**Board Members virtually present:** Kevin Banaszak, Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Dennis Fleischer, Jim Freck, Shawn Gibbons, Joe Gonyo, Russ Olson, Todd Schaller, Pat Smith, and Bruce Urben

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

**Unable to Attend:** Ian Bartelmez, B.J. Grassmann, and Kim Shady,

**Agenda:**

* **6:35 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
* **6:36 – Introduction of the FTE & PTE Public Lands Ecologists (President Urben)**

Bruce Urben introduced WWA’s newest employees, Anthony Hatcher (FTE) and Mark Pfost (PTE).

* **6:48 PM – PLE Update (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross, Peter Ziegler, Anthony Hatcher and Mark Pfost (WWA) met with Jason Fleener (WDNR) o/a 3 March to discuss PL projects, discuss/identify process management procedures, and for the PLEs to begin looking into potential projects.

Bruce Ross informed the Board that Peter Ziegler and he submitted a request for $75,000 of duck stamp funds for private land improvements and another $150,000 for public lands; only $50,000 of the $75,000 was approved for private, but the full $150,000 for PLE effort was approved. He anticipates $150-200,000 more in NAWCA funds. Additionally, WWA was just awarded a $50,000 NAWCA grant in partnership with Pheasants Forever. ED Ross recently applied for $21,000 from the James E. Dutton Foundation, and another $30,000 from the Funds for Lake Michigan to offset Mark Pfost’s 3-year cost to WWA. Lastly, he reported that WWA will receive about $210,000 (pass-through funds) from services WWA provides the USFWS. He plans to reach out to the America the Beautiful Challenge Grants and the Natural Resources Conservation Services for additional funding by tying NRCS into “The Pines Project.”

* **6:48 PM – February Board of Directors (BoD) Minutes (Secretary Elwing)**

Todd Schaller motioned (Dave Elwing seconded) that February’s Board Minutes be accepted as published. The Board unanimously approved January’s minutes.

* **6:36 PM – February Financials (Executive Director Ross & Director of Administration Boettcher)**

As per SOP, Kelcy Boettcher distributed and posted January’s financial spreadsheets, accompanied by an explanatory Word doc summary. Directors asked no questions and accepted the February financial statement as delivered. Based upon previous requests, Kelcy Boettcher provided the following information: WWA receives $620 per month from (12) Sustaining Sponsors (6 of whom are Board members) She also reported that 87 wood duck boxes were sold.

Bruce Urben requested that all Board Members become Sustaining Sponsors.

* **7:01 PM – Executive Director’s Report (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross published and provided the March ED Report to all Board Members prior to the meeting to expedite the discussion.

***Wood Duck Box Update.*** McNaughton Correctional Facility already made & assembled 150 wood duck boxes for WWA. Additionally, ED Ross reported that WWA received a gift of $1,000 for mallard nesting tubes.

***Pines Riverside Farms Project Video.*** Bruce Ross met with United Country Real Estate Group to initiate storyboarding the video that United Country wants to make (ICW WWA). No funds have exchanged hands, or are expected to..

* **7:06 PM – Chapter Grant Requests (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross announced that the Board received two internal grant requests for decisioning. The first is from the West Allis Chapter to provide $1,000 to the New Berlin High School Trap Team ($500 for targets and shells and $500 for birds and range fees). Dave Elwing motioned (Todd Schaller seconded) approval of the request. The Board voted unanimously to support the request.

The second request came from the Baraboo River Chapter, also for $1,000. This request was to assist the WDNR with cattail abatement on Mud Lake. Bruce Ross informed the Board that Mud Lake’s cattail abatement application to the Waterfowl Stamp fund did not make the WDNR funding cut line. While the effort is currently unfunded, funding through other sources is being pursued. Dave Elwing motioned (Kevin Banaszak seconded) that Baraboo River Chapter receive the requested $1,000 for cattail abatement contingent upon WDNR identifying funding within WWA’s current budget year. The Board voted unanimously to support the request.

