

October 24, 2022 Minutes for Meeting of Board of Hill Country Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists

Place: Riverside Nature Center & Zoom

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Present In Person: Tom Burke, Carla Stang, Frank Garcia, Ron Scoggins, Dot Maginot, Jane Jamison, Alice King, Mark Hults

Present on Zoom: Diane Gierisch, David Mathews, Vern Crawford

Not Present: Lisa Flanagan (with notice) – Lisa had to resign from serving as Past President (in lieu of Elsa Roberts). Position will remain vacant through the rest of 2022.

Carla called the meeting to order at 2:30.

Summary of Action Items:

1. Diane to follow up on whether AT rules had changed such that online events were eligible for AT even without an opportunity for live interaction with the speaker.
2. David and Jane to follow up with Schreiner University to evaluate use of facilities for classroom days for new class; David and Jane to share any proposed facilities agreement with Ron for his review.
3. Carla to organize a committee to plan decorations and other matters for the Volunteer Appreciation Party.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On motion by Ron, seconded by Frank, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the September 26, 2022 meeting.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORTS:

Note to Chapter membership – financial reports available to active members in good standing on request. If you would like to see financial reports, please send an email to treasurer@hillcountrytmn.org.

Treasurer – Ron Scoggins

1. Ron reviewed the General Checking statement for September, noting the payments for storage and a speaker honorarium, and a credit from the Spring 2022 Plant Sale and sale of a PGARP sign. Ron noted that the designated funds had remained fairly inactive during the year.
2. Ron reviewed the Financial Report and noted that expenses had exceeded income for the year by about \$3000.

On motion by Frank, seconded by Tom, the Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carla announced that Bill Sewell had been selected as the recipient of the \$100 stipend from the State for expenses to attend the State convention. Carla reported that Bill had been selected by a random method in accordance with the process the Board had approved via email in the prior week.

Carla surveyed the Board members to see if any of the “position” tags (the tags stating the role of President, Treasurer, etc. worn with the members’ name tags) needed to be replaced. Various Board members reported that their tags were worn and should be replaced.

REPORTS:

Vice President – Frank Garcia

1. Frank reported that he was working on getting a speaker for the February meeting through the Texas A&M AgriLife office.
2. Frank reviewed the timing of publicity around Chapter meetings and speakers – noting that the speaker and topic had to be established by certain deadlines to issue a press release and post the information in the Chapter newsletter, etc.

Jane noted that she understood, based on something learned at the State Conference, that the rules for AT might have changed such that online learning could be used for AT even if there were no live interaction with the speaker. **Jane agreed to investigate further and share details.**

Director of Volunteer Service Projects – Tom Burke

1. Tom reported that no new projects had been established. Tom explained that he could usually incorporate new projects/events into similar existing projects and new VMS codes aren’t always needed.
2. Tom reported that he encourages event planners to use the Chapter newsletter and website to publicize events rather than email (to avoid being spammy). Carla noted that the events calendar on the website was now being updated and there was a brief discussion of the process for getting publicity for events.

New Class Director – David Mathews

1. David reported that Carra had stepped down as co-director and that Jane had stepped up to be the new co-director. David expressed appreciation for Jane’s energy, IT skills, and organizational skills.
2. David reported that Sheryl Pender had agreed to take on an official advisory role.
3. David reported that there was a preliminary budget and class dates on One Drive. David reported that the plan was to hold the Welcome Reception on August 16, 2023 at Kerr Arts & Cultural Center and the first class on Saturday August 19 at the Cibolo Center for Conservation, with classes to continue on alternating Wednesday evenings (classroom) and Saturdays (outdoors) until November 11.
4. There was a discussion of the process for evaluating the Schreiner facilities for the classroom days/times, the cost to use the Schreiner facilities, IT/AV equipment setup and the need for a facilities use contract. Carla pointed out that Schreiner’s formal involvement at this juncture was limited to providing facilities if that worked out, and that there was no Memorandum of Understanding in the works for a broader partnership at this point. Carla pointed out that holding the classes at Schreiner would facilitate further discussion of a broader partnership since it would enable Schreiner staff to more easily attend classes to understand the program. David was asked to share any proposed Schreiner contract with Ron for his review.
5. There was a discussion of whether the New Class Committee should reserve days at the UGRA in case the use of the Schreiner facilities did not work out and the consensus was that UGRA did not need to be contacted at this point.
6. David reported that the New Class Committee has gotten input from Sheryl Pender on the curriculum and made some edits based on her recommendations.
7. David reported that he had been in touch with staff at Canyon Lake Gorge and Bamburger about outdoor education days at each.
8. Carla noted that the Board needed to approve the general plan for the Class as to dates and high level curriculum plan but that the New Class Committee had flexibility on the implementation of the details so

long as they met the State and Chapter requirements. Carla noted that she would send potential meeting dates to David and Jane for meeting with Michelle Haggerty so she could review the curriculum plan and schedule to ensure it meets state requirements. This is being done because state review/approval is required when there are “significant” changes in the methodology of how the course is being run.

