

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board  
Williamsburg Bird Club**

June 9, 2021

Tory Gussman hosted the meeting on Dean Shostak's Zoom account;  
Presided by President Cheryl Jacobson.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Bill Williams

**Chair Attendees:** Catherine Flanagan, Patty Maloney, Nancy Barnhart

**Chair Attendees Absent:** Jeanette Navia, George Martin, Jim Corliss, Lee Schuster

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 the Bird Club received a \$10,000 unrestricted donation from the estate of Tom McCary. This donation and the 2 CD's that were cashed out in the past two years are currently deposited in our Money Market account and amounts to a total of about \$15,000. Ann expressed concern that we need to consider a new investment strategy for our monies. Currently CDs are paying 0.05% and checking accounts and money market even less. She noted that we do not really have enough funds to set up an investment account.

Ann recommended that we consider depositing some of our funds into an endowment in the Williamsburg Community Foundation which helps individuals and foundations invest their monies. Although there is a minimum annual maintenance fee of \$250, this could result in a much higher rate of return for our investment. We would, however, be strongly discouraged from taking funds from the principal investment. We would receive an annual payout of 3.5% of the funds 12 quarter rolling balance.

Tom McCary had also made a second bequest of an unspecified amount directly to the Williamsburg Community Foundation specifically targeted to make awards to the Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarships. The club will receive an annual check from the Foundation in the amount of about 3.5% of the value of the Tom McCary fund that we will use to support Nature Camp Scholarships. That payment is usually made in late February or early March.

Ann asked Nancy Sullivan, Executive Director of the Williamsburg Community Foundation, who had joined us on Zoom, to inform us about the organization and what the options are for creating an endowment using Tom's \$10,000 donation.

Ms. Sullivan described the WCF as a tax -exempt public charity created by and for the people of Greater Williamsburg in 1999 that focuses on pooling donations into a coordinated investment and grant making facility to meet local needs. The WCF has over \$25 million in assets with 168 individual funds set up for different purposes and has distributed over \$9.2 million in grants and scholarships since 1999. She stressed that an endowment is considered permanent and provides a steady stream of income over the long term by allowing the monies to grow and keep pace with inflation with the payout growing slowly over time. It is not a rainy- day fund. She described the three different ways money comes from the Fund and the different levels of control. Investments are broadly diversified primarily in mutual funds. WCF has an independent financial investment committee and an independent auditor. The WFC

annually provides participants an estimate of the available payout and the participants have the option of accepting all or part of it or not accepting it and rolling it over to allow the amount to grow faster. A discussion ensued regarding how much we want to put into an endowment versus how much the club needs for expenses.

Ann had emailed a spreadsheet prior to this meeting showing total “2021 club year” dues received, total “2020 club year” dues and 2020 actual expenses for comparison purposes. She reported the projected Assets as of December 31, 2021 are as following: SunTrust checkbook - \$4,488.49; SunTrust CD - \$2,850.48; SunTrust Money Market - \$19,571.17 (currently includes Tom’s \$10,000 donation); Total \$26,910.14. She asked us to note that our club’s 2021 calendar year expenses may exceed our income (excluding the donation from Tom McCary’s estate) by 1,516. Excluding the donation from Tom’s estate, our 2021 calendar year income is \$7,334. Projected expenses are \$8,886.

Ann recommended that, in view of not knowing our future expenses, we put Tom’s donation plus the sale of one CD into the WCF. If we were to leave these funds in the money market or reinvest in one or more CD’s, the earnings on the investments would not exceed \$8 annually at the current rates of return, whereas the WCF will send us an annual payout of 3.5% of the funds 12 quarter rolling balance.

Mary Ellen expressed concern about locking up such a sizeable amount of money and asked that we table the decision until the next board meeting to have more time to give it thought. Ann noted that year to year, our expenses generally balance with our income. She really objected to having Tom’s unexpected donation just sitting in the money market. Shirley felt that as a nonprofit organization we need to put that money to work rather than just sitting on it.

