

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board

Williamsburg Bird Club

April 25, 2022

Conducted via Zoom hosted by Ann Carpenter; Presided by Nancy Barnhart

Board Member Attendees: Nancy Barnhart, Patty Maloney, Mary Ellen Hodges, Ann Carpenter, Cathy Millar, Gary Carpenter, Shirley Devan, Cheryl Jacobson

Board Members Absent: None

Chair Attendees: Jeanette Navia, George Martin, Catherine Flanagan, Patty Maloney, Nancy Barnhart, Cheryl Jacobson

Chair Attendees Absent: Jim Corliss, Lee Schuster

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Barnhart at 3 pm. A quorum of the Executive Board was present.

Secretary's Report – Cathy Millar: Cathy had submitted the January 31, 2022 minutes to the Board via email twice. They were reviewed and one correction was made (spelling of name). Shirley moved that the minutes be accepted; seconded by Mary Ellen; and the motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Ann Carpenter: Ann had emailed to the Board a pdf file (spreadsheet) showing the total "2022 club year" income and expenses through April 25 which was attached to the minutes. The spreadsheet included a column of 2021 income and expense for comparison. Ann presented the following summary of the club's Assets as of April 25, 2022 which she reviewed with us.

Checking/Savings

Truist Checking	\$ 11,843.39 (includes cashed out CD valued at \$2,857.59)
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Truist Money Market	\$7,091.99
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Total Checking/Savings	\$18,935.38
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Other Assets

Bird Club Fund in the Williamsburg Community Foundation:	\$ 11,841.19
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TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 30,776.57
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"CLUB YEAR" ORDINARY INCOME

to date:	\$ 8,745.66
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"CLUB YEAR" EXPENSES:	\$ 5,448.62
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NET ORDINARY INCOME	\$ 3,297.04
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Ann noted that we'd received in March an annual payment of \$438 from our fund in the Williamsburg Community Foundation. She reminded us that the annual expense of having an account is \$250 of which \$124.98 has currently been paid for half of this year. Ann reported a value loss of \$95.81.

Ann noted that one of the highlights of the donations is the Bill Williams Nature Camp Donations of \$2,094.15. Of that amount, \$1,474.15 came from the Tom McCary estate fund that Tom set up with the Williamsburg Community Fund. This is separate from the \$10,000 Tom donated to our club. She noted that nothing's ever been determined about naming this fund in Tom's memory. Ann will ask Ben McCary whether he thought Tom wanted this money associated with the Bill Williams scholarships or whether he would have wanted his name associated with his donation to the nature camp scholarships. There

was a general consensus among the Board members that at every possible opportunity, Tom McCary should be credited in some way for his donation to these scholarships.

Ann asked who was buying the \$5 gift certificates for the Trivia Contest that is a new feature in each issue of *The Flyer*. Catherine Flanagan is buying them and Ann will reimburse her.

Jeanette, our webmistress, reported on website expenses. Three years ago, we paid \$503 for three years. We will be paying about the same amount in March 2023 for the next three years. Every year, we pay about \$36 for our website's domain name.

Ann noted that we needed to make a decision about this year's major club donations that we tabled at our January meeting until we had a better idea of what our financial situation would be. Nancy asked for an update of VSO's expectations of adopting our Red-headed Woodpecker at \$2,000 to support the cost of issuing the VABBA2. Shirley reported that the price structure has not been released yet. Shirley recommended that this year we donate the usual amount of \$500 and in subsequent years, we can decide to make up the difference if we choose to.

Lee Schuster was not present and Nancy reported that Lee has not yet received the list of books for her to review so Lee didn't have anything to report. At the January Board meeting Lee had indicated that her funding was appropriate.

George reported that no additional funds were needed in 2022 for the Chimney Swift tower.

Cheryl reported that the Geoff Giles fund of about \$1,148 was supporting Purple Martin equipment expenses.

Gary reported that Child Development Resources is open again and have told him that they have sufficient seeds and will contact him if they need something else.

After further discussion, Cheryl made a motion that the following organizations received the usual donations totaling \$2,350. Gary seconded it and the motion was passed unanimously.

Center for Conservation Biology - \$500

Coastal VA Wildlife Observatory - \$250

Community Cloud Forest Conservation - \$500

Historic VA Land Conservancy - \$250

Purple Martin Conservation - \$150

VABBA2 - \$500

Williamsburg Regional Library - \$200

Programs – Patty Maloney, Vice President: Patty reported on the following:

Wednesday, May 25th: Peregrine Falcons presented by Megan Thomas. The meeting will be a joint in-person meeting at the library and via Zoom.

Wednesday, June 15th: The library is fully booked in June and Patty proposed an informal outdoor gathering with refreshments at 6:30 pm. After some discussion, it was decided that Patty reserve the pool pavilion at Chickahominy Riverfront Park for about \$75. Cathy Flanagan will organize refreshments.

September & October: Patty reported that she has booked the library for the third Wednesday evenings. Speakers are to be determined.

