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 **MRVAC Board Meeting Minutes: Feb. 24, 2022**

Present via video teleconference: Lee Ann Landstrom, Doug Mayo, Ken Oulman, Matthew Schaut, Josh Sweet, Steve Weston, Bob Williams. Document distributed ahead of time: January minutes, treasurer’s report, agenda, Friends of the Refuge grant proposals. Matthew called the meeting to order at 6:03p.m.

Secretary: On Rob’s motion and Lee Ann’s second, the January minutes were approved unanimously.

Website: Rob reviewed the recent problems with the website and went over the solutions he and Christine had developed. It seems to be working okay now. Lee Ann reported that member contacted her and was having a problem paying through the website; Rob will get her name from Lee Ann and check with Walt and Christine.

Facebook: Steve would like to post monthly program notices to our FB page. Matthew will try to give Steve administrator’s status to make that happen.

Treasurers Report: Bob commented that there appeared to be nothing unusual in the treasurer’s report. Earlier Walt reported year-to-date income is $10,909, expenses, $4,323, and net worth was $6,0221.41. Walt and Rob are working to finalize the transfer of the checking account to Star Choice Credit Union.

Membership: Steve has no up-to-date information from Pam. We’re continuing to get membership dues. There are 758 people on the email list. About 60% of the emails about tonight’s meeting were opened.

Programs report: Tonight’s program is on spiders, with March featuring Don Krodsma, a well-known author and bird call expert. April’s topic is ornithology research at University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Trumpeter: Josh said he’s assembling the March-April edition, which includes regional events, a new field trip registration process, CBC reports and the Salt Lake weekend cancellation. The finished product should be done this weekend. Deadline for May-June edition is likely to mid-April for publication on May 1.

Old Business:

* Sax-Zim Bog sign: Our funding helped complete the sign, which will be erected after the ground thaws. The board thought the funding credits were much improved over an earlier version.
* Friends of Sax-Zim: Rob said he’d spoken with Sarah, at Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, who tried to submit a proposal but was unsuccessful.
* Matthew reported that there are no applications in his email in-box.
* Grasslands: We have no official grant proposal from this wetlands project.
* Don Arnosti, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (Lyon County ditch): While this area is in the river valley, it’s out of our official range, the board heard. Steve said there was no government funding and locals think the project is inactive. MRVAC is asked to sign on as a “party of interest.” By consensus, the board agreed to sign on and Steve will keep the board apprised of any developments.
* Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah – Doug and Matthew said they’d consider helping on the Aug. 20 event. Bob says we need to give them a hard answer by next month and that we should let the organizers know we tentatively plan to staff it.
* Red-headed Woodpecker Project: Its staff acknowledged that they’ve been delayed getting us a grant request. Steve let project staffers know that the $3,000 limit is not a hard one, as they have a $45,000 budget shortfall. We expect to get a grant proposal soon.
* Governor’s Native Plant Garden: Audubon Minnesota’s Rob Schultz sponsored a chapter leader meeting and Steve volunteered to act as a MRVAC resource for the Governor’s Native Plant Garden Project.
* Salt Lake Weekend: Steve said Ken Larson and Mary Lou Frank are stepping aside as organizers. If the weekend continues, it will need to have new organizers.

Grant Requests:

* University of Minnesota Press: The board agreed to table the proposal until March. Meanwhile Steve will get more information at the upcoming Audubon Minnesota meeting.
* Friends of the Refuge Little Library ($500): On Bob’s motion and Steve’s second, the board unanimously approved the $500 grant to Friends of the Refuge to refill the little libraries with nature-related books.
* Friends of the Refuge Campus Habitat Project ($2,500): The board had a number of concerns about the proposal. One was the conflation of MRVAC and Friends sponsorship of projects MRVAC has funded; another was using Refuge visits to measure the success of a neighborhood school rain garden. Lee Ann will contact them to clarify. Lee Ann also noted the Hillcrest Elementary School and Kennedy High School also are interested in doing rain gardens.

New Business:

* Rob suggested getting a structure in place to ensure that open board positions were filled and that spring elections went smoothly. Matthew agreed to set something up.

On Steve’s motion and Lee Ann’s second, the vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Daves, secretary