

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Board**

### **Williamsburg Bird Club**

**September 17, 2018**

Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 5537 Centerville Rd. Williamsburg, VA

**Board Member Attendees:** Cheryl Jacobson, Ann Carpenter, Cathy Millar, Gary Carpenter, Shirley Devan, Bill Williams

**Board Members Absent:** Judy Jones, Melinda Cousins

**Chair Attendees:** Geoff Giles, Lee Schuster, Nancy Barnhart

**Chair Attendees Absent:** Jeanette Navia, Jim Corliss, Barbara Neiss, Tom McCary

**Guest Attendee:** Rexanne Bruno

The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Jacobson at 1:30pm. A quorum of the Executive Board was present.

**Secretary's Report- Cathy Millar:** Cathy reported that there had been an addition to the minutes first shared in May when the group had decided not to support the VA Dept. of Game and Fisheries Birding and Wildlife trail brochure but then decided via emails shortly afterwards to donate \$200. The updated minutes were shared for review the week prior to this meeting. Ann made a motion to approve the updated minutes, seconded by Shirley and unanimously approved. Cathy enquired whether when WBC business is conducted via email exchange between board meetings, she should add them to future minutes as an addendum? Bill recommended that when this occurs, a comment such as 'the following things were approved via email' be added to the minutes. Cheryl said she could supply a list of the people who voted affirmatively on the issues. Resolved that this will be done in the future.

**VSO Annual Meeting 2020 – General Chairperson Rexanne Bruno:** Rexanne reported on the progress since the May Board meeting. Rexanne had already agreed to serve as General Chairperson. The following people volunteered to serve as committee chairs: Ann Carpenter as Finance & Registration Chair, Nancy Barnhart as Field Trip Committee Chair, Shirley Devan as Publicity Chair, Cheryl Jacobson as Program Chair, and Judy Jones as Exhibits & Raffle Chair. These committee chairs make up the Annual Meeting Committee.

This committee chose the dates of May 1-3, 2020 for the conference. After touring and getting prices for three area hotels, Fort Magruder Hotel was selected as the meeting location based on its central location for field trips and arriving guests, extensive grounds conducive to birding, remodeling in progress of the entire hotel and overall meeting prices being better. Cheryl drew up a list of potential speakers and the committee's top choice, Bryan Watts agreed to be the banquet speaker. Shirley has investigated how to use Constant Contact for meeting and field trip registration and Nancy has started thinking about the best field trips to include. Rexanne presented our progress to the VSO Board at their August meeting. She also reported that Bill Williams is working on a revision of *The Birds of Virginia's Colonial Historic Triangle: An Annotated Checklist* that will be available for sale at the 2020 conference. The last edition was printed in 2012.

A copy of the proposed contract with Fort Magruder Hotel had been emailed to the Board for review prior this meeting. Shirley, Ann and Rexanne had requested several revisions which the hotel incorporated into the contract. Rexanne distributed a detailed spreadsheet of hotel and non-hotel related expenses. Fifty guest rooms have been set aside at \$119 per night. The committee has been trying to keep the costs as reasonable as possible. The current estimated cost of registration is \$45 and banquet per person is \$45 (food=\$33 and 11% tax & 21.5% gratuity=\$11.51). The actual banquet menu will be available in 6 months. Previous cost of banquet tickets has ranged from \$36-\$40. The meeting was then open to any questions or concerns about the contract. Considerable discussion ensued regarding the cost being prohibitive to active W&M birding students and how to make the conference accessible to them. Rexanne reminded us that the VSO has always had a policy where folks without a banquet ticket are still welcome to come in after the dinner to hear the speaker. She noted that it is up to the individual club to decide whether local club members who volunteer are given an option to not pay for registration as a reward. She also reported that the raffle at this year's VSO annual meeting in Harrisonburg earned \$900 and suggested that we could use the proceeds from our raffle to subsidize tickets for students or club members for whom the cost would be a concern. She noted that having the banquet speaker lead a field trip Sunday morning has been a big item in previous raffles. She also suggested that costs could be reduced by getting a sponsor such as Center of Conservation Biology or local bird store to fully or partially pay for refreshments for the paper sessions (\$339) who'd in turn be recognized with publicity. It was observed that the conference date is also probably during the beginning of final exams period which may impact student attendance. Cheryl stressed that she wanted the conference accessible to students and that if we do subsidize some tickets that we needed to expect that our club would incur some costs. The board discussed subsidizing half or the entire cost of a registration and/or banquet ticket for up to 10 worthy students or subsidizing tickets for those students who helped with the activities of the conference. That would entail jobs like leading a field trip drawn up and students invited to participate. Cheryl noted that she preferred offering such support when it is noted/heard that individuals are being impacted by the cost. She cautioned that we need to set a limit on how much the club can subsidize. Our treasurer, Ann, noted that besides our checking account, we have easily accessible funds of \$5,000 in the money market. It was estimated that subsidizing tickets for both registration and banquet for 10 students would cost approximately \$900. Cheryl asked that the minutes reflected that no one on the Board objected to the club being financially willing to support up to \$1000 for student registration and banquet costs if needed. She then requested that a motion be made that the contract with Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center be signed. Geoff made the motion, Shirley seconded it and all were in favor. Ann signed the contract and will pay the deposit of \$500. Final payment is made the Sunday of the meeting. Cheryl reported that VSO has a fund for lending money to clubs for initial meeting expenses but our club does not appear to be in need. Cheryl asked Bill to report on groups we need to reach out to for the 2020 VSO meeting. Bill said that we need to contact someone at W&M like Dan Cristol now to alert them that we would like to have participation from students. He also requested that our Chairs reach out to members of the Hampton Roads Bird Club for assistance with behind the scene tasks. His preference is that this be listed as a joint venture between both clubs as the clubs overlap. In turn we will help HRBC when they are tapped to host a VSO meeting. Cheryl will pass these thoughts/invitations on to appropriate folks at W&M and

