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**MRVAC Board Meeting Minutes: Sept. 23, 2021**

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

Documents distributed ahead of time: Treasurer’s report, revised minutes from August, a second grant request from Red-Headed Woodpecker Project. Matt called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and declared a quorum when Steve arrived.

Secretary: In Rob’s absence, Lee Ann took notes. On Ken’s motion and Doug’s second, the board unanimously approved the revised August minutes. Rob had reported earlier there were some news posts, grant and renewal page problems with the website, which were fixed by reinstalling a plugin.

Treasurer: Bob filled in for Walt with a verbal report. There was little activity: The only expenditure was for annual liability insurance. About $300 has been received outside the August Bird-a-Thon, which garnered $1,056 for the August Bird-A-Thon; we’re not expecting any more contributions. We do foresee memorials: Jack Telfer (announcement in the church obituary) and possibly for Nancy Skinner, who is now in hospice. Bob will let MRVAC know if there will be a memorial service for Jack.

Membership: Steve says we are at 101 current local members, with one in the works. This is lower than the 164 previously reported (some folks have not renewed). There are 719 email subscribers. Forty-four percent of them opened the meeting announcement email, a bit lower than usual. Two-hundred seventy clicked to read the *Trumpeter*. Steve has yet to contact Pam to send her the spreadsheet.

Trumpeter: Josh has sent the request for articles for the next edition. He needs them by Oct. 21.

Programs: Tonight’s program is Clinton Nienhaus, head naturalist at Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, who will talk about biodiversity and research projects at the bog. There is no one lined up for November, when we traditionally hold the auction. Matt said Hawk Ridge is doing a raffle for fundraising, binoculars donated by Leica. MRVAC also has the large *Birds of North America* book as an item, but there was skepticism about demand for it. Lee Ann said it is too late to try to arrange for a raffle, as we need software, items to auction, promotion, etc. She suggested we get a speaker and ask for donations like we did last year with Stan Tekiela. Steve does not want to use the same person two years in a row, and other suggestions included Carrol Henderson and Michael Joyce (DNR, mammals).

Old Business:

* Refuge COVID status: The board expects that the building will be closed in November.
* Red-headed Woodpecker second grant request: By consensus, the board decided to table this request. The cited shortfalls all look like 2022 needs (research assistant, chipping the birds, installing the acoustic monitors). Bob wonders if there are other funds or funders that the project is trying to get. Not long ago, it was short $54,000.
* Trumpeter Award: Absent any activity from the past winners committee, the board agreed that Matthew should send the single current nomination to the entire board prior to consideration at the October meeting, and that there are likely other, stronger candidates who could be nominated.
* National Audubon Society’s Oct. 1-2 annual conference is virtual. Registration is ‘pay what you can’ (although the requested fee is $150).
* Sax-Zim donation: Some board members expressed interest in doing a sizable donation. Others suggested continuing to try a joint effort with the Minnesota Ornithological Union. Doug said the board needs to know if the current “Owls to Warblers Critical Habitat” campaign had to do with mitigation versus land acquisition. He has suggested to Sparky Stensaas that the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog request a $10,000 grant, and others suggested a formal request was not necessary. Some continue to want to try to leverage our donation with other chapters. To that end, Bob will contact the MOU; Lee Ann, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis; Steve, St. Paul, Zumbro and Wild River chapters. (The state Audubon chapters’ forum has not been active lately). Lee Ann suggest that we move quickly to contact these partners and by next month, either get the matching partners, or drop it and do our own donation.
* Allocation of surplus funds to the nine affiliated groups we have a past practice of supporting: Bob and Walt had prepared a list of these organizations and their missions. The consensus is to add Osprey Wilds (formerly Audubon Center of the Northwoods) and drop Hunt Hill in Wisconsin, as we should focus on Minnesota groups. Lee Ann reminded the board that the August proposal was to give the nine groups an additional $100 each. Bob wants to cap the total amount per group at $100; he prefers we fund specific projects rather than provide unrestricted funding. Steve suggested that we give an additional $100 to American Bird Conservancy, MOU, Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, CURE, The Raptor Center, Hawk Ridge, and Osprey Wilds. Lee Ann called for a vote but because Ken had left the meeting there was no quorum.

On Steve’s motion and Bob’s second, the board unanimously approved adjournment at 7:04 p.m. as there were many technical difficulties tonight to fix before the general meeting.

The next board meeting is Oct. 28 at 6 p.m. via GoTo Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Daves, secretary