

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board

Williamsburg Bird Club

October 4, 2021

Conducted via Zoom hosted by Ann Carpenter; Presided by President Cheryl Jacobson

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

Board Members Absent: Tory Gussman

Chair Attendees: George Martin, Catherine Flanagan, Patty Maloney, Nancy Barnhart

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

Guest: Judy Jones

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

Nature Camp Travel Stipends: At our June Board Meeting, Cheryl had expressed 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. Judy has suggested that offering a stipend of \$500 would fund the expenses of 2 to 3 families attending a pre-visit. Judy was invited to this meeting to share with us the details of how a travel stipend would be implemented. Judy stressed that the idea is at an experimental stage from which we hope to learn. The pre-visit is held the Saturday before Nature Camp starts. The drive is about 3 hours long each way and the money would cover gas money, lunch, etc. Judy has posted info about Nature Camp Applications at NAACP, local black churches, public schools and in park visitor centers, where allowed, and WISC regarding after school programs. It was suggested that checking with the student reference person (teacher, scout leader, guidance counselor) would be a good way to determine actual economic need of applicants. There was a lot of discussion about how to get students interested and families supporting their students. Suggestions were made to target a specific school like James River Elementary School and to have students who've attended recently speak to interested candidates to further their enthusiasm.

Shirley Devan made the motion that a budget of \$500 be made available to assist families who need financial help for transportation. Bill Williams seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Judy will work with Lee Schuster to further develop the parameters for making this happen. It was suggested that they find someone in our membership who has contacts in the school system for additional assistance. We were urged to send names as we think of them to Judy and Lee.

January WBC Boat Trip: George has reserved the *Nancy Anne* for the Club's annual boat trip. The owners sold the *Bay Princess*. The capacity of the *Nancy Anne* is 40 people; only 2/3 the capacity of the *Bay Princess*. Cost of the trip is \$1400. A discussion was held regarding how much to charge per person. George had figured that it would cost \$42.50 to break even. To include tips for the crew and guarantee that WBC could cover the cost, \$50 per person was recommended. The policy of no refund for cancellations if a person's spot is not filled will continue. WBC members will be given priority to reserve a spot. Then the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalist, Hampton Roads Bird Club,

Richmond Bird Club and Piedmont Virginia Bird Club will be invited before opening reservations on listserv.

Ann Carpenter moved that we charge \$50 per person; the motion was seconded by Gary Carpenter and unanimously approved.

Funding for Chimney Swift Tower: George Martin, as president of the Ford's Colony Bird Club, WINGS, requested a donation of \$300 from the WBC to help cover the cost of materials to build a Chimney Swift tower on property owned by Ford's Colony Country Club. It would be built on open land near the FCCC visitor's parking lot where it would be readily viewable by the general public. George reported that there is already a small population of Chimney Swifts and it is hoped that the tower would increase the size of the local population and provide a roosting site for migrants. Estimated cost of material for the approximately 12-foot-tall tower (18 inches square and set on 4X4 foot square cement base) is \$700 - \$1000. George hopes to get permission to install a sign describing the tower's purpose. Construction is expected to be provided by volunteers. George will be speaking to the Ford Colony's Woodworker's Club who've expressed interest in the project. He has already received a donation from a Ford's Colony golfing group. Funds will also come from a portion of WINGS membership dues. George is also seeking \$300 contribution from Ford's Colony Activities Committee and Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Bill Williams proposed that WBC donate \$300 towards the project. Gary seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

Treasurer's Report – Ann Carpenter: Ann reported the following in her interim treasurer report:

Ann made the \$12,500 investment to establish the Williamsburg Bird Club endowment at the Williamsburg Community Foundation.

A pdf file (spreadsheet) was attached and included in the minutes showing the total "2021 club year" income and actual and planned expenses through December 31, 2021. The spreadsheet includes some highlighted income and expenses from 2020 for comparison purposes. Dues collected is higher than in 2020, but excluding Tom McCary's donation, donations for the special project areas was slightly down. As shown on the spreadsheet, expenses are slightly less than in 2020.

The projected Assets as of December 31, 2021 will be as follows: SunTrust checkbook - \$5,013; SunTrust CD - \$2,855; SunTrust Money Market - \$7,092 and Williamsburg Bird Club endowment - \$12,500; Total \$27,460. Excluding Tom McCary's donation and the establishment of the Endowment fund, the calendar year balance of income (\$9,399.29) versus expenses (\$9,027.03) may be around \$350. She noted that we will not be getting a payout this year from Tom McCary's Endowment fund but it will be earning money.

Ann also noted that the spreadsheet does not include the \$300 approved at this meeting towards building the Chimney Swift tower.

Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar: Cathy had submitted the minutes of the June 8, 2021 WBC Board Meeting twice via email to the board for review resulting in minor corrections. Gary Carpenter moved that the minutes be accepted. Shirley Devan seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

Membership – Chairperson Jeanette Navia: Jeanette was out-of-town and emailed the following report.