On motion by Alice, Seconded by Carla, the Board unanimously approved a proposal for a class to be held in Fall of 2023 from August 16 – November 11, on alternating Wednesdays evenings and Saturdays, with classroom education on Wednesdays and combined classroom and outdoor education on Saturdays.

9. There was a discussion of various budget matters relating to the new class; it was noted that the amount spent in 2022 might not represent the actual cost given that various donations had been made.

Membership – Dot Maginot

1. Dot reported that there were 94 people on her list of people interested in the New Class, with 4 new inquiries since the last Board Meeting.
2. Dot reported that there were no new certifications from the Class of 2022 since the last Board Meeting, and that overall 10 out of 26 members of that Class had certified.

Advanced Training – Diane Gierisch

1. Diane noted that people should be encouraged to finish their training hours to certify for the next year, especially given that there are fewer trainings available for November and December than during prior months.
2. Diane noted that she would get in touch with appropriate people at the State about whether online events without live speaker interaction were eligible for AT. Carla noted that there might something in the new versions of the CMOP or Bylaws that touched on this issue.
3. Jane noted that all TMN Tuesdays were available for AT credit at any time, even without live interaction.

Communications – Mark Hults

1. Mark noted that he had expanded the information on his report to include website visitor metrics – noting that in the last 30 days there had been 890 sessions, 2198 pages viewed, with an average session length of 3 minutes. Mark said he suspected that the short average session duration had to do with Chapter members visiting the website to enter VMS and post their volunteer hours.
2. Mark noted that there had been 21 changes to the website since the last Board meeting.
3. Mark touched on social media metrics for YouTube and Facebook.
4. Mark reported that he had confirmation that print publications were in fact picking up the Chapter’s news releases regarding chapter meetings and speaker topic.
5. In response to a comment from David about web information about the New Class dates Mark reported that he had plans to revise how information about the new class is presented on the website generally.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Volunteer Appreciation Party: Dot reviewed RSVPs to date and noted that she would send an email reminder to members at some point. After some discussion, and a motion by Carla, seconded by Alice, the Board voted to change the RSVP date from mid-November to December 1 (with all members but one voting in favor). The meeting discussed the plans for the event, such as nature and bird walks, the silent auction, decorations, recognition of volunteer milestones, and a presentation of the history of the Chapter. Carla noted that she would organize a group to work on decorations and specifics for the event.
2. Every Drop Counts: Dot reported that the proceeds from the event (raffle and hot dog sales) would be split three ways between RNC, TMN, and NSPOT and that TMN would receive \$462.50 as its 1/3 share.

3. Governance Documents: Carla reported that she had submitted the Chapters Bylaws on the State's revised form with the 1 year term of office of officers and the 501(c)(3) Addendum. Carla noted that the Bylaws and CMOP would be presented to the Chapter membership for approval at the November 28, 2022 Chapter meeting. Carla explained that the Chapter Operating Handbook still needed revision but that she would handle that next year in her role as immediate Past President. Members were still encouraged to send Carla any revision recommendations they have, even before next year.
4. Dot reported that 25 TMN Textbooks had been purchased. Textbooks will be stored in the chapter Climate-Storage unit.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Vern and Carla reviewed the work of the Nominating Committee and reported that an AT Director and VP may have been identified but that they were working on the other roles and were open to suggestions. Diane disclosed to the Board that she might transfer to the Travis County Chapter; that it was a tough decision but that this change would better facilitate her involvement with TMN given that she splits her time between Austin and Mason County. Carla reminded Board members to think about how to transition their role.
2. Carla reminded Ron, Alice, Jane, and Frank that they are required to conduct the annual financial review prior to the November 28 Board meeting. Alice, Jane and Frank agreed that Frank would head the review.

There being no further business, on motion by Frank, seconded by David, with unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes taken by Alice King with modifications by Carla Stang.