be truly effective, personal conversations with these individuals is ideal. EXPO closeout year 2 and startup year 3: the committee has met a handful of times, there were 3800 attendees, not quite hitting the 4000 goal and not all were “full pay” customers so while we did better than the previous year by 10% but we did not hit our target attendance or our financial goal. That said, we have \$35,000 sitting in the bank with no liabilities and the steering committee intends to continue with a 1-day event on the same Saturday in August, a letter has been sent to the city of Oshkosh and Winnebago county to hold the date. The committee is working through their plan to fund a minimum of \$6000 towards funding WWA’s private lands ecologist position out of EXPO proceeds. The steering committee is also discussing the funding of a scholarship.

- **7:20 PM – Private Lands Ecologist**

Bruce Ross provided the following for historical reference: The nature of the PL Ecologist agreement with the DNR has morphed from a Cooperative Agreement between partners to a contractual relationship between the DNR and its subcontractor (WWA). The DNR indicates that to make this a sole source contract which is exempt from competition, WWA needs to bring some contribution to the contract. In addition to technical expertise and similar to the original cooperative agreement approach, this “contribution” is expected to take a financial form. While it is not hard-and-fast, there is an expectation that WWA will contribute close to ¼ of the costs associated with the position. These costs can include payment of salary, travel and administrative costs, administrative overhead, management time and insurance. In addition, the EXPO Steering committee will authorize between \$6-8000. Cumulatively, WWA’s direct financial contribution plus the EXPO contribution of \$16-18,000, coupled with the DNR’s payments, will support an ecologist position that costs us between \$64,000 and \$72,000. WWA will finish the 2022 year ahead of budget (in the black) by over \$30K if all remaining events achieve their budgeted targets. It has a generous \$100K operating capital apportionment on our balance sheet, and a reserve of \$70,000. The WWA board will have final approval of the contract, but this authorization will allow the ED to proceed and negotiate in good faith with the DNR. PROPOSED RESOLUTION: “The WWA Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to proceed with negotiations with the DNR to establish a public lands ecologist position in which WWA would contribute up to \$10,000 cash per year for salary and expenses, plus an expectation \$6-8,000 per year from EXPO funds. The term of this commitment is not to exceed three years.” Todd Schaller motioned to accept the proposal as written for up to \$10,000 per year for salary and expenses for the wetland ecologist position. B.J. Grassmann seconded. Bruce Ross reminded the board that they will still need to approve the final contract. Motion approved unanimously.

- **7:49 PM – Committee Reports**

Policy/Advocacy Committee George Ermert reported that a Hook & bullet policy summit took place at the end of September with about a dozen groups to discuss what they’d like to focus on

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in the next legislative session. The group will put out a survey of all lawmakers in the capital to get their backgrounds on hunting, fishing, trapping, etc.

Education Committee Todd Schaller reported that the committee did not meet in October. We've had one LTH [ed note: plus a youth hunt] and will have another coming up next week in SE WI. Bruce Ross added that we accepted the R3 Grant and a document is posted on the secure page that explains where we are going with that grant and he asked that all board members read that. \$75,000 will be expended and the grant is \$60,000, but no cash outlay is expected from WWA.

Development Committee Bruce Ross reported that the committee has not met recently but will be focusing on how we diversify our revenue in 2023.

Habitat Committee B.J. Grassmann reported that he had nothing further to add.

Marketing/Communications Committee George Ermert had no further comments on his report submitted earlier this week. Bruce Ross noted that we were on the front page of *Wisconsin Outdoor News* due to a press release George put out.

- **7:57 PM – Internal Grant Program**

Waukesha Chapter Update and decision - Waukesha Chapter met 2021 Super Goal and applied for internal grant of \$1000 to fund fences for a Paradise Valley parking lot. This was considered by the board in June, and tabled to gather more information on the use of boulders. The ED spoke with the chapter chair, who said boulders were considered and too expensive, discussed with the DNR's property manager and split rail fencing was agreed upon. Given the delayed approval, it is unlikely to be completed this year. Ian explained that boulders could have been purchased but the expense of leasing equipment to place the boulders was too high. Proposed resolution: "The Waukesha Chapter is authorized an internal grant of \$1000 as requested and for the use described in their application and has until June 2023 to expend this grant." Ian Bartelmez motioned to approve the application. B.J. Grassmann seconded. Motion passed.

- **8:01 PM – 2023 Planning**

Bruce Urben asked that the board begin thinking of what they would like the organization to accomplish as well as their committee's priorities and to bring that information to the November board meeting. He asked that all committees meet and all members attend these meetings. This will help to establish the 2023 budget. George Ermert added that concrete goals will help us measure our success better. Todd Schaller asked about the 2022 budget item of the website, which was removed from the 2022 budget prior to its approval. George said the website will be a part of the marketing committee's discussion at their meeting next week. Ian suggested that directors reach out to their local chapters to determine their plans and what they would like to see WWA accomplish and Bruce Ross said he would be happy to draft a communication to the chapters to start this process. Todd suggested we ask what they'd like WWA to do for them but also what they'd like to see WWA do on a broad scale.

- **8:18 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting via Zoom at 6:30-8:30 PM on November 16th.