

February 28, 2022 Minutes for Meeting of Board of Hill County Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists

Place: Riverside Nature Center & Zoom

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Present In Person:

Carla Stang, Frank Garcia, Ron Scoggins, Alice King, Carra Milikien, Dot Maginot, Trudy Eberhardt, Elsa Roberts

Present on Zoom

Diana Gierisch, Vern Crawford (joining late at around 3:30)

Not Present

Tom Burke (with advance notice)

Action Items Summary:

Frank to look into new projector.

Tom to ask each Project leader for a short written description of their project and the current status for Chapter records.

Carla to ask McKenzie to put a note on the website that financial statements are available for review on request.

Dot to ask for feedback from the prospective students on a Fall 2022 class (evening & weekends).

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Carla called the meeting to order at 2:39. (The meeting started late due to problems with Zoom audio.)

Approval of Minutes

Carla submitted for approval the minutes from the January 24, 2022 Board meeting. On motion by Frank, seconded by Elsa, the minutes were unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Treasurer – Ron Scoggins

1. Ron reported that the IRS return had been filed, the bank signature cards had been updated, and that he has resolved the issue that was delaying payments from Exxon Mobil in respect of Sarah Hilburn's Old Tunnel volunteer hours.
2. Ron reported that the Chapter's existing insurance carrier had provided notice that it would not renew the policy on expiration (April 15, 2022). Ron is working with an agent in Kerrville to get a proposal from a new carrier. Ron does not believe the carrier's decision is related specifically to the Hill Country Chapter but is the result of a general change in its business.
3. Ron reviewed January transactions, including expenditure for Welcome Reception.

On motion by Carra, seconded by Alice, the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

President's Announcements and Information from State Meeting – Carla Stang

1. Carla touched on the topics included in the agenda, noting that she planned to include National Volunteer Appreciation Month into the Chapter's 20th anniversary celebration.
2. Carla noted that the State office had asked for skilled photographers to volunteer in connection with a State sponsored initiative.
3. Carla described the TMN List-Serve subscription process and explained that she would like Chapter members to subscribe if interested rather than rely on Carla or others to filter and pass on those topics that they judged of interest.

Vice President – Frank Garcia

1. Frank reported on his speaker recruitment efforts, noting that Donna Dutton had provided support.
2. Carla noted that the communications team needed info on the speaker and topic at least 2 weeks in advance to make sure they could provide that information to print media for publication.
3. The Board discussed whether there should be a regular Chapter meeting in August and concluded that there should be. Elsa explained that the August "skip" last year was due to scheduling conflicts in the past with fall class dates for the new class receptions.
4. The class discussed the Chapter projector and Frank agreed to look into possibilities for a new projector. Current projector is outdated and doesn't have both VGI and HDMI availability.

New Class Training – Carra Milikien

1. Carra reported that the Welcome Reception went well and everyone seemed to enjoy the "BINGO" icebreaker activity. The (brought in) catered food was good and quantities were sufficient.
2. Carra and the Board discussed when and how to refund fees to a no-show student. There is one student who has not come to any class activity/class and has not been responding timely to communications from the mentor or Carra. Carra will contact the member and let her know that she will be dropped from the class.
3. Carra reported that the class speakers so far had been well received by the class, and that she had invited Jon Zeitler back at the request of the new class to finish the second half of his 2 hour presentation.
4. Carra reported that the class visit to Cibolo Center for Conservation had gone well.

Membership – Dot Maginot

1. Dot reported that the number of inquiries about placement in a class had dropped off, but noted that this was not surprising given that the new class has now started.
2. Dot reported that prospective list for the next class included 57 people.
3. The Board discussed the best way to handle unclaimed service pins, including a "final notice" process for pins not claimed after one or two years, after which they would be returned to inventory.
4. Diane raised the issue of whether Chapter meetings could be held at lunch time. The Board discussed this briefly and Carla noted that this would be a good item to include on a Chapter survey.

Communications – delivered by Carla Stang

1. Carla delivered the Communications report given that the position remains vacant.
2. Carla reported that the Chapter's Youtube page had received 872 hits in one month (based on Catherine Gauldin report)
3. Carra briefed the Board on how "likes" and comments could boost the Chapter's presence on social media.

4. The Board discussed the possibility of establishing a presence on social media sites other than Facebook, such as Instagram and Twitter.
5. Carla noted that she was still looking for a Communications Director, but that she would continue to be the conduit for requests for website changes, Lenore would continue to prepare the newsletter, Catherine would continue with social media, and that Linda Fiore had agreed to take on the print media management role.

