**Board Members virtually present:** Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Jim Freck, Joe Gonyo, B.J. Grassmann, Russ Olson, and Bruce Urben

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

**Unable to Attend:** Kevin Banaszak, Ian Bartelmez, Dennis Fleischer, Shawn Gibbons, Todd Schaller, Kim Shady, and Pat Smith

**Agenda:**

* **6:33 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
* **6:34 PM – June Board of Directors (BoD) Minutes (Secretary Elwing)**

Dave Elwing motioned (B.J. Grassmann seconded) that June’s Board Minutes be accepted as published. The Board unanimously approved June’s Board meeting minutes.

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

Kelcy Boettcher distributed and posted June’s financial spreadsheets and explanatory Word.doc summary. The Association remains slightly ahead of budget despite the loss of online Class A sales. Early event reconciliations are helping the budget stay at/ahead of forecasts. Finances are not as robust as YTD numbers from last year due to the loss of online Class A Raffle sales and inconsistent financial results from events, which are certainly behind last year’s pace. Bruce Ross noted that the budget is being assisted by the grants recently received to fund PLE positions/work.

Bruce Urben asked if there were any increases to sustaining membership intake. Kelcy Boettcher responded that there have not been any recent changes. Directors asked no questions and accepted the April financial statement as delivered. Dave Elwing volunteered to write another newsletter article requesting more annual members upgrade to being sustaining members and noted that we can push sustaining memberships at the EXPO.

George Ermert asked that the Board consider adding “real depth” to the Association’s funding planning, either through a focus committee or by dedicating full-time support as he feels the grants identified and received are short-term band aids rather that recurring revenue streams.

George Ermert also inquired as to the estimated revenue loss caused by not being allowed to conduct online Class A raffle sales and the subsequent lower number of Class A raffles being conducted. Bruce Ross responded that estimated losses are $25,000 annually. Bruce Ross further noted that the loss of online Class A raffle sales killed the state-wide 4-gun raffle planned as a replacement for the annual UTV raffle.

* **6:43 PM – IRS Form 990 Tax Submission Review (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross presented the IRS Form 990 to the Board for review and approval. The Board approved the draft and President Urben will sign the form for submission by Kelcy Boettcher.

* **6:39 PM – Executive Director’s Report (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross published and provided an ED Report to Board Members via the BoD Directory of the WWA website prior to the meeting. Highlights included WWA’s recognition via “The Fowl Life” podcast promoting WWA and the 2023 Waterfowl Hunter’s EXPO; Public Lands Ecologist YTD efforts; receipt of Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) contract to survey CRP and WREP easements, which will enable hiring a 4th PLE; and an overview of WWA’s involvement in managing harvesting efforts for the WDNR’s Wild Rice Program. PLE Anthony Hatcher is seeking volunteers to harvest rice. Russ Olson asked if WWA could purchase wild rice from Kester’s Wild Game Food Nurseries in Omro or another vendor to supplement the WDNR wild rice program’s needs. Although not a preferred solution because the southern variety of rice Kester’s sells is not as hardy as northern wild rice, WDNR tapped Kester’s last season and is expected to do the same this year if harvest levels are low.

* **6:56 PM – Office of Charitable Gaming’s (OCG) Challenge to WWA’s Online Raffle Ticket Sales Process (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross provided an update to the Board which included the good news that DoG will allow an Administrative Law Judge Review of the Association’s case. The ALJ review is the best chance for a positive outcome short of DoG ruling in our favor. An ALJ review is anticipated to take at least three months but should require limited additional discovery hours by Godfrey & Kahn (G&K) as the State’s Attorney stated that he expects the ALJ will be limited a stipulation of facts review where the ALJ reviews differences between the State’s & WWA’s positions.

Bruce Ross noted that almost the entire $20,000 previously approved by the Executive Committee has been committed. G&K estimates that an additional $6,000-$12,000 will be needed to finish the case. Following a brief discussion Russ Olson motioned (Bruce Urben seconded) that the Board approve up to an additional $15,000 ($35,000 total) to bring this effort to a close. President Urben sought out a verbal vote from each Board Member present. The Board unanimously approved the motion (7 vs 0).

(Note: George Ermert voluntarily removed himself from the discussion due to potential conflicts of interest with his employment as a tribal contract lobbyist. He rejoined the Board meeting following the conclusion of the discussion.)

* **7:22 PM – EXPO Update (Executive Director Ross)**

EXPO 23 is set for 26 August with 126 registered vendors (36 more than 2022); the EXPO Steering Committee continues to field enquiries for booth space. EXPO sponsorships are on target and include $1,500 each from WDNR, WWF and WWA, plus many other corporate and foundations cash and in-kind sponsorships. As a result, the EXPO will end up in the black, but the degree of profitability hinges on attendance, with $23,000 planned in the budget realized from over 4,000 attendees. Weather will play a significant role.

Bruce Ross made a request for assistance organizing, managing, and manning the WWA EXPO booth as George Ermert who usually does this will be out of country for the event. Dave Elwing volunteered to fulfill that role; he will contact each Director to help either setting up the booth (25 Aug), manning the booth during the EXPO, contacting vendors for WWA sponsorship/support, and assisting in EXPO take-down (all on 26 Aug). UWSP will assist at the Admissions station. Admissions staff will have tablets to enhance check-in and billing.

