

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board
Williamsburg Bird Club
August 28, 2020**

Conducted via Zoom, Invited by Dean Shostak; Presided by Cheryl Jacobson

Board Member Attendees: Cheryl Jacobson, Ann and Gary Carpenter, Cathy Millar, Mary Ellen Hodges, Dean Shostak, Tory Gussman, Shirley Devan

Board Members Absent: Bill Williams

Chair Attendees: George Martin, Catherine Flanagan, Jeanette Navia, Nancy Barnhart, Lee Schuster, Patty Maloney

Chair Attendees Absent: Jim Corliss

The meeting was called to order by Cheryl Jacobson at 2 pm. A quorum of the Executive Board was present.

Treasurer's Report – Ann Carpenter: Ann reported that her recent pandemic project was converting Bird Club financial records from MS Excel to Quick Books. This should reduce errors caused by the need to occasionally add data to multiple spreadsheets. It also allows her to more easily report on more specific/one time expenditures; to report income from an "artificial" club year that might begin the "day" someone makes a dues or contribution donation in the autumn for the upcoming year versus an actual calendar year; and to report "fiscal (calendar)" year income and expenses to the VA Department of Charitable Solicitations. The only downside is that the income and expense report is 3 pages and there is a separate file for Club Assets.

The income in the attached report includes dues and contributions made in the prior year for the upcoming year. Ann will call these reports "club year" as opposed to fiscal or calendar year. The attached assets report is the actual balances as of August 22.

Ann noted that one of the reasons that there is more money in the checking account is because the club received \$1920 back from Nature Camp. She also reported that our membership dues did finally exceed the dues we collected in 2019. This mostly reflects the increase in dues from \$15 to \$20 for single membership as the number of members remains approximately the same.

Under expenses she highlighted that the cost of postage is shown as including that for *The Flyer* as well as other WBC mailings whereas previously it had been separated out. Group agreed to having the cost lumped together. Ann noted that the cost of honorariums for speakers (\$75 for all except \$125 for Katie Fallon) will be higher this year since we've had more meetings. The bottom line is our net income is \$4,826.15 whereas last year we had a deficit. It was noted that we won't have the income in 2021 that we had this year from the Geoff Giles Memorial Fund or our annual boat trip.

Ann reported that she will be sending a donation of \$150 to the Purple Martin Conservation Association for our club's membership as a Benefactor.

Williamsburg Bird Club ASSETS as of August 22, 2020: SunTrust Checking \$6,024.42; SunTrust CD 2 \$2,845.75; SunTrust CD 3 \$2,604.00; SunTrust Money Market \$7,794.14; **Total Checking/Savings \$19,268.31**

The spreadsheets were added to the minutes.

Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar: The minutes emailed to the Board prior to the meeting required no corrections or additions. Gary Carpenter moved that they be accepted; seconded by Mary Ellen Hodges; approved unanimously.

Purple Martin Project: Cheryl reported that she had been working on getting signage added to the Purple Martin house that our club erected at York River State Park. Proceedings were interrupted by the Covid shutdown and now there is a new staff person who is asking Cheryl to start over again. She indicated that the park is agreeable to accepting our proposal and she is planning on using a popular Purple Martin poster with our club's name on it. She will get this done in next 30 – 60 days.

Resuming Bird Walks During the Pandemic: Cheryl reported that Hampton Roads Bird Club has resumed bird walks with strict protocol of no more than 8 people; no sharing of rides or equipment; mandatory masks and staying 6 feet apart. They are inviting only club members. To date they have had no more than 4 people attend. Jim Corliss who is chairperson of Bird Walks recommended that we start with only doing one monthly walk at New Quarter Park starting in September to see how it works out. Scott Hemler is eager to lead the walks. Cheryl proposed that she would send out an invitation via Listserv to members only. As soon as the accepted number of folks responded, she would follow up with another email letting the folks know who'd made the list and the others know that the limit had been reached. She would also give Scott a list of their names. She also offered to initially attend just the start of each walk to support Scott and stress the importance of following the protocol to make this work. Cheryl opened the proposal to discussion by the Board. George remarked that in order to keep people from being tempted to cluster too close to see a bird of interest, it would be good for the leader to hone skills in describing the location really well. It was decided to currently not open the walks to other groups like Master Naturalists or the public. Cheryl will ask NQP not to advertise our bird walks. That can be changed if not many club members respond.