Projects – delivered by Carla Stang in Tom Burke’s absence

1. Carla delivered the Projects report in Tom’s absence.
2. Carla reported that Tom had reached out to all leaders having special project funds as requested at the January 24, 2022 Board meeting. All project leaders responded to him that their projects were active, with the exception of the Kerrville Urban Trail project. VMS does not show a project for Kerrville Urban Trail. The Board discussed the best way to handle the disposition of the \$25.00 fund for this project; it was in memory of the death of a member. Tom is in contact with the surviving spouse (also a member)The Board also discussed the “leader” status of the Old Tunnel project, noting that it probably shouldn’t be Nyta Brown (the Park staff member). Needs further inquiry.
3. The Board noted that they would like Tom to ask each project leader to provide a short description of their project and its status for the Chapter’s records.

Advanced Training – Diane Gierisch

1. Diane reviewed the metrics on scheduled AT (number of trainings, etc.)
2. Diane noted that recurring meetings on the online calendar had been dropped due to a glitch but that a trouble ticket had been submitted to the State office and she was working with Mackenzie (our webmaster) on it.

General

1. Ground Rules for meetings: Carla refreshed her request that Board members observe the *Ground rules for meetings and distributions* that she had distributed prior to the first Board meeting. (Secretary’s note: these can be found in the Board folder on One Drive.)
2. Retreat Wrap Up. Carla reviewed a slide with a wrap up of the 2022 Retreat of chapter focus areas.
3. Visibility of Chapter Financials. The Board discussed how to make Chapter financial information available to membership, including a discussion of how other chapters handle this. The Board decided to put a note on the website that financial statements are available for review on request. Carla also will ask other chapter president’s what their practice is – once the “Slack” forum is started by the state.
4. Hybrid Meeting Readiness. Frank discussed readiness for a hybrid Chapter meeting. Various Board members agreed that a “dress rehearsal” of an in-person/Zoom meeting at UGRA would be a good idea and should include Catherine G. to make sure Facebook live stream process was ready.
5. Speaker Dinner and Honorarium Amount. At Frank’s request the Board discussed the traditional \$50 speaker honorarium and the tradition of inviting out of town speakers to dinner at the Rails. The Board decided to continue the dinner tradition and authorized Frank to offer up to \$100 to a speaker within his discretion, and to bring requests for any greater honorarium amount to the Board for approval.
6. Carra Second Term and NC Director. Carra discussed her request to serve a second term as New Class Director with the idea that a member of the current new class would serve alongside her. Generally, the Board agreed that it was a good idea to move toward a stepped process for new class directors so that each new director could learn the ropes before taking on the role. Conceptually

the Board agreed that she could serve a 2nd term, noting that technically the directors are selected by the new year's president.

7. Fall Class. The Board discussed Carra's idea for a Fall class to be held at times more convenient for a demographic other than retirees. The Board generally agreed that this was a welcome concept and discussed whether to target this for the Fall of 2022 or 2023. Dot was asked to request feedback from the prospective students and the Board agreed to discuss further details at later meetings. Carla reported that planning was underway for Schreiner University to include TMN training as part of its community outreach and new degree program, but that this would probably begin in a year or two.
8. Planning Meeting for 20th Anniversary. Carla touched on the plans for the March 4th meeting to plan the 20th Anniversary celebrations. Looking at multiple events vs a "one and done" approach.

On motion by Alice, seconded by Frank, the meeting adjourned at 4:33.

Minutes taken and submitted by: Alice King, with edits by Carla Stang

Attachments: TMN: Hill Country Chapter, 2022 Focus areas (Distributed by Carla prior to meeting)

Overarching:

- Celebration of 20th year of Chapter
- Better use of technology for communication, classes & meetings (hybrid, etc.)
- Update Chapter Operating Handbook

Along the way:

- Encourage directors to recruit director “assistants” or supporting committees
- Celebrate successes of our members accomplishments
- Possibly survey members about: meeting times, Chapter AT topics, ...
- Outlying county focus for recruitment, training, projects
- Improve public awareness through multi-media
- Improve messaging of chapter information/needs (e.g. volunteer opportunities, board needs, projects, etc.)
- Consider developing a Speaker’s Bureau/Forum – get out in public, schools, etc.
- Ensure development of SIMPLE policies and procedures for technology and other routine functions