* **7:17 PM – Office of Charitable Gaming’s (OCG) Challenge to WWA’s Online Raffle Ticket Sales (Executive Director Ross)**

The Office of Charitable Gaming contacted Kelcy Boettcher last week and inquired why WWA never responded to their email of over a year ago asking for specifics about WWA’s calendar raffle. WWA never received the email in question. IN the course of following up on that email they determined that our online sale of raffle tickets to supplement traditional face-to-face sales must end. The Department of Administration directed WWA to cease all online raffle sales, however after ED Ross contacted DOA for clarification and to explain WWA’s proactive compliance with all known requirements, DOA and the Office of Charitable Gaming rescinded the order until a meeting between all parties (lawyers included) could be held. Bruce Ross, and WWA’s lawyers met with DOA & OCG on March 13th. Based on WWA’s preparedness OCG and DOA agreed to temporarily allow WWA to continue ongoing sales until they could review the practice. Kelcy Boettcher reported to the Board that we have temporarily halted new Class A raffles marketing online until this could be sorted out. A significant amount of discussion followed which resulted in the Board agreeing that should we not fight the action, WWA will suffer a significantly measure annual income loss (~$60,000 annually).

George Ermert explained that since WWA wishes to challenge DOA’s and OGC’s stance that WWA is in violation, we have two options regarding “how:” we fight this matter: 1) Make it a legal battle in the courts, or 2) take the matter before the state legislature. Further, WWA should seek allies (other entities affected in a similar manner) to form a loose coalition for better leverage.

Ultimately, the Board resigned itself to needing to wait until DOA & OGC provided a written response to our points/counterpoints.

* **8:01 PM – Annual Virtual Meeting – 23 March via Zoom (Executive Director Ross)**To date roughly 25 people responded to the emails and social media posts about virtually attending the 2023 Virtual Annual Meeting. Bruce Ross laid out the rough scheme of events: 2022 Recap by Bruce Ross, Habitat presentation by Peter Ziegler (15 minutes), Outstanding service recognitions (10 Minutes), Preview of 2023 “coming attractions” by Bruce Ross (10 minutes), and 10-15 minutes for open discussion.
* **8:05 – Director’s Annual Paperwork (Secretary Elwing)**

Directors are requested to annually complete a Conflict of Interest statement, a Code of Ethics statement, and to acknowledge WWA’s policy on receiving gifts. As of this meeting three Directors had outstanding paperwork to complete and return to the Director of Administration (Kelcy Boettcher). George Ermert asked why, if we sign the first two pages of the Conflict of Interest statement, are Directors required to complete the follow-on pages if we already agreed (in the previous pages that we will notify the Association if any conflicts arise in the future. WWA’s Better Business Bureau certification may be negatively impacted by WWA’s failing to secure all Director responses. Bruce Ross agreed to review the Code of Ethics statements for duplication and to simplify it, as well as to research BBB specific requirements to determine what assurances WWA really needs to provide to maintain our BBB accreditation. President Urben asked Bruce Ross to attempt to streamline the procedures while ensuring WWA maintains transparency.

* **8:14 PM – Committee Report (President Urben)**

Committee Reports were addressed by exception because Board members all receive written Committee reports prior to this Board meeting.

Development Committee (Russ Olson): Russ noted that in addition to the submitted report, the Development Committee was able to report that WWA received its first Qualified Distribution of $750 through the Planned Giving in a Box initiative started in 2021.

* **8:20 PM – President’s Recap/Action Items (President Urben)**

President Bruce Urben recap of the Board’s agenda, action items, and decisions included:

1. The Board met the PLEs.
2. The Board approved February’s Minutes.
3. The Board reviewed and accepted February’s Financial Report and President Urben encouraged all Board members to become Supporting Sponsors.
4. The Board approved two internal grants (West Allis & Baraboo); Baraboo River’s grant is contingent upon WDNR allocating funding for cattail abatement of Mud Lake during WWA’s current year budget.
5. The Board discussed the impact of losing online raffle ticket sales, and agreed to challenge any rulings that may be received in the future.
6. The Board received an overview and invitation to virtually attend the 2023 Annual Meeting on 23 March.
7. Board members are to complete their annual acknowledgement of WWA’s policy on giving/receiving gifts, Code of Ethics statements, and Conflict of Interest statements. Bruce Ross will engage BBB to see if the Conflict of Interest statement needs to be as lengthy i=as it currently is.
* **8:28 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

**Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting at 6:30PM on April 19th.**