

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board

Williamsburg Bird Club

April 11, 2016

Ann Carpenter's Home, 6640 Rexford Lane, Williamsburg, VA

Board Member Attendees: Geoff Giles, Shirley Devan, Cathy Millar, Ann Carpenter, Jan Lockwood

Board Members Absent: Judy Jones, Jeanette Navia, Cheryl Jacobson

Chair Attendees: Jim Corliss, Jan Lockwood

Chair Attendees Absent: Bill Williams, Jeanette Navia, Lee Schuster, Ruth Gordon, Tom McCary

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by President Geoff Giles who noted that a quorum was present and distributed an agenda for tonight's meeting.

President's Report-Geoff Giles:

- **CVWO Request for Contribution.** CVWO is supporting a \$5,000 piece of equipment for a receiving station to be set up on Craney Island that will be a part of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. The Motus internet site states it is a program of Bird Studies Canada that is in partnership with collaborating researchers and organizations involved in tracking all hemispheric migratory bird species and that it is the world's most ambitious bird tracking initiative. They are using very light nano-tag tracking devices. Shirley stated that the system can track other small creatures like bats, dragonflies and butterflies. She said that the next closest station is on the Eastern Shore. CVWO has requested contributions from our WBC and Hampton Roads Bird Club. HRC has donated \$500.

Treasurer Ann Carpenter reported that the Ruth Beck Memorial Fund has received \$5,395 in donations. This year the designated donations for research grants to date are \$765. This yields a total of \$6,160. Our club this year gave W&M student research grants totaling \$2,995 leaving a balance of \$3,165. This assures us the ability to give the same amount in grants next year. It was agreed that in view of Ruth Beck's research on Craney Island that it would be appropriate to draw from that fund. The motion was made to contribute \$500 from the Ruth Beck fund. The motion was seconded. All were in favor.

- **Meeting Times, etc.** Geoff reported that since the last Board Meeting we'd changed our membership meeting times from 7:30 pm to 7:00 and had even considered the possibility of 6:30pm. He checked for feedback and it was generally agreed that the 7:00 meeting time is working well and to be continued. He also noted that we'd changed the sequence of the meeting by moving the featured program towards the start of the meeting. That too was noted by all present as working as desired and to be continued.

- **Board Members.** Geoff reported that Jim Corliss will relinquish his role of Committee Chairperson for Field Trips starting in 2017 so he can focus on the bird counts. Geoff complimented the work of all the Board Members and asked that he be informed as soon as possible if anyone else is contemplating a change in board membership. He also commented that he has been president for 2 years and is not “rooted” to it and is open to anyone else being interested in the position.

VP of Programs- Cheryl Jacobson: Cheryl was absent but had given Geoff a report.

- **April 20:** The W&M grad students who have received grants from our club will present their research. Cheryl has asked that we encourage members to attend as this program historically has the smallest attendance.
- **May18:** Bob Schamerhorn will deliver a presentation on warblers with his photos and recorded songs.
- **February 2017:** Dr. Lesley Bulluck, Assistant Professor at VCU’s Dept. of Biology and Board member of VSO, will speak on her work with Prothonotary Warblers. The meeting will be a joint one with the Master Naturalists. Shirley noted that she takes feather samples for Dr. Bulluck from the Prothonotaries that she works with at NW River for genetic studies to track populations.
- **June, July, August:** no meetings.

VP of Newsletter- Shirley Devan & Judy Jones:

Shirley reported that she and Judy alternate months and Judy is doing the May issue. She reported that sharing the role is working very well.

Treasurer’s Report – Ann Carpenter: Copies of a current spread sheet that Ann had prepared were distributed and reviewed.

Checkbook currently balances at \$14,085.

