

GBAC-TMN Board Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2020
Zoom Board Meeting

Attendees:

Susette Mahaffey, George Kyame, Mike Petitt, Janet Mason, Cindy Liening, Pam House, Patty Trimmingham, Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Ellen Gerloff, Jo Monday, Walter Meyer, Kristie Huffman, Leann Criswell (alternate), and Sponsor Julie Massey

Visitors:

Chuck Snyder

This represents 100% of voting members present.

The meeting was called to order by President Susette Mahaffey at 1:02 pm. She welcomed the board to the Zoom meeting and reminded the board that there would be a rehearsal after the board meeting for the chapter meeting on December 3.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. The November 3, 2020 minutes that had been emailed to the board members were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Maureen and seconded by Patty to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Susette reviewed the new COVID guidelines from the state. Our counties are in the red zone which seems to mean that no face to face meetings, either outdoor or indoor, can be conducted or counted toward volunteer service. Specific clarification will be sought from the state to make sure that even social distanced volunteer service will not count. There was discussion that although some organizations had cancelled volunteer service, others seemed to be continuing.

Some clarifying questions about the online store will be addressed to Julie.

NEW BUSINESS

Maureen inquired about Day Away planning since it is usually put on the agenda at the end of the year. Susette announced that Day Away meeting was planned to take place via Zoom on January 5th after the regular board meeting.

BOARD REPORTS

1. Susette: President
Susette gave further details about the January 5th agenda. The day will begin at 9:00 AM with the board meeting. We will then work on the goals from last year, and set goals for next year. This may involve a poll. Since no face to face is possible in the near future, the usually provided food would be absent. Susette “would send biscuits and sausage through the mail, but they wouldn’t be very good when they arrived.”

Susette, on behalf of the board, thanked George for all of his contributions since he will be departing the board.

She shared a thank you note she received from Steve Alexander for the chapter's purchase of two dozen of his books. He indicated that the profits from the purchase of his books go to the Texas A&M Sea Camp.

Susette reported on November 30 Presidents' meeting. It is anticipated that AT can and will continue online in the future as long as live Q & A is included. Exceptions will be made giving credit for those who attended the state conference and view the recorded videos later. Also, the planned state Tuesday ATs will qualify for AT credit, even if they are without Q&A opportunities. It is anticipated that all new classes will be primarily online.

2. George: Past President

Final report of the nominating committee will be presented in the post board meeting rehearsal for the chapter meeting.

3. Mike: Vice President

The April chapter meeting AT will be a presentation by Manuela del Forno on lichens. The February meeting will be Chris Marshall's turtle presentation.

4. Pam: Secretary

No report.

5. Cindy: Treasurer

Reviewed the financials that she had previously sent out to the board members.

Patty made a motion to approve the financials, Janet seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. Patty: Membership

One person has transferred out of the chapter last month. For the year, 201 members reported hours out of the 231 who had paid dues. Impact, volunteer service, and AT were down for the month, but AT for the year surpassed last year. Nineteen of the new class have certified. Tom Sullivan passed the 25,000 hour milestone.

There was discussion of the process for paying dues. The payments will need to be mailed in or delivered because the "hold harmless" form needs to be signed each year. This will be addressed on the web site and at the chapter annual meeting.

7. Jo: Volunteer Service

No report except to confirm that everyone is still trying to get hours as COVID makes it possible.

8. Ellen: Advanced Training

Ellen reviewed the AT for the year. GBAC sponsored 30 AT presentations, including 6 in person, and 36.75 Zoom AT hours. In addition, the Heritage Book Study presented 17 to 20 hours of AT through November. Several AT presentations are already planned for 2021, including Diurnal Raptors in February. The next AT committee meeting will be the 3rd Monday in January.

There was discussion about opening the AT sessions to more attendees. It was felt that this should wait until/ unless the Zoom team was prepared to handle additional numbers. Ellen shared the feelings of many by saying that the Zoom team members have been “champions this year to get this all done.” Cindy suggested waiting until after the Dolphin Challenge and perhaps revisit inviting another chapter to AT in the spring.

A question arose about whether members who transfer out should be able to attend Zoom AT after dues expire. There was a suggestion that this could be discussed further at the Day Away workshop with an examination of the pros and cons.

9. Janet: New Class

She was pleased with the decision that was made to push the next class to the summer or late fall. The recent COVID changes reinforced the wisdom of that decision. At a recent meeting of the training class directors, the 2021 plans were discussed. The 2021 requirements for initial certification will remain the same. Pre-recorded training classes will be allowed, as long as live Q&A with the actual speaker is provided. Virtual field sessions are allowed and the state is encouraging regional chapter coordination for training classes. Another meeting of the directors is planned for June or July.

10. Maureen: Communications

Reviewed the yearend report sent out to the board in advance of the meeting. Facebook saw a 20% increase in followers. We averaged more than one message a day sent out via Constant Contact, with over 50% of those message being opened. Zoom allowed us to do 70+ different sessions. We never crashed and offered a very secure environment. The team has agreed to work the Loggerhead and Dolphin challenges, with a lot of advance testing.

11. Walter & Kristie: Class Representatives

Kristie thanked Leann and Walter for stepping forward when she couldn't due to the illness in her family. Walter thanked Leann for being our leader in developing the program for the chapter annual meeting. Leann described making the power point slideshow (as an alternative to the usual construction of centerpieces). It was completed with feedback from all of the class members.

12. Julie: Chapter Sponsor

Julie apologized for arriving a little late to this meeting because she was with her mother. She reviewed the COVID directions based on information from her extension boss. There can be NO face to face of any sort. Volunteer work in the field must be alone. The directives will be reviewed next week, but are expected to be extended for several weeks.

There were questions about whether all chapters were being held to the same standards, since this had created issues earlier in the year and led to a couple of transfers out of our chapter. Julie explained that the directive is the same as was made in the spring and the challenge will remain of other chapters handling it differently.

Julie was excited about the annual chapter meeting and expressed her appreciation for the leadership shown this whole year. The chapter, in the face of monumental challenges, “cart wheeled forward” with new programs. Because of the board “wonderful things” developed in the time of “terrible things.”

OTHER BUSINESS

Cindy opened a discussion about whether we want to do something as a chapter to reach out to membership more than the chapter meeting for ending the year. Jo liked the idea. Julie indicated that the office could send something out to everyone through the mail. Susette thought a holiday newsletter might be a good idea. Cindy agreed that the “old fashioned way” might be a nice thing for this holiday season. Cindy and Susette will work on it.

WRAP-UP

Susette adjourned the meeting at 2:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam House