

**TMN GALVESTON BAY AREA CHAPTER
BOARD APRIL MEETING
South Shore Grill
April 30, 2024**

Attendees (in-person): Gene Fisseler, Mary Dobberstine, Lisa Hardcastle, Pam House, Sharon Tirpak, Mike Petitt, Diane Humes, Mohammed Nasrullah, Tracy Walpole, Corlis Simmons, Lynn Porfiro and Jesse Monzingo. Also present were Laura Clark, Vivian Allen and Benny Flores. Absent members were Meade LeBlanc and Brandi Keller.

Gene called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

The quorum requirement was met with 86% of Board members present.

Gene reviewed the agenda.

Review and approval of minutes:

The minutes of the March Board meeting previously emailed to the Board were offered for discussion. Two small corrections were made prior to the meeting and reported to the Board. **A motion was made by Pam and seconded by Mary to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.**

Officer Reports:

President (Gene Fisseler)

Gene reported to the Board that the state indicated that it will be releasing the name of the hotel for the TMN Annual Meeting this week. Members planning to attend should quickly reserve rooms as the hotel will sell out. He also initiated a discussion about the Project Fair at the annual meeting. It was recommended that the Youth Birding Club be our chapter's entry. Gene has already discussed this with Eowyn Johnson who is eager to create a presentation to highlight the project. Also discussed was finding a person interested in creating a presentation for the video contest. Mary has a few members in mind and will reach out to them. Pam recommended that winners of our chapter's photo contest be automatically entered in the state's photo contest. Gene asked whether the chapter was going to fund a sponsorship for the TMN Annual Meeting. Lisa reminded him that the budget includes \$500 for the sponsorship. Next, there was a discussion about the state's survey regarding the training class procedures and textbooks. It is a lengthy survey and Gene has responded to part of it. Finally, Gene mentioned new merchandise available on the state TMN website.

Vice President (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared that the Financial Examination Committee has completed its review. According to the review, our financial records reflect overall satisfactory procedures and

accounting. There are a few minor recommendations based on the findings for improvement in our procedures. She will submit the report to our Advisor to review and sign, after which it will be shared with the Board.

Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa shared one specific error uncovered by the financial review, a failure to explicitly state that the financial report submission had passed after two motions to approve in the October 2023 Board minutes. She asked members to be diligent in reviewing Board minutes shared prior to the meeting for errors, especially areas about which they have specific knowledge.

Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)

Meade was absent, so Mary spoke for her. The financial report was shared by Meade with members prior to the meeting. **Pam made a motion and Sharon seconded the motion to accept the report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.** Mary also shared that Meade had presented to Gene and Mary revised draft reimbursement procedures for consideration. The Chapter does not currently have documented procedures. They have made some additional recommendations, and the procedures should be finalized soon.

Immediate Past President (Pam House)

Pam had nothing to share at this time.

Advanced Training (Mike Petitt)

Mike had shared a report listing past and upcoming events with the Board members prior to the meeting. He shared that two in-person trainings have been conducted since the last meeting. He voiced concern with low attendance at both. It was suggested that about a week prior to in-person trainings, he should send a reminder notice to chapter members to encourage more participation.

Communication (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared that the chapter's photo contest will kick-off soon. She is also happy to report that there have been several "milestone" awards recently.

Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity (Mohammed Nasrullah)

Mohammed was excited that ten new class members signed up to join the JEDI team at the recent Opportunity Showcase. He credited Candice Annen, who staffed the JEDI table at the event. The Moody Gardens and Armand Bayou Nature Center (ABNC) outreach events were successful, and they had many visitors to the JEDI booths. He reminded the Board of the upcoming Juneteenth event in Galveston. He asked about opening our Chapter's Advanced Training events to the local community. He will speak to Mike about specific opportunities. Mohammed also shared information about a program offered by ABNC in which three local public libraries will receive backpacks to check out to patrons.

The backpacks contain binoculars, a magnifying glass, laminated scavenger hunt and laminated pass to ABNC. Mary offered to assist with publicity regarding this opportunity.

Membership (Tracy Walpole)

Tracy shared the membership report with Board members prior to the meeting. Tracy highlighted several elements of the report and was excited to report that Jim Duron is very close to reaching 30,000 volunteer service hours. Additionally, three additional members of the 2023 class have certified bringing the total to 15 of 22 class members certifying. The deadline to certify for this cohort is May 18.

Outreach (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa reported that recent Outreach events, LaPorte SpringFest and Moody Gardens Party for the Planet, were successful and well attended. She also shared that there are some items she would like to purchase for Outreach activities, including an additional TMN tablecloth and two Outreach Activity Kits (scat and tracks). She requested that the Board provide funds in the budget for these and possibly other Outreach needs. **Pam made a motion to move \$500 from the “Special Projects” budget to the Outreach budget. Mary seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.** Lisa also reported to the Board that it’s possible that an upcoming Outreach event will be charging parking, even for vendors. She would like to reimburse volunteers for the parking fee. It was agreed that reimbursement for the event is appropriate for volunteers.

Training Class (Diane Humes)

Diane reported that due to the need to reschedule two class trips and one class, the training is not complete. This Thursday will be the last class and the trip to Armand Bayou Nature Center is this Saturday. The trip to Galveston Island State Park has been rescheduled to Saturday, May 18. Although some class members need to make up class time, 17 or 18 of the 2024 training class will have completed their training hours requirement this Saturday.

Volunteer Service (Sharon Tirpak)

Sharon has received and responded to several emails about volunteer service. She has also received positive feedback regarding the reorganization of the Volunteer Service Opportunity description document.

Other Reports

Advisor (Brandi Keller)

Brandi was unable to attend the meeting but sent Gene information to share. He shared that she has been very busy completing tasks for her previous position but is now able to focus on her current role. She is excited to be able to focus more on Master Naturalist needs. She plans to be at the next Chapter Meeting and hopes to attend AT events. She is looking for a contact related to Veterans groups. Both Mohammed and Corlis said they have some information they can share with her.

Class Reps Spring 2023 (Corlis Simmons, Lynn Porfirio and Jesse Monzingo)

Lynn was pleased that classmates were making progress with certification requirements. Both Jesse and Corlis are interested in continuing on the Board and Lynn is still considering it.

Old (unfinished business)

- Afterschool Bird Club – Eowyn shared information with the Board via email. She is making plans for next school year with additional volunteers and campuses.
- Bat Project – Laura shared that the Bat Project started this week with three locations monitoring for bats. She would like to purchase Kaleidoscope Pro software for analyzing monitoring data. She has utilized funding she and her husband donated to the program to purchase additional monitors but needs approximately \$200 more to purchase the software. There was discussion about this, but no decision was made.
- Scholarship Committee – Pam apologized to the Board that no action has been taken by the committee. She offered two options, quickly forming the committee and offering the scholarships, or delaying the committee's efforts until the fall. It was agreed that the committee should wait until fall.

New Business

- 2024 Big Event – Jesse shared information about the Get Back Together event scheduled for October 5 at the Texas City Dike. The event will be an opportunity for the whole chapter to get together and exemplify our motto of food, fun and fellowship. The day will include trash pick-up on the dike followed by a picnic lunch. The SPLASH organization will provide brief training and materials for the trash pick-up. Members are asked to bring a sack lunch and chair.
- Big Thicket Field Trip – no information to share.
- Other – the Board discussed how to honor Jim Duron for reaching 30,000 hours of volunteer service. After much discussion it was decided to purchase a special pin for him. We will also purchase a pin for Tom Solomon who recently reached this milestone.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle