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**MRVAC Board Meeting Minutes: September 24, 2020**

Present via video teleconference: Rob Daves, Lee Ann Landstrom, Doug Mayo, Ken Oulman, Matthew Schaut, Steve Weston, Bob Williams.

Documents distributed ahead of time: agenda (Matthew); August minutes (Rob); treasurer’s report (Walt). Matthew called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. and declared a quorum.

Secretary: On Rob’s motion and Walt’s second, the board unanimously approved the August minutes.

Treasurer: The current budget showed total assets and total net worth as $53,915. Current income from the Bird-a-thon was about $1,500 with more coming in. Bob reported a few more participants this year than in the past. He said that the most unusual bird was the hybrid kingbird and the most species for a birder was 95; he will award prizes. Bob will follow up with Walt to make sure that we’ve filed the 990-N (IRS) report.

Membership: Matthew cannot pick up membership duties, as Greg has stepped aside. Rob is receiving the new member information from the website. Bob will reach out to a potential candidate, and Matthew will make an appeal at the meeting tonight. Rob suggested creating a search committee if no one turns up.

Trumpeter newsletter: Steve reported that 56% of those who received the Trumpeter announcement via email opened the email and 32% opened the newsletter.

Programs: Steve reported that 46% of those who received the email meeting notice opened it.

Lee Ann will be presenting tonight’s program via Zoom on birding in the Pantanal region of Brazil for September. The program for the 7 p.m. October 22 meeting will feature Laura Erickson, who has a new book on bird breeding behavior. Steve has at least three other speakers committed for future programs. He suggested waiting until after tonight’s meeting to discuss a November meeting. If there is a November meeting, it should begin at 7:30 p.m.

Old business:

* COVID-19 – The Refuge visitor’s center remains closed due to COVID-19; trails are open. Steve reviewed new guidelines for the Christmas Bird Count from the National Audubon Society, which includes making no announcement until November.
* Pollinator Grant – Poplar Bridge Elementary School in Bloomington is completing its pollinator garden with our $1,300 that it used for plant purchase. Nine Mile Creek Watershed District is helping Normandale Hills Elementary School with a spring garden, to which we allocated $2,044.
* Bird Strikes – Lee Ann and Doug and two members of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis met with Normandale Community College about bird strikes. While a permanent fix might be too costly in the immediate term, a temporary fix with ribbons and other things could be less expensive. They have recommended creating a budget and work plan and will continue to advise the college in meetings, and hinted to the college that MRVAC could contribute several thousand dollars for a small portion. Ken will join the work group.
* Auction – Bob said it will probably have to be a virtual auction, perhaps over a period of time. Doug said there was “silent auction” software available but that we look at it critically, as other groups have found it difficult to administer. Steve suggested a hybrid auction – online with in-person auctioneering. Bob will do the initial research.

New business: None.

The next board meeting is at 5:30 p.m. October 22, 2020.

On Rob’s motion and Ken’s second, the decision was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Rob Daves, secretary