The Flyer – Mary Ellen Hodges, Vice President (Editor): Mary Ellen noted that *The Flyer* won't be published in July and August. It will resume in September to announce the September meeting and other activities.

The deadline for submissions for the May issue of *The Flyer* is April 26. She's been very pleased that for the last three issues of the newsletter she's received submissions—mostly recent sightings, but also one short essay—from club members who hadn't previously submitted during her first two years as editor.

Bill Williams recently suggested that we regularly include a trivia game in the newsletter and we inaugurated this feature in the April issue. Cathy Flanagan has assumed responsibility for researching and writing the trivia questions and running the game. As the game is currently designed, we have one trivia question in each newsletter issue; the first member to email Cathy with the correct answer to the question wins a \$5 gift certificate to one of our local bird supply stores. In addition to being fun, the trivia game is intended to draw increased attention to the current and past issues of the newsletter and to the club's website. The answer to the trivia question in each issue of *The Flyer* will always be found in the contents of the issue published two months earlier, which will have been published a month earlier on the website.

Mary Ellen has been working to identify articles that we might publish when space is available in the newsletter after our regular announcements and reporting about club meetings, bird walks, trips, counts, and committee work have been covered. She hopes to receive an article from a student in Dan Cristol's introductory ornithology class in the next few months. At her request, Dan asked his students if anyone would be interested in writing an article from the perspective of a young person new to birding on how taking a deep dive into ornithology for a few months might have affected their thinking about birds, environmental science, the environment, conservation, etc. One young woman has volunteered. Mary Ellen also plans to follow up with Michael Academia, one of the graduate students presenting at our April meeting, about writing an article for the newsletter about the menhaden reduction industry and overfishing.

As the 2021/22 Project FeederWatch season comes to a close, Mary Ellen has been considering identifying a participating club member who would like to write about their FeederWatch experience and observations this year, or over the years. George Martin, who has been involved in FeederWatch for 27 years in three different locations, volunteered.

Mary Ellen noted that on March 3, 2022, Ann Carpenter emailed the Board informing us that that the price of printing the newsletter has increased by 57 cents/copy. We printed 29 copies of the March newsletter for mailing and the total price for those 29 copies increased by \$16.76. Ann noted that we used to print upwards of 45 copies, bringing some of those to meetings. She asked the Board if in the future it wants us to print some copies to have available at the meetings. Two other Board members (Nancy Barnhart and Cathy Millar, responded to Ann's email and agreed with Mary Ellen's recommendation that we should not print any copies for the meetings because it's too easy for someone to grab a copy without giving it a thought, even if they may have a copy in their stack of paper mail or email at home. Mary Ellen suggested that in lieu of providing paper copies of the newsletter at our monthly meetings, we should devote a couple of minutes in the business section of the meeting to mention, for the sake of prospective members, that a calendar of events, full-color copies of our newsletters, a membership form, and more information about the club are available on our website. There was general agreement that only copies of the newsletter for mailing be printed and that there be no additional ones printed.

Mary Ellen reported that Mary Anne Fennell maintained an index of the contents of the newsletter for many years, through the March 2020 issue, and that she assumed responsibility for the index in December 2020. Mary Ellen recently completed the index through 2020 and once she indexes the 2021 issues, she will forward an updated index to Jeanette Navia for posting on our website.

Membership – Chairperson, Jeanette Navia: Jeanette reported the following:

- 140 memberships have been paid through 2022.
- 33 paid through 2021 but not yet renewed
- 10 Comps (mostly W&M students. She has no way to know when or if they've graduated and moved on)
- 12 Life memberships

Dorothy Whitfield has not paid since 2020, but we're keeping her on the books anyway.

Daniel Keene hasn't renewed, but she's sure he wants to.

Of the 33 who have not renewed this year, 6 are people who get their newsletters mailed to them.

Perhaps they have not noticed our emailed pleas. We do have their email addresses, but perhaps they don't check their email often or at all. She suggested that we include a separate piece of paper in the mailed newsletters for those six members. Ann agreed to do this.

She will send Nancy the emails for the 33 members who have not (yet) renewed. She noted that there are about 30 or so members each year who don't renew, mostly folks who join once and never renew. PayPal is working very well for both Ann and Jeanette. Jeanette notes on the membership Excel sheet who pays via PayPal.

A membership Excel sheet was shared with Board members via email.

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

Saturday, May 21: Cranston Mill Pond. The leader will be Alex Minarik who wants to limit participants to 20 -25 people. Shirley has been the contact person with the property owner and although has not received a definite confirmation, she is positive that we will be able to go. Details are yet to be determined about how many cars will be allowed. It is anticipated that there will be parking space for 6-8 cars. Therefore, we will probably meet in the parking lot of one of the nearby schools and consolidate the number of cars. George's writeup in the upcoming *Flyer* about the field trip will ask interested folks to contact him if they want to be added to the signup sheet and then when the limit is known, he will notify folks whether they can go or not. He will also send an email out to the membership.

June, July & August: No field trips. Next field trip will be in September when migration again starts.