Post BoD Todd Schaller and Dave Elwing discussed a means to enable R3 candidates and first-time waterfowlers an opportunity to gain free admission or receive an WWA/R3 Grant sponsored voucher equal to (or slightly greater than) the price of admission for use purchasing EXPO vendor merchandise. Details still need to be worked out.

* **7:33 PM – Hall of Fame (HoF) Process Discussion (Jim Freck)**

Jim Freck volunteered to help review the Association’s HoF requirements and procedures during the June BoD meeting. Jim requests additional Director assistance in doing so. Bruce Ross volunteered his support. The criteria to be reviewed is posted on the WWA website under the HoF heading.

George Ermert asked the Board what the real purpose of WWA having a HoF is. Bruce Ross responded that it is intended to recognize an individual’s exceptional contributions which far exceed the normal expectations of volunteerism. Regarding the individual’s long-standing support, being a HoF member also makes the individual the type of person that is most likely to provide long-term financial support, also. George Ermert asked if any HoF members contributed financially since becoming a HoF member, to which Russ Olson responded yes. Furthermore, each HoF member is identified as being one of the “Top 200” Planned Giving in a Box contacts (as are all past & present Directors). Russ Olson surfaced the opinion that due to small numbers of truly worthy candidates, that HoF recognition be considered only as the situation arises, rather than as an annual consideration. The Board expressed agreement but reserved further discussion pending input via Jim Freck’s ad hoc committee efforts. Any Director interested in assisting Jim Freck should contact him prior to August’s BoD meeting.

* **7:42 PM – Draft Annual Report (Executive Director Ross)**

Bruce Ross continued to refine the Association’s required annual report as directed during June’s BoD meeting. A draft is available on the WWA website; Directors are requested to review it and provide feedback to Bruce Ross NLT 23 July. This year’s report is shorter, more eye-pleasing by using pictures, graphs and charts to display information, rather than simply written text. The BoD members expressed their approval. Bruce Ross will finalize the report and provide a follow-on review period prior to going to full publication. June’s BoD meeting approved printing 250 copies. George Ermert asked if our stakeholders (WDNR, key legislators, key donors, etc.) receive copies. Typically, they have not, but all agreed that they should. Russ Olson will get a quote for printing and mailing the report.

* **7:51 PM – Committee Reports (President Urben)**

**Education Committee (Bruce Urben):** The committee met July 19th and focused on efforts which emphasize the “Waterfowl Hunter’s Arc.” Additionally, the committee is in the middle of a Waterfowler Academy branding exercise to capture WWA’s LTH, Hunter introductory, and education efforts under the academy and to further distinguish them from other WDNR-or other conservation organization-associated efforts.

**Habitat Committee (B.J. Grassmann):** Following June’s BoD discussion about the need to identify wood duck box materials/sources, the Committee re-engaged McNaughton Correctional Facility regarding its capabilities to source, mill and dry wood. McNaughton will contact sawyers, mill, and kiln dry 1” pine for boxes at $150 per cord. The Committee determined that (6) cords will produce between 210 and 240 boxes/kits; that number meets/exceeds the Association’s requirements for the upcoming season. WWA sold nearly 100 boxes/kits this past year, which helps sustain this program.

**Policy Committee (George Ermert):** The Committee’s focus is on pulling information together and ensuring WWA, Delta Waterfowl and WDNR are in synch for sandhill crane discussions with/briefings to state legislators in the fall. The Committee is also engaging WDNR on hunters’ behalf after WDNR’s decision to discontinue the Go Wild app in June.

**Communications Committee:** (George Ermert) The Committee did not meet this month. Bruce Urben asked if the committee needed additional help; George Ermert responded that more help, possibly full-time support, is needed.

**Development Committee (Dave Elwing):** The Development Committee did not meet in June, however Planned Giving in a Box legacy giving post cards were mailed to WWA’s “Top 250.” In addition to the successful identification of funds through the Lake Michigan Fund and the NRCS, efforts to re-start a Fond du Lac chapter continue, while assistance with the Midland Wings Chapter is in full swing with four Directors (Kevin Banaszak, Mike Depies, Jim Freck, and Dave Elwing) being actively involved. Bruce Ross thanked each of the Directors for their efforts and emphasized the need to sustain chapters and to actively plan for budgetarily-successful events in light of recent down turns.

* **8:03 PM – President’s Recap/Action Items (President Urben)**

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

1. The Board approved April’s Board Minutes.
2. The Board approved an additional $15,000 to continue the Online Class A Raffle fight.
3. All directors should review the draft Annual Report (v2) on the board webpage and provide any comments to Bruce Ross this week.
4. Dave Elwing will organize Director support for WWA’s Waterfowl Hunter’s Expo booth and seek Director support for EXPO take-down on 25 August.
5. President Urben once again asked Directors to review the Association Hall of Fame selection criteria located on the Board’s protected webpage and provide recommendations to Jim Freck prior to August’s Board Meeting.

* **8:08 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

**Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting at 6:30 PM on August 16th.**