**MRVAC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Oct. 26, 2023, 6 p.m. at The Refuge HQ in person and via Zoom**

**Present:** Lee Ann Landstrom, Walt Stull, Rob Daves, Avery Blumenthal, Steve Weston, Matthew Schaut, Monica Rauchwarter, Bob Brereton, Scott Clark (Zoom).

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

* The meeting began at 6:08 p.m.
* **Auction Planning – All**
  + Publicity (Rob/Dani/Sam)
    - Dani posted about the auction on the Facebook page.
    - Rob posted an event on Nextdoor for Bloomington and nearby cities, sent information to media sources around the metro, and emailed Minnesota chapter leaders asking them to publicize the event.
    - Lee Ann will send Dani a list of high-profile items to publicize.
  + Donations (All)
    - Items include dozens of books, two Vortex binoculars, Swarovski binoculars, bird feeders, feeder poles, bird seed, etc. Steve has about 75 items (over 50 books). The Kowa scope should be taken off the list.
    - Google Doc: All items should be on the document. During the meeting, Monica made the document editable by everyone with the link.
    - Everyone should pick an organization that has not been contacted and reach out for donations.
    - A donor asked how many people will attend the auction. Lee Ann and Monica estimated 50 or 60.
    - Monica asked that everyone enter suggested starting bids / estimated values in the Google document.
  + Site (Monica)
    - Some people will drop off items the week of, which works if they are small.
    - Donations must be dropped off at the nature center by 6 p.m. to be included.
    - Doors open at 6 p.m. for social hour. Auction starts at 7 p.m. with a planned end at 8:30 p.m. but there is no hard end time.
    - Helpers could arrive as early as 4 p.m. to set up. Tables will be ready, and tablecloths may be used. There is one large easel for art and many smaller easels for brochures. Everyone: Please bring tabletop easels if you have them.
    - Rob will follow up with Robin about food.
    - The Richardson Broad-winged Hawk may be displayed around 6:45 p.m.
    - Steve and Monica should discuss how books will be displayed. In the past, some have gone on a table with a set price. It is difficult to auction off all books individually. Maybe a few can be assigned a set price, and a few could be auctioned off.
    - Monica can help at 5 p.m. Marcy will be there, too. Two people should receive donations (Lee Ann can). It would be good for more people to arrive and help before and during the auction. Lee Ann and Steve will arrive about 5 p.m.
    - At least 3-4 high-end products should be out at a time, and the high-end items should be spaced out.
  + Money (Walt)
    - We will only accept checks and cash. Walt will receive the money and will have a lot of change ready.
    - Steve would like to have a spreadsheet to add to when people buy items. Every person would have a row, which could be assigned upon check-in and would compute how much each person owes.
  + Staffing (All)
  + Other (All)
* **Trumpeter Report – Sam**
* **Charitable Organization Update – Walt/Rob**
  + MRVAC is a Minnesota 317A organization.
  + MRVAC is a 501(c)(3) with the Secretary of State as updated by Rob, who will send out a short email about this.
  + On Walt’s motion and Rob’s second, the board unanimously approved the charitable organization update at 6:47 p.m.
* **Secretary’s Report – Avery**
  + On Walt’s motion and Lee Ann’s second, the board unanimously approved the September minutes at 6:09 p.m.
  + Avery will send out a list of action items shortly after each board meeting.
* **Treasurer’s Report – Walt**
* **Website/Social Media Report – Rob/Dani**
  + Rob added many meeting minutes to the website. The minutes had not been updated since spring.
  + Social media is going well. Dani and Lee Ann have been posting.
* **Membership Report – Steve**
  + The email list is stable.
  + Steve sent a letter about membership renewal that resulted in 124 renewals.
    - MRVAC received $1,680 in membership fees. The $100 sustained option brought nine people. Two people asked Steve about how long the $100 option lasts and will receive five years for it.
    - About $400 more was brought in because of the new dues structure.
  + There are 124 local members. Steve expects that more people will respond.
  + Pam asked to step aside as membership chair.
* **Programs Report – Steve** 
  + There is not a set program for January. Steve sent out emails for January and February and has a couple of possible presenters.
* **Old Business (board champion):**
  + **Grants:** 
    - Urban Bird Collective grant request #2023-5
      * There might be a tax-free number that could affect the grant amount.
      * On Steve’s motion and Walt’s second, the board unanimously approved the Urban Bird Collective grant request for $1,430 or $1,530 at 6:55 p.m.
    - Grant contacts (Lee Ann)
      * Rob sent MN Master Naturalists a press release about grants, but they do not seem to think that it is appropriate for their publication.
* **Non-grant old business:**
  + Generic MRVAC email address (Lee Ann, Dani, Rob)
    - Dani created an email address: [mrvacinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mrvacinfo@gmail.com). The email will go to Rob. Rob will set it up so that Rob and Walt have access. This is in addition to contacts through the website. Rob will ask Dani if the spam filters are strong.
  + Audubon Update (Rob)
    - Next summer, the board should consider paying some expenses to register 1-2 board members for the National Audubon conference.
    - Rob will ask the local policy director or DJ Langefels to write an article for The Trumpeter about the vote to approve MN lottery dollars for conservation.
  + Conservation updates (Lee Ann)
    - Lee Ann will post on Facebook when people are prompted to contact their local representatives about conservation bills.
  + Cass County spring birding trip (Matthew/Steve)
    - MRVAC could sponsor a trip to Deep Portage Learning Center. Matthew will pursue this.
  + Name change/EDIB (equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging) (All)
    - Minneapolis, St. Paul, and MRVAC chapter leaders are discussing EDIB. Would 2-3 people be interested in forming a MRVAC committee to coordinate with other chapters who are working on EDIB? This could be regular MRVAC members or board members.
* **New Business**
  + On Lee Ann’s motion and Steve’s second, the board unanimously approved the addition of Bob Brereton to the board at 6:45 p.m.
  + Rob will work on a “cookbook” on how the Board functions, for future use and consistency.
* **Adjournment –**The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

*Minutes taken by Board Member Avery Blumenthal.*