

GBAC BOARD FEBRUARY MEETING

January 31, 2023

Attendees via Zoom: Pam House, Vivian Allen, Laura Clark, Mary Dobberstine, Gene Fisseler, Lisa Hardcastle, Cynthia Hughes, Diane Humes, Meade LeBlanc, Jo Monday, Mohammad Nasrullah, Mike Petitt, Abhi Prasad, Patty Trimmingham, and Julie Massey, Advisor. Also present were Tracy Walpole, and Kathy Tamer.

The meeting was called to order by President Pam House at 6:00 pm.

OLD BUSINESS:

The minutes of the January 15 meeting that had been emailed previously to the Board were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Mike and seconded by Gene to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pam reported that several Board members had been working to update the Chapter Operating Handbook, and the final revisions would be circulated for the Board's approval well in advance of the April Chapter meeting.

Next, Meade recapped changes to the 2023 budget for items that had been approved previously by the Board. The revisions included increasing gifts made to speakers, allotting \$5,000 to be made available for scholarships, making a gift for the benefit of Camp Wild of \$5,000, and allotting up to \$10,000 for a Special Projects Fund. The revised budget of estimated expenses would exceed expected revenue; however, the Board discussed its fiduciary responsibility to use accumulated funds appropriately and wisely. Mike Petitt moved that the revised budget be approved, Gene Fisseler provided the second, and the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD REPORTS:

President (Pam House)

Pam reported that she, Julie, and Maureen had been working on a formal grant application from B-WET (Bay Watershed Education and Training) through NOAA. Pam explained that after studying the intent and requirements of the B-WET grant, that the Chapter did not seem to be a good fit. Although they will not submit an application for this one, they will continue to look for other grant opportunities. Pam suggested that the Board consider the recruitment of a Grant Committee from within the chapter of those members who have experience with grant applications.

Vice President (Gene Fisseler)

Gene noted that he was working to line up speakers for the 2023 Chapter meetings. He was pleased to have Jaime Gonzalez Santana lined up for February 2nd, and he was working on a NASA application for astronaut Kjell N. Lindgren's appearance for April 6.

Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)

Meade provided the financial report. She was pleased to report the receipt of a \$2,000 grant from the Hillcrest Foundation. Following some discussion, a motion was made by Lisa and seconded by Patty to accept the January financial report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Membership (Patty Trimmingham)

Members reported 2,335.55 Volunteer Service hours and 189.25 AT hours for January, 2023. January Impacts were up significantly from December at 2,324. The Chapter has 258 active members, with more than 213 members who have already paid 2023 Chapter dues. Patty announced that 3 members had achieved 4,000 hours of volunteer service: Penny Bessire, Sandy Parker and Lynn Wright. Patty also provided a pie chart of Chapter activities by Federal categories: Natural Resource Management – 48%, Field Research – 17%, Training & Education – 12%, Chapter & Program/Business & Administration – 12%, Public Outreach – 6%, and Nature/Public Access – 5%

Volunteer Service (Jo Monday)

Jo was pleased to note that the Chapter's volunteers seem to be everywhere. She reported that she continued to field questions regarding approved volunteer opportunities.

Advanced Training (Mike Petitt)

Mike announced upcoming opportunities for advanced training by Zoom:

On Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 6:00 pm via Zoom for 1.5 hours AT, **Diurnal Raptors of the Galveston Bay Area** will be presented by Lynn and John Wright.

On Wednesday, March 22 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, retired geologist and Audubon Master Birder, Scott Kiester, will present **Wrens**.

Mike mentioned that the January AT was well-attended with 70 participants, and that the Chapter may be pushing the Chapter's Zoom limit of 100 participants in the near future.

Spring Class Training (Diane Humes)

Diane had been working on the Spring schedule, and she would be meeting with her committee within the week. There were a couple of locations to nail down, and she hoped to have a firm schedule very soon.

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Mohammad Nasrullah)

Mohammad announced that the next JEDI community presentation would be held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 7th at 6:00 pm: **“A Warm Welcome for All,”** would be presented by Lisa Reznicek, Outdoor Education Specialist & Master Interpreter, Texas Parks & Wildlife. Lisa would discuss how Texas Parks & Wildlife is reaching out to underserved communities.

Communications (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary reported that she would be exploring the creation of a speakers’ bureau/outreach committee and the possibility of a February huddle to determine interest. She would also be reviewing the Chapter’s communication strategy as a whole and looking for opportunities to strengthen what’s already there, including the website and Facebook.

Class Reps Spring 2022 Class

Lisa announced that the Dick Benoit Prairie Day had been set for March 1st, and a Chapter email had been scheduled on Constant Contact. She also mentioned that she would be happy to make a personal announcement at the upcoming meeting.

Class Reps Fall 2022 Class

Laura and Abhi would be sending an email to the Fall class to let them know about volunteer opportunities and include a special invitation to attend the February Chapter meeting on the 2nd.

Chapter Advisor (Julie Massey)

Julie thanked Lisa, Patty and Cindy Lienen for helping out in the office while her search for an administrative assistant continued. Julie also mentioned that Jaime Gonzales is developing two projects in the Houston area, and Julie would like for the GBAC Chapter to become involved.

Also, Julie hoped to invite the Master Gardeners to attend the April meeting, especially if Kjell Lindgren would be speaking. Julie also said that NOAA Sea Grant is requesting research proposals on numerous topics, including oysters and the Flower Garden Banks. The research proposals were required to have an Extension component that might mesh well with GBAC Chapter activities. She promised additional information soon.

Other business involved a discussion of the format and schedule for the February 2nd Chapter meeting. Pam noted that Mel’s and Mary’s Chapter Store would be open, and she would send a special invitation to encourage members to attend the meeting in person.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Hughes