

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board
Williamsburg Bird Club
February 10, 2020**

Williamsburg Pottery Au Bon Pain, 6692D Richmond Rd, Williamsburg, VA

Board Member Attendees: Cheryl Jacobson, Mary Ellen Hodges, Cathy Millar, Dean Shostak, Shirley Devan, Bill Williams, Gary Carpenter

Board Members Absent: Ann Carpenter

Chair Attendees: George Martin, Catherine Flanagan, Nancy Barnhart, Bill Williams

Chair Attendees Absent: Jeanette Navia, Jim Corliss, Lee Schuster, Patty Maloney

The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Jacobson at 1:00 pm. A quorum of the Executive Board was present.

Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar: The minutes sent to the Board prior the meeting had one modification made. Gary moved that they be accepted and Shirley seconded. They were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Ann Carpenter: Ann was absent but via email had submitted a final spreadsheet for 2019 and a summary of income and expenses for 2010 -2019. Her final report for 2019 and update on 2020 info are as follows.

Final Treasurer's Report for 2019

Assets:

Checking Account: \$3520.69 (includes 2020 dues received through December 31, 2019)

Money Market: \$5,000.50

CD's: \$8,200.97

Total Assets: \$16,722.16

2019 Highlights:

2019 income: \$ 11,194 (Does not include 2020 dues received in 2019)

Dues, donations to Nature Camp and to CDR, and interest on assets lagged behind 2018 by \$459, but other categories (donations for grants, donations from Bird Stores and the Bob Long memorial fund) were higher for an increase in income over 2018 of \$1,656. However, please note that part of this increase was the donation from the Millin children of \$940 for the Millin Nature Camp Scholarship.

2019 expenses: \$ 12,161.08

Our expenses were increased by \$ 1,857 over 2018. This includes the \$940 Millin scholarship funds. The other big-ticket expense items new for 2019 were donations for the CCFC, the VABBA2, the Purple Martin Houses and Seed for New Quarter Park. Expenses for the Flyer and the CDR were down slightly. Deficit of 2019 income versus 2019 expenses: \$967

2020 information

Income to date:

Dues: \$2,480

Grants: \$975

Nature Camp: \$2,085 (includes Millin contribution of \$960). Will make three awards totaling \$2,880

CDR: \$210

Undesignated donations: \$205

Hats: \$20
Boat Trip: \$1710
Expenses:
Flyer: \$120
Stamps: \$40
Boat Trip: \$1300
Current Assets:
Checkbook: \$7,698.19
Undeposited Funds: \$285
MM: \$5,000.63
CD's: \$8,206.84 Note: This week I will cash out the CD valued at \$2,792.78 as of Feb 6 to ensure that we have sufficient funds to cover any contingencies from the VSO meeting. If we don't need the funds, I will reinvest in a new CD later in the spring.

Gary, representing Ann, reported that she is concerned about the need to allocate funds for 2020. An issue she wanted addressed at this meeting was whether we wanted to move the number of Ornithology Grants from three to four in view of the fact that Dan gave the club \$525 that he'd earned for his birding column in the Virginia Gazette. Cheryl noted that Dan has often reported that there were only three students that he recommended. She will ask Dan how many grants he thinks he can use. A motion was made by Cathy that we increase the number of grants to four if Dan has four suitable candidates; Shirley seconded it; the motion was passed unanimously.

We will need to vote in the near future on funding for Williamsburg Regional Library, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, Center for Conservation Biology, Historic Virginia Land Conservancy and Community Cloud Forest Conservation. It was decided that Ann make her recommendation to the Board for funding via email and that a vote will be taken via email to fulfill the dispersing of monies in the first quarter. We were reminded that we should hold off from making a donation to the CCFC and VA Breeding Bird Atlas until after the 2020 VSO meeting as it was previously decided that profits from the meeting be shared with CCFC and VABBA2.