Ann noted that Hampton Roads Bird Club questioned her on whether we had liability insurance. Their club may be looking into getting liability insurance as they begin bird walks again. John Adair indicated that he was posing this question to a number of organizations. Cathy Flanagan reported that Native Plant Society has a release of liability form for folks going on walks to sign. It was noted that liability forms set an understanding but do not hold up in court as it is unconstitutional to waive one's rights. Shirley noted that the VSO has acquired liability insurance for field trips and will contact the VSO treasurer for guidance regarding cost, etc. Cheryl will follow up with John Adair regarding what HRBC decides. Mary Ellen proposed having guidelines to be followed in light of Covid clearly written so that participants are fully aware of the risks. Cheryl noted that she would include the rules in the Listserv invitation. Cathy Flanagan will share with Cheryl the Native Plant Society disclaimer as a reference for our own. Gary proposed the number of folks be limited to 6 plus the leader.

The group finally reached an agreement of starting bird walks in September with a limit of 6 folks plus the leader following the above noted protocols and means of invitation.

Monthly Zoom Meetings: Cheryl checked with the Board for any recommendations about what we have been doing to date. There was unanimous appreciation of the Zoom platform for holding our meetings. We do need to limit attendance to 100 as the next level is too costly. Dean who is paying for the business membership said that he has no issues and added that Zoom is updating their security in November. Dean agreed to send Zoom etiquette regarding muting mike when joining meeting and using chat box for questions when he sends out Zoom invites.

Programs – Co-Vice Presidents Dean Shostak and Tory Gusman:

September: Dean reported that Mike Bishop, President and founder of Northern Virginia Purple Martin Initiative, will be our next speaker. This program resulted in about 500 Purple Martins fledging this year. He will also talk about another cavity nester, Chimney Swifts. Cheryl is considering inviting Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists and Hampton Roads Bird Club.

October: Tory reported that Katie Fallon who lives in W VA will give a presentation based on her book, Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird. Cheryl added that Katie was a professor at VA Tech and was across the hall when her students were being shot during the 2007 April shooting. Katie was so traumatized that she quit and to aid the healing process started searching for the Cerulean warbler.

November: Sarah Karpanty PhD, professor at VA Tech who, among other things, teaches principles of Fisheries and Wildlife Management, will talk about the successful move of nesting seabirds from South Island to Fort Wool and barges. She was recommended by DGIF and was involved in the study of creating a new habitat for the birds from the very beginning.

VSO Fundraising: Shirley Devan reported that she is on the fundraising committee of the VSO's second fundraising effort to raise money for the analysis and publication of the data collected during the 2nd Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas survey over the last five years. She stressed the importance of making the data eventually accessible to scientists, citizen scientists, state wildlife managers, property, government and business managers around the state. The funding of the data collection was funded to a great extent by Dept of Wildlife Resources (formerly DGIF) but they do not have funds for this second stage of analysis and compilation. The VSO is seeking donations from members and organizations around the state. Currently the data is stored at Cornell's data base. Our bird club has donated \$500 to VSO this spring. Shirley proposed that she ask Bill Williams who has been on the steering committee for the Breeding Bird Atlas from the beginning to write an appeal to the membership for donations via our Listserv. She shared her perspective that although we receive many monetary requests from conservation and bird groups, she prioritizes the local and state organizations that are bootstrap organizations and in greater need. It was decided that Shirley be given 5 minutes at the upcoming September membership Zoom meeting as well as have Bill Williams send out an appeal in his own words.