There have been about nine new members since June.

She and Ann have worked on a way for members to pay their dues and donations via PayPal. She has created a couple of pages (one for new members, one for renewals). You can view them by going to <http://williamsburgbirdclub.org/membership/>

Jeanette noted that since we are charging new members ½, May through August, and then new membership is free from September-December, she will need to create new buttons in May, and then will need to create a form for people joining September-December to send (via email) with just their name, address, email, etc.

When people pay via PayPal, we should be getting their email and street addresses from their PayPal account. We will not be getting their phone numbers, but Jeanette has had very little reason to ever use anyone's phone number.

Ann Carpenter reported that they have successfully tested our new PayPal account by Shirley having successfully made a donation.

It was noted that the membership form needs to be updated in the next Flyer to reflect the year, 2022, and also by adding a box for donations to the Conservation Fund. The PayPal format requires boxes for specific donation amounts, which has been done, and also needs to be added to the updated membership form. Cheryl recommended that the form tells applicants that a benefit of membership is that they will receive a colorful digital newsletter, The Flyer, but if they want a hard copy in B&W mailed to them, they should check the designated box.

Cheryl noted that she thought that our WBC Facebook may be helping to increase membership.

Field Trips – George Martin, Field Trip Coordinator: George reported on the following:

September Field Trip, Newport News Park: Attendance was light at the field trip on September 18 at Newport News Park. Two Club members and one non-member joined leader Jason Strickland on a walk around the park. Birding was good, as the group identified 42 species, including five warblers.

Saturday, October 16: Matt Anthony will lead us to several sites on the Eastern Shore and will meet him at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge (ESVANWR) at 9 am. Current plans are to bird at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Scenic Overview, the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge (ESVANWR), and Kiptopeke State Park's Hawkwatch Platform. Brian Taber has been alerted that the group plans to stop by the hawk watch site. Other sites may also get on the agenda, especially if unusual species are known to be in the area. George also advertised the group gathering for lunch at Cape Charles Brewing Company after they've finished at Kiptopeke.

Car-pooling at the usual meeting spot at Colony Square Shopping Center at 7:15 am is a possibility. But he has asked members interested in carpooling to let him know if they wanted to drive or ride and he's received no responses to date. In view of the light attendance at the September field trip, he plans to email Club members both weekends prior to the field trip to make sure the trip is publicized. It will be up to each driver to decide on vaccination/masking protocol for passengers.

Saturday, November 20: George hasn't organized a field trip yet but he is considering Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton. Ann suggested that he also consider Machicomoco State Park in Hayes, VA that features a lot of good trails and a variety of terrains.

Sunday, January 16, 2022: WBC annual boat trip.

Bird Counts/Bird Walks – Chairperson Jim Corliss: Jim was absent due to work commitments and Cheryl filled in for him.

Bird Walks:

Saturday, October 30: New Quarter Park at 8 am with Scott as leader. The monthly bird walk at New Quarter Park is usually scheduled on the fourth Saturday but this October walk will be on the fifth Saturday to avoid a 5K race the weekend before.

Bird Counts: Jim had emailed us that the Audubon Society requires the CBC to be conducted in the window of December 14 to January 5 each year. If we stick to Sunday as being our count day, then our options are December 19 or 26 and January 2. The day after Christmas and the day after New Year's don't seem particularly attractive, so he made an advance motion that we hold the CBC on Sunday December 19 this year. After a brief discussion it was agreed by all that our CBC be held December 19th.

Conservation Committee Report – Cheryl Jacobson: Cheryl reported that for the past two months the focus has been on WBC Purple Martin Conservation efforts. Materials were ordered to improve the colony at Fords Colony. The original WBC set up did not include a pole with a system to facilitate lowering to monitor etc. A new pole system has now been installed. The colony will be expanded to include gourds as it appears possible to entice, as well as support, more martins at this site. At this point, all available funds from WBC, HRC, and CVWO have been expended. Efforts will focus on recruiting and training more monitors for the birdhouses. A firepit meeting at Chickahominy Riverfront Park was held on September 30th with an attendance of over 30 people and was a great success. She emphasized that no funds from any of the organizations were expended on this meeting. She reported that the martin pole at Chickahominy was vandalized and was obviously rammed and will require straightening and resetting in cement. She noted that installing a trail camera appears to prevent vandalism in other parks and is being considered.

The Flyer – Mary Ellen Hodges, Vice-President (Editor): Mary Ellen reported that so far this year, we have published the newsletter in the following months: Jan, Feb, March, April, May, June (published mid-June), September, and October. We had initially planned to take a summer hiatus covering the June and July issues, but we later changed that hiatus to the July and August issues so that activities and sightings associated with spring migration could be reported in a timely manner. The efforts of Gary (Assistant Editor) and Ann Carpenter have been invaluable in proofreading these issues in advance of publication and in printing and mailing the newsletter to those members who have requested a hard copy. President Cheryl Jacobson has recently suggested that we might also take a one-month hiatus this winter and not publish the December issue. This would mean that any advance promotion of the Christmas Bird Count in the newsletter will need to be in the November issue and we would not be making a marked effort through the newsletter to encourage members to pay their 2022 dues until the January issue.