Membership/Webmaster – Jeanette Navia: Jeanette was absent but sent via email the following report.

New member addresses since last board meeting: 4 (2 couples, 2 individuals)

Total number of members paid through 2019 and 2020, including Life members, and complimentary members (W&M students, WHRO, Wild Birds Unlimited): 190 (includes 51 families/couples)

Number of people renewing this year so far: 108

Members paid through 2019 but not yet renewed for 2020: 60

Question: The search program we are currently using on the website is free. It is free because it has many ads, provided by Google. It can be confusing to the user. Although there are many other free search programs, they all either have ads or, more likely, they do not search pdf files. Because we have decades' worth of *The Flyer* in pdf format, I chose the search program with the ads that does search pdf files. There is a newer search program (Ivory Search) that does claim to search pdf files, but it costs \$49.99 a year. Is it worth it to use this new search program? Or do we want to stay with what we have? Or downgrade to a search program that does not search pdf files (and therefore would not include searching *The Flyer*, but would have cleaner results without ads)? (I think we do need to search pdf files, myself. There is a lot of information in *The Flyers*).

The Board agreed that the ability to search *The Flyer* was important. The annual cost of \$49.99 per year for the Ivory Search program was thought very reasonable. Concern was registered about whether there

were any negative factors involving dropping Google Search or downsides to buying Ivory Search. A decision was made to defer the issue to the next meeting when Jeanette has more info addressing this. Regarding the 60 members who still have not paid, Cheryl will send an email to the membership with membership renewal in the subject line and that is solely devoted to requesting that folks renew.

Mass Audubon Museum of Bird Art: Cheryl had received on our club website a request from the Mass Audubon Museum that we circulate a poster regarding an art contest for four to eighteen-year-old young people in the US.

Refreshments – Catherine Flanagan: Cathy reported that we will have enough refreshments for the upcoming joint meeting with master naturalists. Cheryl noted that since this meeting's program includes live birds, the program will be first on the agenda to minimize stress after which refreshments will be served to allow time for the birds to be packed up for a prompt exit. The business portion will be held after refreshments.

Vice President/Programs: Dean Shostak reported on the upcoming forty five minute program, AWARE, which is an animal rehab program in Richmond with Deb Woodward who is also a Virginia Master Naturalist as speaker. She is expected to bring a Pileated Woodpecker, Mallard Duck, Screech Owls and a Kestrel.

Dean reported on further following programs:

- Wednesday, March 18: Mike Bishop from Northern Virginia Purple Martin Initiative.
- Wednesday, April 15: The grad students who were grant recipients will present their research.
- Wednesday, May 20: Nick Newberry will talk about warblers at Magee Marsh in Ohio.
- Dean is considering asking Jessica Ruthenberg, the Watchable Wildlife biologist with DGIF, to talk about Watchable Wildlife Trails at a future meeting.
- Cheryl suggested another possible speaker being someone to talk about the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel nesting site issue.

Wildlife Rehab List: Catherine Flanagan has been compiling a list of organizations that treat injured birds that will highlight those groups that operate in our area. This important resource will be ready for our upcoming meeting and shared with the membership via email.

Vice President/Editor (The Flyer): Mary Ellen Hodges reported that the deadline for the next *Flyer* is February 21st. She thanked Gary as proof reader and Cheryl and Shirley for their assistance with her first two publications. She expressed concern that she was not able to fit all the submissions for the January issue and requested input regarding the best font to use that would maximize the availability of space for articles/photos and that would still be readable by aging eyes. She distributed samples of different fonts and sizes for our inspection. She noted that she has a working layout of 10 pages of which 8 are devoted to articles/photos. The limit is imposed to make printed versions that are sent in the mail affordable at 55 cents each. Cheryl noted that for a brief period there were two versions of *The Flyer*: one that was going out by email that had no page limit (the extra pages mostly filled with photos), and the other limited to 10 pages for hard copy. This was dropped because it was so time consuming. Shirley and Mary Ellen both expressed concern that since our newsletter is the official record of the WBC, having two versions creates a problem. Shirley advised that she thankfully acknowledge folks for their photo submissions but tell them that not every photo might be used due to space limitation. She added that as a duly elected Vice President and Editor of *The Flyer*, Mary Ellen is empowered to make the decisions about what is included. Mary Ellen concluded that she still wanted input regarding font and size and it was agreed that we would email her our preferences after further consideration.