The Flyer - Editor Mary Ellen Hodges: Mary Ellen noted that it has been a bit difficult collecting enough material for the newsletter since there are fewer club activities such as bird walks and field trips to report. She requested ideas for stories/topics for future newsletters. Cheryl noted that, as usual, we won't have a newsletter in December. It was proposed that we do a combined Oct/Nov newsletter which was met with no opposition. Mary Ellen suggested that she send the newsletter in mid to late October to advertise the November meeting and include the membership form as a first reminder for renewal of membership.

Mary Ellen suggested that an article be written in an upcoming newsletter about the significance of the Christmas Bird Count and how it will be conducted this year. Cheryl reported that Jim is expecting that the CBC will be done by individuals and reported via eBird like we did for the Global Big Day event this last spring.

Ann reported that we are now mailing only 30 hard copies of the newsletter. Staples is printing the newsletter but she and Gary are collating the pages to save money as Staples charges quite a bit for that service.

Field Trips – George Martin: George noted that field trips are essentially bird walks taken further away. If we are tentative about bird walks, he recommended that we see how bird walks work before planning field trips. He suggested that since we probably won't have a boat trip in January that we target that

month for the first potential field trip as long as the NQP bird walks work according to plan. We would then need to establish how we would plan a field trip within the same parameters.

Membership/Webmaster – Jeanette Navia: Nothing new to report. Our FB page is getting more attention.

Bluebird Trail at Waller Mill Elementary – Lee Schuster: Lee reported that she has seen pictures of the really nice bluebird houses Roger Searles has built from the money our club donated. She said they had a very successful season with at least 8 nests producing fledglings. Lee has the 6 old bluebird boxes in her basement and asked if anyone wants them to refurbish. Cheryl noted that the Boy Scouts made 10 new boxes. Lee is willing to store them a while longer in case a need arises next spring esp. if a new trail is set up.

Child Development Resources – Gary Carpenter: Gary talked to the folks with CDR a couple of weeks ago and the playgroup that enjoyed the bird feeders we sponsored has not met and has no plans to meet for the foreseeable future but will let us know when they are ready to.

Historian – Patty Maloney: Patty requested that we clip anything we see pertaining to the bird club and send it to her. Shirley suggested that the Newsletter Index compiled by Mary Anne Fennell be sent to her to be included in the history records. She will send Patty the most recent version.

Records/Liaison to CVWO – Nancy Barnhart: Nancy reported that Hawk Watch at Kiptopeke State Park will begin on September 1. The hawk counter will have a “safe zone” on the platform but visitors are welcome apart from that area, practicing social distancing and following Park regulations.

Bird Records: We are seeing some late breeding activity, e.g. nestlings and fledglings being fed by adults. Also, shorebird activity; only the 3rd record of a Ruff, and the 9th of a Long-billed Dowitcher in the Colonial National Historic Triangle Bird Records. The summary is updated at the end of the month on the WBC website. (Thanks Jeanette) She asked that any observations be sent to her via email.

Refreshments – Catherine Flanagan: Cathy noted that refreshments are not being served now that we are on Zoom but that Cheryl has substituted it with a raffle involving correctly answering a question from the last meeting’s presentation. A discussion ensued about the last meeting’s question being too difficult and Cheryl asked for suggestions for a question for the September meeting. Some ideas were suggested to design questions from birding trivia or regarding our local bird population but Cheryl wants to keep it focused on encouraging members to pay attention to our presentations. Finally decided on probably making the question simply being ‘who was our speaker and what was the topic’.

Next Meeting: Friday, November 20th at 2pm via Zoom.

Cheryl Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 3:40pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club
August 29, 2020

Addendum:

- September 4th: Cheryl sent an invitation to only the membership to attend a bird walk on September 26th at 8 am at NQP limited to the first 6 people that responded. She stressed that masks must be worn covering the nose and mouth at all times; social distancing of 6 feet is required and that there will be no sharing of optics or books. She attached a Release from Liability Form that indicated that by signing up for the walk that the person is accepting the conditions of the Release. She requested that participants please print and sign a copy and bring it to the walk.

A copy of the release form was added to the minutes.