

**Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
August 21, 2013**

Present: Vern Crawford, Tom Hynes, Floyd Trefny, Priscilla Stanley, Daneshu Clarke, Becky Etzler, J.D. Clarke, Valeska Danielak, Paula Smith was present for a portion of the meeting by Skype.

Absent: Michelle Haggerty, Carolyn Bean, Stephen Bishop

Also present: Anne Cassidy, substituting for Carolyn Bean, Secretary

President Vern Crawford called the meeting to order at 1:50 pm.

The meeting commenced with a discussion regarding **annual dues to Riverside Nature Center** payable by our chapter for room use. Dues have been increased to \$300 for the year. The general feeling among board members is this amount is unreasonable considering Hill Country Chapter members provide 75% - 80% of maintenance on the grounds. In 2012, HCMNs logged 3343 volunteer hours valued at almost \$66,000 at Riverside Nature Center. Vern Crawford agreed to speak with Mary Muse, executive director of RNC, following this meeting. He stressed that the chapter needs to maintain a good relationship with RNC.

Acceptance of Minutes for July 2013 Meeting: Tom Hynes made a motion to approve the July minutes. The motion was seconded by Daneshu Clarke. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Floyd Trefny presented the Treasurer's Report. The summary report for August 2013 shows a balance of \$14,877.24. Floyd noted that our income is up significantly as we have been collecting tuition for the new class. All trainees for the new class have now paid their tuition via check or PayPal. One student for the new class has withdrawn. Although, she paid her tuition through PayPal, the full amount will be refunded. The chapter will lose the \$4.50 transaction fee.

There was no new activity for the Holding Account and it remains with a balance of \$11,737.17.

Priscilla Stanley made a motion to approve the treasurer's report; Tom Hynes seconded. Motion carried.

Floyd Trefny reviewed the budget through July 31, 2013 and noted that expenses were \$6184.59 and a budget of \$7616.60; leaving us under budget. Some of this is due to a decrease in the number of certification refunds made to the class of 2012. (Out of a class of 34, currently only 18 members have certified.) Our year to date income was \$7732.95 against a budget of \$7991.00, almost exactly on target.

HCMN Expansion of Service Area – Floyd Trefny made the following motions to accept the additional counties (formerly Western Edwards Plateau Chapter) into the Hill Country Chapter Service Area as well as an update to our Chapter Operating Handbook to reflect this:

“Motion to adopt the chapter boundary changes in the revised Chapter Operating Handbook dated July 9, 2013 with the understanding that such action will be in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding dated August 21, 2013. The Hill Country Chapter Board of Directors affirms its commitment and pledge to the new members in the new counties to integrate them into the fabric of all our chapter activities.”

Additionally: “Motion to approve the Chapter Operating Handbook sent to the chapter membership by Vern Crawford via email on July 10, 2013.”

These motions were seconded by Tom Hynes. Approval was unanimous. Vern will send a welcome email to all of these new members.

2013 Class Update – Becky Etzler reported that the first new class meeting today went very well. There were good questions from the class members and a lot of enthusiasm. She also commented on the new class reception held August 19 and thanked everyone for making it a great success!

Becky reported that a new lease was signed with Texas Lions Camp this week for use of their space for our chapter classes. Steven King, operations manager at the camp, suggested that the camp could use some assistance in improving the trails on the grounds.

Sally Garrett will be creating a photo board of the new class members. There will be some expense for materials which will come out of the new class budget.

Vern will update the presentations for Advanced Training, Membership, Volunteer Service Projects, and Activity Recorder to be given at next week's class. He will get them out to the presenters and send a copy to Becky.

Review of State Template and HCMN current Bylaws – This past spring when we updated the Chapter Operating Handbook, Michelle Haggerty, our chapter advisor, suggested that the Hill Country Chapter's bylaws be updated to reflect some name changes and minor edits. Floyd stated that the last time this was done was in 2009. He took the current chapter bylaws and compared them in one document to the state bylaws template which Vern had forwarded to the board. Except for minor edits and name changes, all of the paragraphs are identical with the exception of Article V, G – Terms and Limits. There followed a discussion about what the terms and limits for officers and directors should be. Floyd stated that he felt the term of the Treasurer should be longer than 2 years as the job has become more complex and the learning curve is longer. He also stated that as a 501(c)(3) organization our bylaws must differ from the state's to recognize additional language needed by the IRS. Vern recapped the discussion by saying that there were 2 possible decisions to be made: 1) Update the by-laws to match the state bylaws. 2) Change the term limits; specifically lengthen the Treasurer's term.

Tom Hynes made a motion to table the discussion until next month and have Michelle speak to the terms and limits issue. Valeska Danielak seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Broadcasting Information On Other Organizations' Events – Valeska said she had received a notice from C.A.M.P. Camp regarding a fundraising event (Starry Night Gala) to be held in September. She asked the board if we should send the information out to all of the Hill Country membership. Daneshu Clarke suggested sending the information to Paula Smith, communications director, and let her make the determination. All agreed.

Officer and Director Reports:

Daneshu Clarke: Reported that so far this year, 194 AT codes have been assigned. She is working on the AT codes for the annual state meeting.

Tom Hynes: Reported that he, Vern, and Priscilla are meeting right after the board meeting to schedule the dates for 2014 meetings – both chapter meetings and board meetings.

Valeska Danielak: There were no awards made in August due to the new class reception which took place instead of a regular chapter meeting. Awards will be made at the chapter meeting September 23. There is 1 initial certification, 6 members will be recertified, 5 milestone awards to be made including Cathy Downs who has achieved 5000 hours.

Valeska also reported that one new class member has withdrawn, but that an additional paper application has been received recently from a candidate who will be able to join the class late.

Next year the payment button will be left up longer because applicants have until the third class to sign up. 85% of the applications received this year were electronic. Additionally, a check box will be added next to the volunteer pledge portion of the application indicating that the applicant has read it, acknowledges it and their online application serves as the electronic signature for this.

Priscilla Stanley: Priscilla thanked everyone involved in the New Class Reception and agreed that it was very successful! Priscilla also stated that for the plant sale, Jim Stanley will be scheduling the volunteers and she will be taking care of purchasing the plants.

.JD Clarke: Nothing else to report.

Becky Etzler: Becky asked if someone misses the class on how to report hours, when can they start reporting the hours? The board agreed that that individual will have to have a separate training before they can report their hours. Becky stated that she thought there were a couple of trainees who would miss class next week. So she will plan to have a tutoring session.

Becky also reported that Paula Smith has asked her and Daneshu to redo the chapter display board which they have agreed to do.

Floyd Trefny: Nothing else to report.

Meeting Decisions:

- Vern Crawford will discuss the RNC dues with Mary Muse following this meeting.
- The board voted to accept the MOU with the former WEP chapter and the subsequent changes to the Chapter Operating Handbook.
- Vern Crawford will send a welcome email to the new members from the former WEP chapter.
- Vern Crawford will update the presentations to be given to the new class on AT codes, Membership, Volunteer Projects and reporting activity.
- Discussion on the chapter bylaws update was tabled until next meeting.
- Board agreed to let Paula Smith, Communications Director, decide if we should broadcast other organizations' fundraising events.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at 1:30 PM at RNC.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Cassidy
Acting Secretary