Upgrade of WBC Display: Shirley Devan reported that we have two tables for a display of our WBC at the 2020 VSO meeting. She asked if we wanted to upgrade our display to look more up-to-date and professional. Our current exhibit is a tri-folding board with photos that can be easily changed. The alternative is a retractable stand-up banner that would be colorful but have room for fewer images with those images being permanent. It is much easier to transport and leaves more room on the table for other items. The consensus of the Board was to go with some version of the banner. Shirley will email us a proposal for the size and price. The order will need to be made by April 1 to have it by May 1st. Gary moved that we buy a retractable banner; Mary Ellen seconded it, and the motion was passed unanimously. Shirley said when she has designed it, she will share it with us via email.

VSO 2020 Meeting: Cheryl reported that there are two questions we need to address. The raffle committee people are asking for two tickets for the 2021 boat trip to be raffled at the meeting. Shirley moved that we do so; Gary seconded it and the motion was passed unanimously. We had previously voted to cover the expense of registration and banquet for ten W&M deserving students. Dan Cristol has reported that there will probably be only seven. They are the four students delivering papers and probably three from the new class. Cheryl will tell Dan that we are prepared to cover the cost of seven students.

Field Trips – George Martin: George reported on the following field trips:

- Saturday, February 15: Dutch Gap Conservation Area led by Rose Ryan. Rose will meet us at the parking area at Dutch Gap at 9 AM. Birders interested in carpooling should meet at the Colony Square Shopping Center at 7:40 AM for departure no later than 7:50 AM.
- Saturday, March 21st: Chippokes Plantation State Park led by Nick Newberry. Tentatively, the walk will start at the park around 8 AM. Those interested in carpooling should meet at the Colony Square Shopping Center at 7 AM. More details to follow.
- April field trip remains to be finalized.
- Two options were explored for the May field trip. George suggested going to the Breeding Bird Atlas blocks that are near the NC border that we've not finished. Cheryl reported that Andy Hawkins is willing to do a bird walk on Warbler Road. This would probably be an overnight trip.

Bird Counts/Walks – Jim Corliss: Jim was absent. Cheryl reported that Jim has not established a date for the Spring Bird Count but is considering May 9th. He is getting the Christmas Bird Count data on the Audubon site this week. Upcoming bird walks are as following.

- Saturday, February 22nd: Cheryl reported that we got a request from the boy scouts to attend this WBC community walk. Scott Hemler is working with the scout leader and Jan Lockwood will assist.

Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel Destruction of Nesting Sites: Cheryl inquired if as an organization we have done enough about supporting finding/creating alternative nesting sites or is there more that we can do. Members have been emailing the responsible groups. Cheryl has emailed the membership urging folks to attend a Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting being held on February 19, 2020, at 10:00 am at the VDOT Auditorium. This Board is responsible for VDOT's actions at the HRBT and they have the authority to ensure that the birds are protected during the HRBT expansion project and have a new island built for the birds. Some 20,000 birds (including Royal Terns, Sandwich Terns, Least Terns, Laughing Gulls, Herring Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Snowy Egrets, Canada Geese, Black Skimmers, Gull-billed Terns) will have their nesting site paved over. A long discussion ensued in which Bill and Mary Ellen shared their insights on the complexity of the situation making it a very difficult issue. Bill

suggested that Plum Tree Island could be a possible future colony site. It is a national wildlife refuge, so manipulation of the habitat would require working with National Fish and Wildlife. Bill is hoping for recommendations from the Virginia Tech study that will probably be released this April. Alas, it appears nothing can be done in time for this year. It was concluded that at this point we've done what we can in terms of education, and that there is currently no recommendation that we can act upon. Cheryl added that it be a priority that the recommended speaker regarding the HRBT issue be scheduled for a club program in the autumn.