Bird Counts – Chairperson Jim Corliss: Jim was not present. Nancy reported that he will be sending out information about Spring Bird Count on May 15. There will be a post in the upcoming *Flyer* that interested folks who want to be assigned to a team should notify Jim and that feeder watchers are also welcome.

Bird Walks: Nancy reported that Scott Hemler led over 25 people at the last NQP bird walk. Jeanette enquired whether she should resume posting our walks in the local events section of the Virginia Gazette which she had stopped at the onset of Covid. It was agreed she should resume the postings.

Library Liaison – Chairperson Lee Schuster: As reported above, Lee was not present but had reported that she'd not yet received from the Williamsburg Library a list of books to review.

Refreshments – Catherine Flanagan: Cathy has volunteers on her signup sheet for refreshment for the May meeting. She will coordinate refreshments for the June outdoor meeting.

Historian – Chairperson Patty Maloney: Patty noted that she continues to add relevant things to the club's history folder.

Conservation Committee – Chairperson Cheryl Jacobson: Cheryl reported that the focus this quarter has been preparing all gourds at the five locations for the return of the Purple Martins and training monitors. At this time all five locations have two monitors and they are doing an excellent job of twice weekly monitoring.

She has learned that the scout birds return first to the site where there was nesting in the previous year. She has noted that migration continues thru June so she is expecting more Martins to return. Currently, the colony at Fords Colony is the most active with about 30 Martins. Subsequently she will be ordering more gourds for the Ford's Colony site. She has been trying to convince Bill Vanzetta to remove the last metal house that can't be lowered for monitoring but to date, he has not been in agreement. When he cleaned the house last fall there were numerous abandoned eggs, probably due to mites or heat. There is one Martin pair in a gourd at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. The monitors have constantly fought Tree Swallows at this site and finally resorted to closing all the gourds but the one where Martins nested last year. That pair came in June and were successful in fledging four Martin chicks. The Martins are diligent in keeping the Tree Swallows away from that gourd and it is expected that more Martins will come and at that time more gourds will be opened for them. Cheryl reported that this is taking a great deal of monitoring time but the team is dedicated to making this work.

Records/Liaison to CVWO – Chairperson Nancy Barnhart: Nancy noted that Hawk Watch continues every day until the end of May. She reported that there is not much new on record except for Least Terns returning the earliest ever.

New Business:

Policy for Posting on Facebook: Nancy enquired if there was a policy about who can post of the club's FB site. Cheryl reported that she, Shirley and Jeanette are the ones with permission to post on the site. Shirley enquired if we should publicize our meetings, walks and field trips on the FB site as a means of welcoming the public to our club. Which led to the question if we need a member to be a Social Media Coordinator. George cautioned that there needs to be protocol about what is put on the site and that postings should only reflect pertinent local info. Shirley noted that a link to our club's website should be included with each FB post to encourage folks to visit it. Jeanette responded that the FB posts are already tied to our club's website. Nancy recommended that the Board continue to reflect on the issue and the possibility of a need for a Social Media Coordinator. The need for a social media coordinator was reinforced by experience shared of how time-consuming answering questions on the club's FB site can be. In the meantime, Jeanette will post notifications of meetings, walks and field trips; Cheryl will post conservation issues; and Shirley can add relevant posts. We can return to the issue after we see how this works.

Black Birders Week (May 29 – June 4) and the Issue of Accessibility: Nancy had received an email from VSO if we wanted to participate in Black Birders Week. There was no opinion expressed at this short notice. There was a lot of discussion about making our activities accessible to folks with mobility, hearing, sight and mental issues such as autism. Inclusiveness is a current big topic that all groups are facing. Nancy has read that it is being recommended that bird walks be called outings. There was general consensus that merely changing the word wouldn't be helpful. Mary Ellen suggested that we discuss this important topic at our next board meeting and set some modest goals such as establishing one bird walk a year that targets a special need population and to choose a location that is ADA (American Disabilities Act) approved accessible and advertise it widely. She recommended that we consult members of the community that we are trying to accommodate in planning such an activity. Nancy recommended that we visit Birdability (birdability.org) to familiarize ourselves more with the issue. Nancy will discuss this with Scott Hemler. It was decided that this is a good goal to work towards. This issue needs a lot more careful consideration and was tabled until the next Board meeting.

Birding 101 Class: Shirley reported that she got an email from Backyard Birder offering a birding 101 class with Williamsburg Parks and Recreation at College Landing Park. It's a free event with space limited and offered the first Saturday of each month. The first one was held April. Nancy added that the store proprietor (Dean Shostak) had checked with her to make sure that the date did not conflict with any of our activities. Shirley wondered how well it was received and if we should be involved in offering a similar class since there aren't many birding 101 offerings in our area. Nancy will contact Dean to find out how much interest there has been in the class. The topic will be continued at further meetings.

Next Board Meeting: Monday, July 25th at 3:00 pm

Nancy Barnhart adjourned the meeting at 4:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club,
April 27, 2022