

GBAC-TMN Board Meeting Minutes  
February 2, 2021  
Zoom Board Meeting

Attendees:

Susette Mahaffey, Mike Pettit, 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

Guests:

Gene Fisseler and Meade LeBlanc

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.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. The January minutes that had been emailed to the board members were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Patty and seconded by Jo to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Susette raised the issue of whether more space in Google Docs or other location should be purchased so that videos could be saved as part of the archiving project. Cindy reported that currently we are using 1.9 GB of the 15 GB available with the free account. She suggested monitoring usage and buying more space if and when that would be necessary. Meade reported that Smug Mug's website indicates that videos stored there are limited to 20 minutes. Maureen said that videos were being stored there, but probably they had fallen within that 20 minute limit. AT or chapter meeting videos would be longer than that and would need to be archived elsewhere. The consensus was that no action needed to be taken immediately and that we would continue to monitor if we approached the Google Docs limits.

**BOARD REPORTS**

1. Susette: President

Susette reported on the state president's meeting. Meeting dates for the rest of the year were announced. The state COVID guidelines were reviewed:

- Virtual meeting platform tools should be used whenever possible.
- For any indoor activity that occur in-person, both volunteers and public participants must wear masks. The occupancy limit shall not exceed one person per 100 square feet of indoor public space to allow for 10 feet of social distance.
- For outdoor activities, both volunteers and public participants must wear masks and social distance by at least 6 feet.
- All multi-county TMN Chapters must consider each of their county's health ordinances when scheduling in person ('face-to-face') events or meetings, the

ability/inability for chapter membership to attend, and the equity of scheduling events in certain counties to the exclusion/inclusion of certain segments of the chapter.

Susette had requested guidance as to how vaccination would affect guidelines. She was told that the state will not be making a statement about that and that CDC guidelines would be followed.

Jo was asked about whether the indoor activity guidelines would allow the store to reopen on some basis again. Julie said that if a small numbers of volunteers were working it, the store operation would be possible. Any gathering with more than a small number (not defined with exact numbers) required a COVID preparedness plan to be filed and approved prior to the event.

Susette continued with the presidents' meeting report. The state had announced that more items were available for purchase to be sold in the bookstore. The state sponsored volunteer fair was being offered on the morning of February 3 and 4. There was conversation about the importance of inclusion and diversity. They were impressed with the actions we have taken and have suggested that they might look to a presentation from us on how we have moved forward. The TMN Tuesdays will continue with Doug Talley leading the February session on February 9. The "What Nature Means" project soliciting videos and other content from TMN members was very successful last year and they expect to repeat it in 2021. The state meeting is scheduled for October, but it is still not decided what format it will have. The virtual meeting last year was a great success and whether that will be repeated, or a hybrid format, or completely in person will depend greatly on COVID guidelines and a decision will be made later.

Pins for 2021 recertification (sideoats grama) are expected to be available at the end of February. The special grit pin for 2020 (any member with 8 hrs AT and 1 hr. volunteer time) will be sent out to the membership chairs of the chapters. This will be after the final 2020 hour reports which are due February 15.

They asked for reports from chapters that held a board retreat. Susette sent in a report on our Day Away and the goals we identified for 2021. This seemed to impress them.

Susette reminded everyone that the rehearsal for the business and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary presentation for the chapter meeting will be held on February 3 at 12:30. If you need time at the meeting, please let her know as you make your reports today.

Susette announced the Meade had offered to become the chapter historian and she was delighted.

Susette reviewed the section of the by-laws that specifies the president should nominate persons for filling any vacancies on the board during the year. She then nominated Pam House for president and Meade LeBlanc for secretary to fill those vacancies as of February 10. Jo made a motion to accept the nominations. Mike seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Susette invited Gene to share his work creating class picture slides for the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 classes. These are intended to be part of the planned 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration part of the April chapter meeting. Gene suggested that showing all of the class slides might be too much and we might reconsider dividing them into 4 or 5 years for each chapter meeting, and not do them consecutively through the year. Susette suggested that putting them to music would help with the enjoyment. Also, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee would like an in memoriam slide also be prepared.

2. Mike: Vice President

Dr. Chris Marshall will be presenting the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research AT on February 4. The April chapter meeting AT will be a presentation by Manuela del Forno on mosses. June AT will be by Sam Kieschnick about moths, with some assistance from Scott Buckel. Jaime Gonzales will speak about the Urban Heat Island Effect in August. October's presentation will be the Galveston Bay Report Card by Sasha Francis.

He expects to present the disaster preparedness plan to the chapter at the June meeting.