Shawn Dash at HRBC and ask committee chairs to reach out. Nancy said she would like to ask for a co-chair for field trips and Shirley would like a co-chair for publicity.

Rexanne said we have accomplished all the important preparatory things that need to be done in 2018. The Board thanked her for all her assistance.

**Treasurer's Report- Ann Carpenter:** Ann distributed a spread sheet and reported the following: check book -\$3,670.11, CD's- \$8,099.53, money market- \$5,002.34 with total assets of \$16,771.98. Our income for 2018 is less than in 2017 in every category of donations. Cheryl enquired if there were a lot of dues that were not paid. Jeanette was absent so Cheryl will follow up with her to see if this really is a big problem. Shirley stated that we may need to be more direct and assertive about getting members to pay as many who get The Flyer by email don't read it and simply forget when dues need renewal. She proposed that the Membership Chair go after those people by sending them a first class letter with a reminder that we miss them and that their dues are late. Geoff said the HRBC announces at their meetings that those who need to pay their dues should see the Membership Chair at the back of the room. It may be too late this year to implement these ideas now since 2019 dues are coming soon. Cheryl will follow up with Jeanette about doing this in upcoming years. Ann said our expenses to date of \$8,903 were less than last year. Outstanding expenses for the year are the The Flyer and speakers.

Ann enquired whether she should write a check of \$100 for Dave Youker's honorarium as our September speaker since he has asked that it be contributed to the Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship. It was agreed that a note be made in the records that we set aside \$100 for nature camp and that it be announced when Judy introduces Dave at our meeting.

Bill moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted; seconded by Cathy and unanimously approved.

**Field Trips- Chairperson Geoff Giles:**

- Geoff has asked Bryan Taber for a recommendation for the optimum time for a field trip to the Kiptopeke Hawk Watch and when he would be available to lead us for our September or October field trip. Bill said the last week in September and first 10 days in October have been the best. Geoff will keep us in touch via email.
- Geoff has booked the boat for our annual field trip on the Chesapeake Bay for the third Sunday of January. High attendance is expected since the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands are closed to birding this year. We usually make a profit of \$300-\$600. Bill proposed that we consider earmarking these profits for the next two years to cover 2020 VSO expenses.

**Bird Counts/Bird Walks – Chairperson Jim Corliss:** Jim was absent but had sent a report to Cheryl. She shared that the Christmas Bird Count is Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Jim does not have a leader for this upcoming Saturday bird walk at NQP. There were no volunteers as many people are out of town. Cheryl will report this back to Jim. Jim is planning to continue the same bird walk model of having the first walk every month in a different place and the second walk at New Quarter Park. There were no further comments or questions.