Shirley Devan made a motion that we invest \$12,500 with the WCF. Cathy Flanagan seconded it. The motion passed with Mary Ellen abstaining. Ann will contact Nancy Sullivan to find out what the next step is.

**Creation of a Conservation Committee:** Recognizing the VSO has a Conservation Committee, Cheryl proposed that our club also have one because our club has become increasingly involved in informing and engaging the membership about issues related to bird and habitat conservation issues. Shirley thought it a worthy idea. This would be a committee chair position. As president, Cheryl volunteered to appoint herself as the first chairperson. Gary Carpenter made a motion that the board accept the idea of a Conservation Committee. Shirley Devan seconded it. Approval was unanimous.

**Nature Camp Travel Stipends:** Cheryl noted concern about recruiting more lower income and minority youths to attend Nature Camp. Judy Jones, who’s been on the review committee of all the local organizations that offer Nature Camp grants and selects the students that receive them, feels that an issue may be that lower income families don’t have ready means for paying the cost of traveling to the meeting that Nature Camp offers to interested students. Two years ago, a teacher with similar concerns, took a van of low income and middle-class students to the pre-visit and every one of those students ended up attending Nature Camp. She has suggested that offering a stipend of \$500 would fund the expenses of 2 to 3 families attending a pre-visit. Board members had a number of questions regarding what the plan entailed to make the travel stipend work, including how students would indicate that they needed a stipend. The students for 2021 would have already been selected so this would be an option for 2022. There was general agreement that this is a worthy goal but we need more input from Judy Jones. Cheryl will ask Judy to share a document with us about how it might work and invite her to our next board meeting.

**Future Meetings on W&M Campus:** Cheryl reported that she’s been communicating with Dan Cristol and it is still unknown, but a possibility, that we will be able to resume our meetings on campus in the

autumn. When scheduling speakers, program chairpersons need to inform them that, at this time, we don't know whether their presentation will be on Zoom or in person.

**Bird Walks:** Cheryl reported that Scott Hemler has been leading monthly bird walks at New Quarter Park by reservation for at first 10 participants and more recently 15. Cheryl stated that Scott is agreeable to opening the bird walks, once again, to the public, and that we no longer require reservations and restriction of number of participants. New Quarter Park has been eager to be allowed to publicly advertise our bird walks. Cheryl asked for our input. Since CDC is recommending that fully vaccinated people can safely resume outdoor activities as in pre-Covid, there were no objections from the Board. Cheryl will notify Scott, NQP, WBC members and the Master Naturalists.

**Field Trips:** Chairperson, George Martin, was absent. Cheryl reported that 15 people have signed up for the next field trip at 8 am on June 19<sup>th</sup> at Chippokes Plantation with Nancy Barnhart as leader. A pass or fee of \$7 per carload is required. Nancy reported that there is a triathlon being held at Jamestown Beach that morning which will tie up traffic. Nancy will contact Jamestown County police for recommendations regarding when participants should take the ferry. Nancy will email further info to participants.

Cheryl asked whether the board was ready to resume carpooling on future field trips as before at Old Colony Square parking lot on Jamestown Rd. It was agreed by all that the drivers have the right to ask whether folks, sharing their car, are vaccinated. There are probably no field trips for July and August.

**Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar:** Cathy had submitted the minutes of the Feb 26, 2021 WBC Board Meeting twice via email to the board for review. A minor correction was made. Gary Carpenter moved that the minutes be accepted. Ann seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

**Membership:** Chairperson, Jeanette Navia was absent. She'd emailed the following report. We have 147 paid memberships (including family memberships), 9 Comp memberships (including W&M and former W&M students, there being no way to know if they've graduated), and 12 Life memberships. She reported that since Cheryl sent a friendly reminder in mid-April to members who had not renewed, we received 40 renewals. There are still 34 members who have not renewed their membership, some who have been members for many years. She suggest sending out one more reminder. There are always about 30 members who do not renew each year. She would like to delete non-renewals around the beginning of July. Cheryl will send another reminder to those who still need to renew.