Next Meeting: April 13, 2020 at 1:00 pm at Williamsburg Pottery Au Bon Pain.

Cheryl adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club,
February 11, 2020

Addendum:

March 12: Rexanne Bruno shared her email to the VSO Board of Directors and to our Annual Meeting Planning committee about the probable need to cancel WBC hosting the VSO annual meeting on May 1-3 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. She outlined the possible financial consequences our club might face by cancelling the contract with Fort Magruder hotel. In the next couple of weeks, she will speak with Fort Magruder about invoking the Impossibility Clause which reads: "termination of liability due to circumstances beyond the control of either party, such as acts of God, war, government regulations, disaster strikes, etc. to the extent that such circumstances make it illegal or impossible to provide or use the hotel facilities. The ability to terminate this agreement without liability pursuant to this paragraph is conditioned upon the delivery of written notice to the other party setting forth the basis of such termination as soon as reasonably practical but in no event longer than ten days after learning of such basis."

March 15: A consensus of the Board was reached by email that all WBC activities be suspended due to the Covid 19 pandemic until further notice.

March 24: Cheryl sent an email to the general membership that the VSO 2020 Annual Meeting had been canceled. She thanked all the volunteers who stepped up when asked and a special thanks to Rexanne Bruno for her tremendous leadership and to all the members of the planning committee. She expressed gratitude to all the volunteers, exhibitors, field trip leaders and raffle donors.

April 1: Cheryl Jacobson notified the Board that Nancy Barnhart has volunteered to assume the WBC's Records Committee Chair. Bill Williams, who has so aptly filled this office for many years, had asked to step down several months ago. Bill has indicated his support. Although Committee Chairs are appointed by the president, Cheryl gave the Board opportunity for input.

April 1: Cheryl Jacobson sent an email to the general membership that our newsletter editor, Mary Ellen, has set the end of Saturday, April 25, as the deadline for newsletter submissions. She is suggesting

that members report about what they are reading and how nature and birds are helping them to cope during this stressful time. Cheryl has decided that only email copies of the newsletter will be distributed. The production of paper copies would unnecessarily expose that person to public settings.

April 12: Cheryl reported that the Impossibility Clause did not need to be imposed because a loop hole regarding the dates was found and that we were able to cancel within a time period wherein there should be no penalty. We did receive an email from Fort Magruder hotel accepting our cancellation in which there was no indication of a pending penalty. Cheryl also thanked many of the planning committee who did not ask for a refund but instead donated their payments to cover some of the WBC losses. She included the following summary of what the costs and donations appear to be:

Expenses			
09/29/18	Fort Magruder deposit	\$	500.00
02/14/20	Amazon - Banquet and Breakfast tickets	\$	16.60
02/21/20	Walmart - raffle tickets	\$	9.61
03/20/20	Certified Letter to Ft. Magruder	\$	5.80
	paypal fees	\$	118.10
		\$	650.11
Donations			
		\$	80.00
		\$	97.50
		\$	92.61
		\$	97.50
		\$	136.62
		\$	504.23

Cheryl also noted that in anticipation of the 2020 meeting expenses, Ann had cashed out one of our three CD's. That has added almost \$2800 to the club's available money.

April 11: Cheryl Jacobson emailed the Board that she'd received a request from Jessica Ruthenberg of DGIF that we repeat our May 2018 contribution of \$200 toward a reprint of the *Bird and Wildlife Trail* brochure. An email poll of the Board resulted in seven voting Board members approving the club's repeating the contribution of \$200. There was one non-response.