**Programs – Vice President Judy Jones:** Judy was absent but had sent the Board a report on the following upcoming programs:

- **September 19:** Dave Youker will present 'Birding in Guatemala' as well as talk about the Community Cloud Forest Conservation project that involves the people in the community with birds. This year's Nature Camp Scholarship recipients will give brief presentations.
- **October 17:** John Swaddle will discuss his research to develop technology to reduce bird hits on wind turbines.
- **November 14:** Fletcher Smith will speak about his research in the Arctic. This will be a joint meeting with the Master Naturalists. Date of meeting set to avoid conflict with Thanksgiving.
- **January 16, 2019:** Bob Schammerhorn will give an illustrated presentation about Atlantic Coastal Birds.
- **February 20:** Sergio Harding from VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries will talk about bird conservation programs in the DGIF.
- **March 20:** Maureen Eiger, a wild bird rehabilitator, will speak on the biology of feathers.
- **April 17:** The W&M grad students who have received grants from our club in 2018 will present their research.
- **May 15:** Speaker to be determined.

Judy had added a point of concern that needed the consideration of the Board. The March speaker, Maureen Eiger has requested \$150 in addition to the honorarium to cover hotel and meals since she is coming from Roanoke. She also has cat and dog allergies and is requesting lodging at a hotel that does not allow pets. Furthermore, she might be bringing some birds that are being rehabilitated and an extensive collection of feathers. Shirley recommended that we look into a guest room at Williamsburg Landing that has in the past given free lodging to a Master Naturalist speaker. We can also take her out to dinner. Cheryl said she and Judy will probably be providing lodging for the birds. She is listed in a VSO booklet of potential speakers. Geoff noted that live animals attract increased attendance and made a motion that we provide the requested \$150. The motion was not seconded and died. Ann made a second motion that we tell her that we will make sure she is physically and financially comfortable for which we will set aside \$150 but that in the meantime we research other options to meet her needs. Cathy seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

**The Flyer- Vice President Melinda Cousins:** Melinda was not present due to air conditioning problems. Shirley noted that the September newsletter looked very nice and asked if there were any questions or comments. Shirley reported that it cost 71 cents to mail each of the 43 issues of this 12 page B&W newsletter. Printing cost was \$76 since there were more pages. Cheryl said that Melinda had checked costs of printing at Printwell, UPS and Minuteman Printing and had reported back that there are no cheaper options. Our club has a business account at Staples so we do get a discount. Jeanette digitally archives the newsletters on our web site.

**Refreshments- Chairperson Barbara Neiss:** Barbara was not present. Cheryl said we'd had a need for this upcoming membership meeting which was promptly filled.

**Other Business:**

- Cheryl passed out copies of the Williamsburg Community Foundation newsletter that featured on its front page an article about the Mike and Jeanne Millin Fund set up by their son and his wife to support Nature Camp. The Millins will not be present at our upcoming membership meeting so we will postpone recognition until the October meeting. Shirley reminded us that we need to remember in future planning and recognizing participants that we have our own distinct Bill Williams Nature Camp scholarship.
- Cheryl reported that Jeanette is concerned that she might not get back in time for the upcoming Wednesday membership meeting. She has all the raffle tickets. Geoff will buy some more just in case they are needed. They will be needed for the boat trip anyway.
- Cheryl reported briefly on the work plan that she'd sent out earlier via email outlining what we'll need to do for the VA Breeding Bird Atlas in 2019 & 2020. We have 6 distant blocks that will need to be covered. She'll talk more about that plan as we get closer to the next breeding season.
- Nancy announced that the CVWO Hawk Watch is up and running and is using a new technology that is a reporting platform that shows hawk count data every day. There is a link on their web and FB pages. Shirley added that the VA-bird ListServe on the Kiptopeke Hawk Watch data totals also has a link for the up-to-date data. There is an effort underway to create livestream reporting.
- **Next Meeting:** Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm.

Cheryl adjourned the meeting at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Millar, Secretary,  
Williamsburg Bird Club  
September 18, 2018

#### **Following Discussions by the Board via Emails:**

- In September Cheryl sent a copy of the by-laws to the Board and asked them to indicate their input about the need for appointing a nominating committee since all of the Board members wish to continue another year. Emails were received from Judy Jones, Cathy Millar, Ann Carpenter, Gary Carpenter and a verbal response to Cheryl from Shirley Devan indicating that it did not seem necessary under these circumstances. This constitutes a majority on this decision. However, it was expressed as being very important that the membership be allowed to nominate from the floor as called for in the by-laws. Cheryl assured the Board by email that she plans to do so.
- On November 9<sup>th</sup> Cheryl shared an email request from Dan Cristol to have access to the WBC list of member's emails for a fund raising request. John Swaddle and Dan Cristol's bird research, *Does mercury pollution affect fertility?*, is going to be a test-case for fundraising around a student-based research project. This will be the first student-based research project on W&M's Tribefunding Platform. Cheryl noted that our club has never before shared our email list. A

majority of board members responded via email stating their approval of his request based on Dan's relationship being so fundamentally important to our club.