Shirley brought up the issue of making available the option of paying dues on-line. She guessed that it would help members pay in a timelier manner. The recent increase in dues would cover the cost of the PayPal processing fee. Ann noted that our club already has a PayPal account that we set up for the VSO convention registration. Jeanette will need to edit the PayPal account for receiving membership dues. Cheryl suggested that the contribution portion of the membership form may need to be edited.

Currently, there are three: Ruth Beck & Bill Sheehan Ornithological Grants Fund for W&M Students; Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship Fund; and Child Development Resources Seed/Feeder Fund. Gary reported that the future of the CDR Feeder Project is unknown since they are in the process of moving their facility and have not responded to his enquiry. Cheryl would like to see a contribution site added on the form for other club activities. The board agreed to a proposal to form a Bird Club Conservation Fund from which the board can distribute monies to projects of interest to the club such as the Purple Martin Project and Bluebird Trails. It was agreed that the membership form will be edited before it is available for 2022 renewals. Ann will work with Jeanette to create a draft of the form and to tweak our PayPal account. Cheryl will introduce the membership to the purpose of the new Conservation Committee and Fund in the next newsletter. Shirley recommended that the funds that have been

collected this year for the CDR Feeder be rolled over to 2022 and if/when the CDR gets their feeders up, the money will be available. Gary will try to make further contact with them and have a report for our October meeting.

**Programs – Tory Gussman:** Co-chairperson, Tory Gussman, reported the following:

- **Wednesday, August 18:** Julie Mallon, a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, will discuss her research on Turkey Vultures and migration. Tory will send the board a link to the presentation to preview it so we can whip up interest in the membership to attend. Attendance at the May meeting was only 32. Cathy Flanagan will send Tory an entertaining vulture photo for an article about the meeting in the next Flyer. Cheryl will invite Master Naturalists and local bird clubs to the meeting.
- **Wednesday, September 15:** Bryan Watts will be speaking about Black Rails, a species that is in steep decline. Dr. Watts is a popular speaker and we may have an issue of exceeding allowable number of 100 participants on Zoom. Bird club members will be asked to join before starting time and others asked to enter about five minutes later.
- **Wednesday, October 20:** Brent Lubbock from Sylvan Heights Bird Park will present “Beyond the Bird Park”. Dean Shostak had reported that this presentation will discuss a brief history of Sylvan Heights Bird Park, past and present conservation projects, and information about the Avian Breeding Center.

**The Flyer – Mary Ellen Hodges, Vice-President (Editor):** Mary Ellen is working on the June issue. There are a lot of wonderful photos from recent field trips. Cheryl will have a report from this board meeting to the membership ready for the newsletter by Friday, 11<sup>th</sup>. Gary said they’d have the hard copies available for mailing by the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Records/Liaison to CVWO – Nancy Barnhart:** Nancy reported that we’ve had a new breeding species confirmed for this area: a Hooded Merganser at York County. Hopes to have the photo for the June newsletter.

**Nominating Committee:** Cheryl has appointed Ann Carpenter, Shirley Devan, and Nancy Barnhart to be a Nominating Committee to recruit people for the open Board positions of President and Vice President, Programs as Cheryl, Tory and Dean are not continuing. The goal is to have nominees available by the October Board Meeting because the slate will need to be posted in the November issue of *The Flyer*. We’ve been using Dean’s Zoom account, for which we’ve been most grateful. With Dean’s resigning, the club will need to acquire a Zoom account, for which Ann has already budgeted and would be willing to host. Shirley proposed that we might consider continuing offering our meetings on Zoom for the convenience of the membership even when we meet again in person.

**Next Meeting:** October 4 at 2:00 pm.

Cheryl Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 4:10 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Millar, Secretary,  
Williamsburg Bird Club  
June 13, 2021