Our 2 CD’s total \$5,460. One came due this week and was earning an interest of .2% and is now up to 1%. She has renewed it for 3 years so that one will come due again in 2019. The other CD expires in Feb 2017. She asked the Board that since we have \$14,085 in the checking acct., if we want to buy any more CD’s and how do we want to cycle them. She stated that CD’s sell for a minimum of \$2,000 and that a 12 month CD currently earns .35% interest and that the next available level is for 36 months. She suggested that we buy a 12 month CD so that when both CD’s come due in 2017, we can decide how we’d like to cycle those two. The CD’s are non-taxable because our total club income is under \$50,000. Shirley recommended that we try to cycle them so that one will come due every year so we can access the money if needed. The motion was made to move \$2500 from the checking account to buy a one year CD at .35% interest rate and was seconded. All were in favor.

Ann expressed concern that money from dues are down by \$4-500 from last year. 30 people have not renewed. Fred Blystone has sent a letter to members who’ve not renewed and the response has been good with 7 renewals today.

Ann commented that there have been no seed requests from the CDR Feeder Project. Shirley said that the contact person, Deb, has retired. Shirley will contact Deb and ask her to designate someone at CDR.

Ann next noted that the donations that we give every year and that we needed to vote on are as follows: Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg Land Conservancy, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory membership and W&M Center for Conservation Biology. Last year we gave everybody \$200. There was concern whether we should give as much again. In 2014, we'd given WRL \$150, WLC \$150, WLC \$150, CVWO \$100 and CCB \$200 and increased the donations in 2015 because we were feeling rich. Because we have already designated \$500 to CVWO toward purchasing a receiving station, Ann said we could if preferred give as little as \$25 for the membership dues. Geoff voiced that CVWO has many good projects besides the new tracking system program that we benefit from and that he felt they deserved the full donation given last year. There was a general feeling that with the current decent amount in our checking account we can afford to continue to donate \$200 to all the above mentioned groups. Shirley agreed but stated that we need to keep in mind that VABBA2 is soliciting funds. CVWO and Master Naturalists have donated \$200 each. Geoff suggested that our club also donate \$200. There will be a need for funds for this for the next 5 years. Shirley clarified that VABBA is asking donations from individuals, organizations and other groups to fund an educational component for schools and to pay some of the regional coordinators' expenses.

A motion was made that \$200 be donated to the VABBA2. It was seconded and approval was unanimous.

A motion was made that we continue to fund WRL, WLC, CVWO and CCB at the 2015 rates of \$200 each. The motion was seconded and all present were in favor.

Ann shared with us a card that she'd received from Phyllis Appler of Hudson N.H. The card featured a Red-cockaded Woodpecker that would have been a birthday card for her friend, Ruth Beck, and contained a \$100 check toward scholarship grants in Ruth's memory.

Ann requested that another Board member also have the on-line password for Sun Trust Bank and for the online submission of the IRS 990N tax "postcard". She explained that as a tax-exempt organization whose income is less than \$50,000 per year, the only income tax form required (on or before May 15) is the simple 990N form. Shirley Devan volunteered to be that person.

Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar: Cathy had emailed the minutes of the last board meeting held November 12, 2015 to the board members for review. _Minor corrections were made.

Field Trips and Counts – Jim Corliss:

- **Saturday, April 16:** Dismal Swamp with leader Bob Ake. Jim will send out an e-mail reminder. We will car pool at 5:30 am and birding starts at 7:00 am. Weather looks good.
- **Friday-Saturday, May 13 & 14:** Highland County led by Matt Anthony. Trip was limited to 10 people so that only 2 cars will be used on the mountain roads. A place to stay in Staunton has yet to be confirmed. Jim expressed frustration that the opportunity wasn't open to more people but was unable to establish a date for another trip this spring.
- **Sunday, May 15:** Spring Bird Count
- **June, July, and August:** No field trips planned but some may be arranged ad hoc. Geoff added that he believed that Fletcher Smith might be able to lead a trip to Piney Grove at some future time.

Jim added that after the Curles Neck Field trip he'd received several emails from folks upset that someone banged on the barn to try to get the Barn Owl to fly out. Geoff commented that Ellison Orcutt had started the tradition of barn banging years ago. Ellison was included in these emails. Jim said the message to be taken from this was that we be vigilant about behaving ethically.