3. Pam: Secretary

Assured the board that Meade will continue to function as the historian, at least in the foreseeable future, since that still falls within the bailiwick of the secretary.

4. Cindy: Treasurer

Reviewed the procedure for check signing during the transition from Susette to Pam as president. Since Mike is authorized as a second signer on the accounts, he will do that until next month's board meeting.

Cindy reviewed the financials that she had sent to the board members prior to the meeting. There was discussion of a donation received from the Hillcrest Foundation that was not planned for in the 2021 budget. Julie explained that the donations from them cannot be solicited and represents their continued desire to support us. Pam pointed out that this will more than cover the small deficit projected in the budget.

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

5. Patty: Membership

Patty reviewed the reports that she sent to the board prior to the meeting. She created a new membership retention report and pie chart to display 2020 volunteer service (additional hours can be reported through February 15). We have a new member transferred in from the El Paso chapter, Margaret Amanda. 150 members have paid their dues of the 507 total members. Two class members from the 2020 class still need to complete their hours for initial certification.

6. Jo: Volunteer Service

She would like to be available for questions at the chapter meeting.

7. Ellen: Advanced Training

Ellen reviewed the AT scheduled through April. The planned ATs are: February 18, “Water Pollution in Galveston Bay: Past, Present and Future” by Cindy Howard; February 22, “Diurnal Raptor of the Galveston Bay Area” by Lynn and John Wright; March 18, “Marine Mammal Stranding Network” by Heidi Whitehead; April 7, “Just Enough Latin to Go Plant Shopping” by Carol Clark. Other presentations are already planned for later in the year.

Mike raised a question about how the honorariums for speakers were set and whether there was a standard amount. Ellen explained that since speakers were not incurring travel time and expense which presenting via Zoom, the standard for virtual presentations had been \$25. Julie indicated that, in her experience, some chapters had not been giving any honorariums and that she thought it was important that the effort required to prepare and present programs deserved to be recognized. Also, that we want the experience to be a positive one so that speakers will be willing to return. Ellen said she would pass on the input to the committee. She said the committee agreed that they didn’t want anyone to feel short changed for their efforts. Julie said we have a reputation for valuing the contributions of others to our chapter.

8. Janet: New Class

The committee will plan to meet sometime in March and expects to announce the 2021 class plans to the April board meeting. There continues to be high interest expressed from those who want to join the class.

9. Maureen: Communications

Maureen has added to her growing portfolio of responsibilities by agreeing to be the media liaison for communications. The Zoom team is getting ready for the dolphin challenge. She thanked Jo for the great volunteer coordination.

10. Walter & Kristie: Class Representatives

Kristie had no report. Walter reported that those working with Galveston Island State Park continue trudging along. Leann had no report.

11. Julie: Chapter Sponsor

Julie confirmed that the Dolphin Challenge would be held on March 6 and 7 with eight teams that are very excited. Her boss is very interested in the steps being taken by our diversity group and has requested that we do a presentation about the project. She is working on getting an intern for the summer: a college student interested in marine sciences. The goal is to have the intern coordinate the “Treasures of the Bay” workshop.

WRAP UP

Pam was looking forward to taking on her new role, but a bit intimidated. She was very glad that Susette had agreed to stay on a past president on the board. Maureen reported that she was very excited to be the historian and secretary for the chapter.

Susette reported that the “Seaside Chats” from NOAA will begin tomorrow. The four planned sessions will be AT opportunities.

Led by Jo, the full board thanked Susette for her great leadership. Susette thanked the Zoom team, led by Maureen and Chuck for all of their efforts.

Maureen made a motion to adjourn. Patty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam House

## Goals for 2021

- Assign the new class reps a mentor from the board & hold an orientation meeting for new members to the board. – Janet Mason
- Training program for identifying invasive species – recognition of the species / needs to be ongoing and learning about how to address the issues with the invasive – GBAC Invasive Team – Mike Petitt
- Chapter needs to work on being more intentionally inclusive – assign greeters for each meeting and possibly training/ be with Patty at the sign – table. – Ellen
- Disaster Planning Team – Mike Petitt
- Creation of Slide Shows – Leann, Maureen & Chuck (temporary), Meade LeBlanc
- Zoom meeting to recruit volunteers for the different volunteer activities – needs to be an action item to begin next week – board members ( Jo, Susette, Maureen, Patty, Chuck) & team leads
- Succession planning
  - Identify & train chapter members
  - Leading a team
  - Agendas, scheduling of meetings, minutes etc.
  - Taking on leads or co-leads of various committees
  - Outreach - board members