After a brief discussion, the Board noted that we have not published a December issue in the past and it was unanimously decided not to publish one this year. The concern about encouraging members paying dues was addressed by the fact that contacting members via email seems to work better anyway. Shirley added that using our Facebook page is another way to notify folks of our events that are open to the public. Cheryl will also notify the membership via email of the December CBC date.

In regard to the content of the newsletter, Mary Ellen worries each month that we will not have sufficient content to fill an issue, but that problem has always been resolved in the last few days around her deadline. The number of members who regularly share their recent bird sightings for publication in the newsletter is small. Mary Ellen would welcome any suggestions on how to increase participation in this section of the newsletter among a broader segment of the club membership. She would also

welcome any other comments the Board or Committee Chairs may have on the content of the newsletter in general.

Mary Ellen reported that the deadline for submissions to the November newsletter is the end of the day on Wednesday, October 27.

Promotion of Club Diversity: Mary Ellen noted that in the wake of the May 2020 incident in which a White woman confronted a Black man who was birding in Central Park, Cheryl Jacobson had written an article in the July 2020 issue of *The Flyer* stating that the WBC endorsed the Virginia Society of Ornithology's statement on diversity and inclusiveness, which includes an ongoing commitment to promote participation from people of all backgrounds and ethnicities in organization activities. Mary Ellen proposed that, we the Board, review how the club presently promotes our business/program meetings, and, perhaps, monthly walks and projects, to determine whether additional efforts might be warranted to ensure that a broad segment of the Greater Williamsburg community is aware of the opportunity to join our club and share in our interests and activities.

The resulting discussion pointed out that this is a very tough issue that many nonprofit and for-profit organizations are struggling with. Cheryl noted that some have a Public Relations Committee to address this issue. There were suggestions of posting more in the VA Gazette and on the WAVY online events calendar; adding to our membership form the question of how the applicant found us; and walk leaders having WBC fliers to hand out to new participants. Also, that sharing our interest in birds via personal contact is valuable. It was decided that this very important issue will be considered again in 2022 by our new leadership.

Nominating Committee Report: Cheryl had appointed Ann Carpenter, Shirley Devan, and Nancy Barnhart as Nominating Committee to recruit people for the open Board positions of President and Vice President, Programs, as Cheryl Jacobson and Tory Gussman are stepping down. Ann presented the nominees Nancy Barnhart for President and Patty Maloney for Vice President/Programs. Ann noted that Mary Ellen Hodges as Vice President/Editor, Ann Carpenter as Treasurer, Cathy Millar as Secretary, Gary Carpenter as Member-at-Large & Assistant Editor, and Shirley Devan as Member-at-Large have agreed to continue to serve on the Executive Board. Bill Williams will step down at Past President and Cheryl Jacobson will assume that position.

Gary Carpenter moved that the Board accept these nominations. Bill Williams seconded it and the motion was passed unanimously. The slate will be posted in the November issue of *The Flyer*. The membership will be asked to vote at the November meeting.

Records/Liaison to CVWO – Nancy Barnhart:

For **CVWO**, Nancy reported that Steve Dougill, this year's hawk watcher, started on September 1 at Kiptopeke State Park. He is on the platform 6 days a week and loves company and visitors. He is joined this year by Suleka Deevi, the Educator/Hawkwatch Intern and Monarch Biologist. As of 5:00 p.m. 9/30/21, Steve has tallied 7155 raptors including an adult Swainson's Hawk, an impressive 1690 American Kestrels, and 2645 Osprey to name a few.

For **Records**, Nancy reported that Roseate Spoonbills have put on quite the show in Virginia this year. As many as 3 have been reported at Hog Island, a new high count, and the first ever for James City County at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Just the 12th record of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was reported by Bill Williams in Settlers Mill on 6 Sept 2021.

Records are update monthly on the WBC website.

Bill Williams added that he is updating the local annotated check-list and that his goal is to have most of it finished by the end of the calendar year.

Next Board Meeting: January 31, 2022 at 3 pm via Zoom hosted by Ann Carpenter.

Cheryl Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 4:03 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club
October 5, 2021

Addendum: Future 2022 WBC Membership Meetings: The Board approved on November 23, 2021 to make a deposit of \$100 to secure the Williamsburg Community Library auditorium for meetings for the 3rd Wednesday of the month for Feb, March, and April, and the 4th Wednesday in May (Library not available the 3rd week in May).

To use the library auditorium (capacity 268), stage, screen and audiovisual equipment, it will cost \$95.00 a meeting. This is the non-profit rate. Dan Cristol generously made a donation to the Club of \$500 which he has earmarked for the purpose of paying for meetings. The remaining balance of \$280 for meetings through May will be due 1/12/2022. We can cancel any meeting seven days prior to the event and receive a full refund.