



## MRVAC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Feb. 23, 2023

6:00 p.m. - Via Zoom

**Present:** Rob Daves, Steve Weston, Bob Williams, Daniella Collier, Walt Stull, Douglas Mayo, Avery Blumenthal, Pam Albin, and Sam Warren.

*Meeting began at 6:06 p.m.*

### Welcome, introductions, and agenda approval – Rob

Rob introduced Daniella (Dani) Collier who is interested in rejoining MRVAC and becoming a board member. Bob let her know of the opportunity. Rob is trying to touch base with all board members over the next few weeks to talk about the direction of the chapter and find out members' intentions for the upcoming April election. The agenda was approved at 6:16 p.m.

### Trumpeter Report – Sam

This edition of the Trumpeter is done and is being edited. Sam asked Steve to send the last article by tomorrow morning. Sam should be able to have the edition ready to print by Monday morning and it will be sent to Pam by mid-next week. This edition includes stuff on native plants. The spring edition will include warblers; anything about spring is welcomed. Rob reminded us to confirm that the MRVAC events calendar includes everything. Rob thanked Sam: The last few editions have been great.

### Secretary's Report – Matthew

- **January minutes approval**
  - Rob shared the minutes. On Steve's motion and Walt's second, the board unanimously approved the minutes. Rob will make corrections and post the minutes on the website.

### Website Report – Rob

Steve and Rob discussed whether the meeting link should be on the website. Christine thinks that it should not be and that anyone who wants the link should email Steve for the link.

Rob put a couple things up including National Audubon's notice about the Backyard Bird Count and info about My Youth Bird Club events between now and June with a note that MRVAC is a financial contributor to the events. Bob heard that Minneapolis Audubon might be the fiscal sponsor for the walks. Rob says that MRVAC gave Amy Simso Dean a grant a few months ago and that MRVAC would co-sponsor the walks.

### Treasurer's Report – Walt

- **MRVAC monthly budget**
  - Most things were straightforward. Memorial amount for Becky was wrong (\$200 instead of \$100). In the February report, we will see what we get back from National Audubon

(about \$2,600-\$2,700). The annual report was submitted to National Audubon by January 31.

- Total net worth is almost \$57,000, Walt suggested that we look for substantial grants to give. One idea is a scholarship for students going into environmental fields.
- Steve said that the Red-headed Woodpecker Project would be short this year but it will not need to make a new proposal for the \$2,000 that is held for them. They want a new grant and need to make a new proposal.
- Steve will check who the liaison is to MVNWR Friends. Rob said that it would be nice to have a sign at the refuge stating that MRVAC helps fund the bird seed.
- **Preliminary 2023-2024 annual budget**
  - Most things stayed the same. General contributions used to be budgeted for \$3,000 but we have taken in over \$7,300 this year. Walt suggested that we may want to bump this up a bit. Investment income has grown over the past year because of investment with the credit union earning 1% (almost \$100 a month which is a change of \$900, budgeted for \$1,200).
  - “Newsletter” is now “Newsletter and Communication.” Added amount for Zoom and line for Mailchimp. Grants and allocations: Not all groups are listed.
  - Bob said that for the Bird-a-thon, the majority of money has come from the same people Bob knows every year and that there is no participation from the rest of the board to generate money for the event. Bob suggests that the board get more active with the event or eliminate it. Bob thinks we should let it go and raise the money elsewhere. Could be brought up again in the next board meeting.
  - Rob wondered if we could publicize the Bird-a-thon differently and get behind it this year, if spring may work better, and if the auction can take its place.
  - We are budgeting \$275 less for expenses than we are budgeting for income. Monthly reports will be set up so that income and expenses are equal.
  - Doug asked Walt to examine the formulas to make sure they are accurate.
  - On Steve’s motion and Bob’s and Doug’s seconds, the board approved the monthly treasurer’s report unanimously.

## **Membership Report – Pam/Steve**

- **Numbers**
  - Pam - numbers for this month: 133. Fourteen people dropped and there were five new members.
  - Mailchimp will reach out to expired members to renew, which has not happened for six months.
  - Steve - email list: 1,178 to 1,179, a number of joins and drops, drops are mostly national members, not a big deal.
- **Renewal reminders**
  - Mailchimp will be used to do this.

## **Programs Report – Steve**

- Speaker tonight is Scott Weidensaul. Steve spent \$50 extra so 500 people can attend on Zoom. Speakers for the next two months are decided. Need to find a speaker for June.

### Old Business (board champion):

- **Grants: There are no current active grant requests. (Rob)**
- **Non-grant old business:**
  - **Auction (Bob)**
    - Monica has offered Richardson Nature Center as the site.
  - **Audubon Update (Rob): Minnesota report; national chapter report**
    - Former MRVAC member/president Lois wrote an article about motorized recreation trails. MRVAC will sign on and support the legislation in the state legislature. It would be easiest to sign on with MN Audubon, but if not, we can do it on our own.
    - The Lawns to Legumes bill has passed the MN Senate.
    - MN State lottery proceeds go to the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund. We have been asked to sign on with MN Audubon; Rob will do this.
    - We have been asked to support the 2023 Farm Bill in the U.S. Congress (which has money for conservation); Rob will do this. Other bills will likely come up. Lee Ann and Rob have agreed to be “on call” if last minute requests come up. More people could help out with this.
  - **Telfer estate gift (Rob)**
    - Rob received communication from two people asking how to give an estate gift.
  - Dani and Steve discussed using Dani’s social media and web design skills to get MRVAC out there on social media; Dani will be added as an administrator. Dani suggests a social media plan for MRVAC that the board could design and review. Dani will help with web design, maintenance, and web posting.

### New Business

- **MRVAC credit card (Steve)**
  - Steve asked Walt to look into getting a MRVAC credit card to expedite ongoing bills rather than Steve using his own credit card and getting reimbursed. Walt said that Steve mentioned a debit card; Steve thinks a credit card is better. Need to decide who can access the card. Walt will contact the bank about how to do this by the next meeting. On Steve’s motion and Bob’s second, the board unanimously approved Walt to look for a credit card with the bank.
- **Mailchimp (Steve)**
  - Mailchimp changed their business plan, we went from a free user to paid (\$200 or \$300 per year). We can have three people on Mailchimp, Steve and two more. Pam can use Mailchimp for the membership letters.

- **Trumpeter Award (Rob)**
  - Rob asked past Trumpeter Award winner Rita Baden to chair a committee and look into choosing a Trumpeter Award winner for this year.
- A bird conservationist/author asked for someone to review a book.

**Adjournment:**

On Steve's motions and Walt's second, the board unanimously approved adjournment at 7:17 p.m.

*Minutes taken by Board Member Avery Blumenthal.*