Bird Counts: Jim Corliss reported that the Christmas Bird Count had just been wrapped up (verifying data and getting supporting information, etc.) about 3 weeks ago.

He reported that the teams and leaders are ready and prepared for the upcoming Spring Bird Count. The twist this year will be to try to fold some of the data collected with that for the Breeding Bird Atlas as the area does contain some of the VABBA priority blocks. At the very least, it can lead to a list of target birds to be confirmed for the VABBA.

Membership – Jeanette Navia: Jeanette was absent but Shirley referred back to an earlier discussion about membership renewal and said that renewals needed to be managed in a more forthright manner. She suggested that it could be most easily done by email using our LISTSERV as at least 90% of our members have e-mail accounts. She proposed that a separate email focused only on renewal be sent out Jan & Feb of each year. Ann said that we should include on the email that membership and any other donations are tax deductible. Shirley said she would be glad to draft the letter. Geoff said he would work with Shirley and Jeanette. It was agreed that this subject would be revisited at our November meeting to finalize the details.

Jeanette sent an email prior to this meeting regarding membership numbers as follow: 133 paying members/couples are up to date; 31 have yet to renew; 4 complimentary memberships (Molly Nealer of NQP, Dwight Davis of WHRO, Bird Watchers Digest, Wild Birds Unlimited), 4 life members and 6 W&M students.

Ann said that Jeanette had asked to have clarified whether the \$5 charge for membership by students applied to W&M students. Geoff stated that members of the W&M Bird Club have free membership.

Ann also said that Jeanette was seeking advice of when to delete non renewing members from the email and newsletter lists. Shirley recommended that if folks don't respond to the renewal requests recently sent out, that Geoff contact them by phone or at an upcoming meeting.

Member at Large & Refreshments- Jan Lockwood: Jan reported that she's had no bad feedback about the recent move to simplify refreshments. There are currently no problems with people signing up.

Old Business

- **W&M Research Grants:** Geoff wanted to review the 5 research grants we'd awarded this year. Our April meeting will feature presentations by 3 of the 4 students we awarded grants to last year. The fourth student, Nick Newberry, will not be able to make it back from Madagascar in time.
- **Nature Camp Scholarships:** Geoff reported that Judy Jones has ably handled that process this year. We will have a brief meet and greet with the 3 recipients at our May meeting.

- **Bill Sheehan/Ruth Beck Fund:** Ann Carpenter noted that given the grants that we awarded this year and the \$500 we voted to donate at this meeting, we have \$2700 left which will be enough to be able to fund the same number of grants next year if we choose.
- **Bird Counts-Venue and Catering.** Jim Corliss said he's planning to check with Carrot Tree in the near future to see if they'd be available at their new facility to once again host our group for our after-bird-count gatherings. Geoff said that he'd authorize that we'd be willing to compensate them by an amount of perhaps \$200 if they think it would take that much to compensate any lost business. Jim said that he would check with James City County Marina, formerly Eco Discovery Park, as a possible backup. There had been an insurance issue problem there that he felt was not insurmountable. Jim said he would send us a progress report this week after he'd visited these two places.

New Business:

- **VABBA2:** Geoff commented that we'd already discussed funding and asked if there were any other issues that we needed to address. Shirley said that the focus of our bird walks and field trips especially during the breeding season should be to document breeding activity as much as possible. Geoff felt that we could use more participants and said that he would ask folks at our upcoming meeting to join in even if they don't feel they are experienced enough as experienced birders would be pleased to have their assistance.
- **Kestrel Boxes:** Geoff put up the one Kestrel Box that was donated to our club at New Kent Forestry Center. He will be checking it for activity in the coming week. We may have gotten it up too late for nesting this season.
- **W&M Bird Club:** Geoff reported that Matt Anthony said that the club is very active. They've been doing a number of their own field trips.

Ann Carpenter was thanked for offering us a lovely place to meet in her home as our usual meeting sites had been fully booked.

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club
April 13, 2016