

## **GBAC BOARD MEETING**

**April 25, 2023**

Attendees via Zoom: Vivian Allen, Laura Clark, Mary Dobberstine, Gene Fisseler, Lisa Hardcastle, Cynthia Hughes, Diane Hume, Meade LeBlanc, Jo Monday, Mike Petitt, Abhi Prasad, Patty Trimmingham. Tracy Walpole was also present.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Gene Fisseler at 6:00 pm.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

The minutes of the March 28 meeting that had been emailed previously to the Board were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Patty and seconded by Mike to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Next, Lisa updated the Board on the Scholarship Committee's recent activities. The Committee had drafted a request for scholarship applications and had mailed 25 packets to local schools, including public, private and home schools. The Committee would be looking for candidates with interests in and/or volunteer experience in naturalist projects. Applications should be returned by May 22, and two \$2,000 scholarship nominations would be presented for consideration by the Board at its next meeting on May 30. The Board expressed appreciation to Lisa and the Scholarship Committee.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

In new business, Gene discussed the possibility of a joint meeting with the local chapter of Texas Master Gardeners. Several meeting options were under consideration, and he asked the Board to await additional details.

Next, Gene called for a presentation from Tracy regarding the purchase of an iPad for use by the Membership Committee for electronic sign-ins at Chapter meetings. Tracy noted that the Chapter could save copious amounts of paper each year by going electronic. She believed a device with 64-gig memory would be sufficient, and she asked the Board to consider a protective cover as well as insurance. Discussion ensued, after which Patty made the motion for the Chapter to purchase a 64-gig iPad with protective case/screen protector and maintenance included. Diane provided the second, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next, Meade reported that Mel asked to stock GBAC TMN lunchboxes in the Chapter Store. Meade commented that the lunchboxes had been very popular with the training class, and at a cost of only \$5 each, they would be flying off the store shelves. Mel would start with an order for 25 units. Discussion ensued, after which the Board decided that the purchase did not require a formal motion. Therefore, the Board asked Meade to convey its appreciation and a vote of confidence to Mel.

## **BOARD REPORTS:**

### **President (Pam House)**

As Pam was traveling, Gene reported that she had been supportive of the iPad acquisition, supportive of a combined meeting of Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners, and she was pleased that Mel intended to stock the lunchboxes.

### **Vice President (Gene Fisseler)**

Gene reported that Lisa Gonzalez, Vice President and Executive Director of Audubon, Texas, had agreed to speak at the next Chapter meeting scheduled for June 1. He continued to look for a speaker for the August meeting, and he would welcome all suggestions. On another subject, Gene had drafted a report from the Financial Examination Committee following an examination of 2022 financial records, and the report would need to be attested by all four Committee members, including Gene, Lisa, Cynthia and Julie.

### **Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)**

Meade provided the financial report detailing activity to date. The Chapter had purchased the iPad for Mel's Store, had paid for the entry fees of the Spring Training Class to High Island, and had purchased a large rock for Bayside Regional Park. The Board expressed intrigue with the purchase of a rock, and Meade explained that Stennie had obtained a grant for a water feature at the Bayside R.P. native garden, and the rock would become an integral part of the design.

### **Membership (Patty Trimmingham)**

Patty noted that Chapter members had reported 5,833.75 Volunteer Service hours and almost 500 AT hours through April 24. Personal impacts had been steady at 1,446. Since the previous meeting, 21 members had recertified. Patty also reported that three members had achieved their initial certifications, one from Spring, 2022 and two from Fall, 2022. Patty congratulated Mike Petitt on achieving 4,000 hours.

### **Advanced Training (Mike Petitt)**

Mike was pleased to report that Scott Buckel's *iNaturalist* AT had been attended by 55 participants on April 12. Kjell Lindgren's presentation, *A Window on the World*, at the Chapter Meeting on April 6 had been well-received by 85 people in person and 55 remotely. The JEDI Community Presentation, *Houston Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights*, had been attended by 33 participants. Upcoming programs included *Bald Eagles* by Mary Schwartz on May 17, *Texas Native Cats* by Monica Morrison on June 14, and *Hummingbirds* by Martin Hagne on August 9.

Mike mentioned that the next JEDI Community AT would be presented by Tim Pylate, ED ABNC, *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Armand Bayou Nature Center*, on Tuesday, May 23.

### **New Class Training (Diane Hume)**

Diane reported that the Spring, 2023 training class was going very well, with four classes done and four classes to go. Diane had purchased 30 hand lenses for the recent lab class, and she asked that the Chapter keep them and make them available when needed.

### **Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity (Mohammed Nasrullah)**

In Mohammed's absence, Gene reported that in addition to the May 23 Community AT presentation by Tim Pylate, Mohammed was working with Audubon Texas and Black Outdoors to develop future presentations. Mohammed had attended a Houston City Council meeting in which Mayor Sylvester Turner had presented a proclamation in support of the Houston Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights.

### **Communications (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary began by reminding the Board that one of its established goals for 2023 was rebuilding the Outreach Committee with a focus on the development, coordination, and support of presentations made by Chapter members to other organizations.

Mary had been trying to understand past practices for public outreach and to determine who had offered presentations in the past and whether those presentations continued to be timely and available. Mary noted that Patty and Tracy were good resources for determining who, when and where presentations were being made. There are significant presentations being made in the form of youth field trips, for example.

In the meantime, Mary had taken the 2019 Speaker's Bureau list and had contacted all of the past speakers and asked them about the scope of their presentations and whether they would like to continue to be included on an updated list. Mary asked for clarification from the Board about how best to put this information to use and how best to organize the Chapter's outreach. She mentioned a Public Outreach Charter that had been adopted previously by the Board, and she asked about its relevance going forward.

Gene thanked Mary for her efforts on these topics and suggested that she reach out to Board members prior to the next meeting with an outline of the previous outreach charter and other issues that she has identified as requiring further discussion and direction.

**Chapter Advisor (Julie Massey)**

In Julie's absence, Gene reported that the Extension Office is advertising for two new administrative assistant positions. Julie would welcome all recommendations. Julie was also looking forward to hosting two summer interns and hoped that they would have opportunities to volunteer with chapter restoration and education activities during their tenure.

There being no further business, upon motion made by Mike and seconded by Jo, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Hughes