****

**MRVAC Board Meeting Minutes: August 27, 2020**

Present via video teleconference: Rita Baden, Rob Daves, Lee Ann Landstrom, Doug Mayo, Ken Oulman, Monica Rauchwarter, Matthew Schaut, Josh Sweet, Steve Weston, Bob Williams.

Matthew distributed the agenda, treasurer’s report and background documents for projects ahead of time; Rob distributed the May minutes in June. Matthew called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. and declared a quorum.

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

Treasurer: The current budget showed total assets and total net worth as $53,444. By consensus the board agreed that for the present we’ll cover whatever revenue shortfall caused by the coronavirus situation with existing funds. Walt and Matthew are working on filing the IRS 990-N report. The discussion moved to how to better utilize the website to engage people in the Bird-a-thon, but acknowledged that it would take a lot of volunteer time.

Membership: Greg sent the report, which showed 140 active local members. Half of recent renewals have been via the website and half by check. Eight email requests for renewals were sent to members whose memberships were expiring in July. There were no volunteers to serve as membership chair; we will put an appeal on the website.

Trumpeter newsletter: The board welcomed Editor Josh Sweet. He thanked everyone for their contributions. He reported that the current edition is close to being done, waiting on a meeting notice for September and one other article. Bob will send him the Bird-a-thon information for the next edition.

Programs: The Refuge visitor’s center remains closed and unavailable for a September 24 meeting. Monica said that Richardson Nature Center might be available for an in-person meeting, with COVID precautions. Steve said Lee Ann would be available to present a Zoom meeting on birding in the Tantanal region of Brazil for September. Matthew can pay the annual Zoom fee ($161.93) to allow us to have unlimited minutes for board and member meetings. Steve will send a synopsis to Josh for the Trumpeter. Steve has at least three other speakers committed for future programs and will put together a schedule for the next few months.

Old business:

* 180th St. Marsh: No new news
* The Refuge visitor’s center remains closed due to COVID-19 but trails are open
* Fall trips have been canceled

News business:

* Birding while black – We need to better understand what the national Audubon organization plans.
* Pollinator Grant – Poplar Bridge Elementary School in Bloomington has submitted a proposal to Lee Ann for a pollinator garden ($800). On Lee Ann’s motion and Bob’s second, the board unanimously approved a grant of $800 for the Poplar Bridge school project. Nine Mile Creek Watershed District is interested in helping Normandale Hills Elementary School in mind for a spring garden ($2,044). She has other schools that might be future candidates. National chapter grant applications (generally several thousand dollars) will open in October. There seemed to be consensus that we should wait until the spring to look at subsequent projects. Lee Ann also represents MRVAC in the Minnesota Audubon Chapters Native Plant Initiative.
* Matthew will gather more information about supporting Monitoring Overwintering Survival stations in Latin America to inform any subsequent discussion.
* Certified Peer Support Specialists: Matthew will gather more information about support this initiative, which is headquartered in Grand Rapids.
* Trumpeter Award: We need to develop nominations for the spring award. Matthew and others agreed that we need to keep these initiatives alive.

There was no time or date set for the next meeting.

On Bob motion and Rita’s second, the decision was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Rob Daves, secretary