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**MRVAC Board Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2020**

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

Documents distributed ahead of time: agenda (Matthew); November minutes (Rob); treasurer’s report (Walt). Matthew called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and declared a quorum.

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

Treasurer: The current budget showed total net worth as $53,283.28. Walt reviewed the past month’s income and expenses. He reported $1,228 in Give to the Max donations and $2,655 for auction fundraising.

Membership: Rita distributed the membership list near the end of the month to the membership chair search committee, Matthew reported. After some information sharing at the board meeting, it appears that in the absence of a membership chair, there is no coherent way to keep the Trumpeter mailing list or the membership list current with the current lack of a process in place.

Trumpeter newsletter: Josh reminded folks to use his Gmail address and thanked everyone for their submissions for the January-February issue. He asked about a call for Trumpeter Award nominations. Doug updated the board about the current status of the award, saying he could put together a quick blurb about submitting nominees. Rob reminded folks that the form for the award nominees was on the website; Rob will find out where that information goes. Matthew asked Josh to do a story on the Trumpeter Award nominations. The board agreed that Josh should update the story soliciting grant proposals in last year’s Trumpeter. Steve will get additional meeting information to Josh.

Programs: The Christmas Bird Count will be Dec. 19. Steve is working on speakers for the January and February meetings.

Old business:

* Covid-19 Status: Matthew reviewed the current status of Covid-19 requirements and how they fit into the current events.
* CBC – Steve said it was taking place on Saturday and things are proceeding as expected and under the current Covid-19 requirements.
* Trumpeter Service Award – Doug has handled the arrangement for the actual award in the past; he has contact Craig Mandel to determine the current year’s award status. Rob reminded the board that we have a submission form on the website; he will check how those submissions are routed.
* Pollinator grants:
  + Rob met with the Poplar Bridge Elementary School science teacher – where we helped fund a rain garden – to help her site bluebird houses.
  + Lee Ann said Richfield High School will be submitting a funding request.
  + We’ve received a Girl Scout funding request for a bluebird trail at Terrace Oaks. Rob volunteered to serve as a contact and Robin volunteered to recruit helpers but we agreed that we need more detailed information by next month for the request to be approved in January.
  + Normandale Hills Elementary School has asked for $2,000 with a Nine Mile Creek Watershed District match for a raingarden. The watershed district wants to have a formal agreement; Bob thought that was a good idea. There was some immediate board support for the project but Bob expressed concern about mistreatment of the project from non-school users in the area. Fencing might be needed. There also was concern about creating a green area that might not directly help birds. Other concerns included using cultivars rather than native plants and the lack of shrubbery for cover. Ken suggested we ask for more information in a proposal before we make a decision about the award. Lee Ann will ask for that information, including shrub cover, plant list and protection.
  + Bird Strikes – There has been no further information from Normandale Community College.
  + The larger issue arose about the lack of criteria we use to award grants. Past practice has been to review requests in the spring before awarding grants. Robin and Rob suggested that we develop criteria to use for judging requests; he reminded the board that there’s a form on MRVAC.org that grant requests should use.

New business:

* Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) dues should be paid by Jan. 31, 2021. Walt reminded the board that we generally pay affiliated organization dues in March.
* Bob proposed a Question & Answer column for the website. He agreed that a link to the Minnesota Birding Facebook page and perhaps other social media would serve that need, as the website is not structure for public posts and immediate MRVAC responses. Rob will check with our MRVAC.org manager to determine the best way to do that.

The next board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Jan. 28, 2020.

On Robin’s motion and Doug’s second, the decision was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Daves, secretary