**Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter**

**Board of Directors meeting of 6/23/2022**

**Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

In attendance: Rob Daves, Matthew Schaut, Ken Oulman, Bob Williams, Lee Ann Lindstrom, Steve Weston, and Doug Mayo, Board of Directors; Joshua Sweet, Trumpeter editor; Amy Simso Dean, guest.

**Trumpeter Report** – Josh is working on the July-August Trumpeter, which should be completed this Saturday. Josh was a little short on content for this edition so he added an article on mapping bird migration from Audubon. He Josh will work on the September-October edition, his last. The deadline for that issue is the third week in August, publishing on Sept. 1. Steve may have a candidate able to assume editorship of the Trumpeter with the November edition. The person Steve has in mind currently edits the Indiana State Audubon newsletter. She lives in Sherburne County. Another idea: recruit from journalism schools. Rob asked Josh to send him the content of the Trumpeter in a format Microsoft Word accepts to make it easier to post on the website.

**Secretary’s Report** – Rob sent the May minutes out ahead of time. On his motion and Lee Ann’s second, the minutes were approved unanimously. Rob will post on the website.

**Website Report** – Rob said the website is functioning normally. He posted an article Lee Ann sent to Josh for the Trumpeter. Rob will ask Walt to put together a summary of the amount of money MRVAC has granted this year for the Trumpeter.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Walt was absent but previously had submitted the treasurer’s report.

**Membership Report** – Steve and Pam reported 811 subscribers. Four have unsubscribed: one moved out of state, one is a long-time local member. Steve sent out renewal notices. Steve is going to call them. Steve has also been reaching out to members of other Audubon chapters to see if they’d like to join MRVAC. Rob asked Steve and Pam to get the local member numbers each month ahead of the meeting, as Walt does with the treasurer’s report. The board wanted to know who has the National Audubon Society (NAS) membership list. Steve would like to check that list. Rob agreed to contact NAS Membership Services. There was discussion of the $15 fee we ask for an annual membership and if we should offer a variety of membership levels (such as youth, family, etc.). (See discussion notes below.) The board consensus was to keep it simple and retain the single $15 category.

**Programs Report** – Steve said the program today is on fishers in Minnesota. Steve is working on next year’s schedule.

**Old Business:**

Active Grant Proposals:

1. MN Valley Refuge Friends. No-one has yet contacted MN Valley Friends to inform them the BOD didn’t approve the Partnership Academy habitat gardens grant request. Lee Ann will do this.
2. Friends of the Sax-Zim Bog. There was a staff change at Friends of Sax-Zim Bog. MRVAC is still waiting for a revised grant request regarding Wood Thrush Woods.
3. Red-Headed Woodpecker Recovery Project. Still awaiting clarification about its request for $3,000 in additional funding.
4. Amy Simso Dean. The first My Birding Club sponsored walk is this coming Sunday. Next walk is in July. After that, activity will pick up.

Non-grant business (Board Champion)

1. Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah is scheduled for August 20, 2022. Doug and Matthew have volunteered to represent MRVAC.
2. Membership Rates (see above). Steve would like to offer different membership levels. Most outstate chapters currently charge $20 annually. Audubon Everglades’ levels are $10, student; $25, regular; $35, household; and $75, supporter. Steve proposes levels of $20, member; $10, student; and $45, supporter. Because we will accept whatever a member sends us, tracking isn’t really an issue. All we have to track is the time for the annual renewal. Bob said we’re generating plenty of income based on the number of members we have so why change it? Ken believes the same: $15 is more than adequate. Lee Ann wanted to consider a student rate. Matthew supported Steve’s proposal.
3. August Fundraiser, i.e. The Great Minnesota River Birding Day – Bob. The information is in the Trumpeter and he asked Steve to send it out to all the members using our email list. Matthew will put the event on the Facebook page. Bob also will reach out privately to people he knows asking them to sponsor. Other board members and interested parties also should also do this.
4. Recruitment of new Board members. Steve has been getting mixed feedback. He approached the Urban Bird Collective. Its people suggested those who are not in our Minnesota River Valley area and are not MRVAC members. Steve said “We will only find younger and more diverse Board members by going out of our group and our area. We need to get on this and ‘shake some bushes.’”
5. MyBirdClub. Amy Simso Dean has proposed a partnership between MRVAC and MyBirdClub. There was discussion of if and how to make this partnership proposal a reality. Bob reached out to Molly Eichten, a former board member, for legal advice but she has not responded. Rob suggested that one strategy is to take the proposal and retool it for the attorney with the aims we want. Bob will work on the language of the partnership document and will try to find an attorney willing to take a look at the proposal. Doug didn’t think we should be assuming any legal obligations or any legal fees. Rob asked if there are any insurance ramifications. Bob said Walt will have the most current information about MRVAC’s insurance. The plan moving forward: Bob will develop the language with input from an attorney, then send what he has to Matthew to look at. Amy suggested we also reach out to the Audubon Chapter of Minnesota (Board Member Peter Thiel is their point person). Amy’s concern was being caught flat-footed if MRVAC decides not to sponsor. Amy needed to think about her organization and how she will move forward with her people. She has requests for fall programs she needs to respond to. There will be a story in the Star Tribune on her club published in the near future.
6. Location of upcoming member meetings. – Rob will contact the Refuge to see if we are able to resume using the auditorium for member meetings in September 2022. Next members meeting will be in September.
7. Auction – Will there be an auction this year? If the Refuge is available, can we have the auction there?
8. Trumpeter Award. Discussion postponed until future meeting.

**New Business:**

1. Relationship with Audubon Minnesota/Recovering America’s Wildlife Action alerts to members. Steve attended the June 4 Minnesota Audubon leadership meeting at Sherburne NWR. The state leadership was reaching out to chapters. A recap of this year’s legislative session was presented. Audubon Minnesota now has an action alert process. A suggested text is sent to participants and the letter can be personalized or used as written and be sent to decision makers. Some of these alerts have generated more than 400 responses. The purpose is to get timely feedback to lawmakers as votes come up. You can sign up to get the alerts. Steve asked Rob to put the alert link on the MRVAC website. Lee Ann will put the information on the Facebook page. Steve will send out the legislative recap and the latest action alert.

On Steve’s motion and Doug’s second, the motion to adjourn passed unanimously. There is no July meeting. Meeting is adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

**Minutes taken by Matthew Schaut, MRVAC BOD Secretary**