

**APRIL 24, 2023 MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE TEXAS MASTER
NATURALIST HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER**

Meeting Location: Riverside Nature Center

Time: 2:49 p.m.

Attending in Person: Jeff Schwarz, Carla Stang, Ron Scoggins, Patti Guin, Dot Maginot, Mark Hults, Deb Youngblood, Jane Jamison, and Vern Crawford

Attending by Zoom: David Matthews

Absent: Kim Ort and David Drake

President Jeff Schwarz called the meeting to order at 2:49 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Patti Guin

Secretary Patti Guin submitted the minutes from the March 27, 2023 Board meeting. On motion of Vern Crawford, seconded by Deb Youngblood, the minutes were unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Treasurer – Ron Scoggins

Ron Scoggins gave a report on the general checking account register for the month of March, which revealed an ending balance of \$27,342.77. He also presented the quarterly financial report pointing out that at the end of the first quarter, we had received income in the amount of \$6,168.38 and incurred expenses in the amount of \$3,093.63. Ron indicated that merchandise sales were down from where they were at this time last year and stated that may be the trend in the future, as fewer people were attending the meetings, hence fewer sales. After a review of each itemized entry on the quarterly report, a motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Carla Stang and seconded by Mark Hults. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice President – Kim Ort

Kim Ort did not submit a written report this month and was absent from the meeting.

Immediate Past President – Carla Stang

Carla indicated she had nothing new to report.

New Class Committee – Jane Jamison and David Matthews

Co-Director Jane Jamison reported that upon completion of the 2023 class, students will have a total of 64.5 hours of state-required training, and if they attend all advanced training included in the class schedule, they will have a total of 13 hours for the year 2023. She further reported that

they will still need to fulfill their 40 hours of volunteer service before certification, and they have until August 16, 2024 to fulfill this obligation. She reported that zoom training has started, and she briefly described how the zoom format will work. She also stated that they had some dynamic speakers lined up, and mentors would be allowed to participate in the zoom class sessions.

Membership – Dot Maginot

Dot reported that she received 33 new class applications, and that the 2023 new class application process is complete. She further stated that she has had four new class inquiries since the 2023 application process ended and they were informed that the fall class is full, and they would need to apply for next year's class. Dot further reported that there are currently 202 active members in the membership directory and the number of members with VMS entries in 2023 is 183. She stated that there was a total of 20 recertifications in the month of March and several members have reached milestone status. She indicated she would be handing out several pins at the Chapter meeting.

Communications – Mark Hults

Mark reported on all Communication activities for the month of March, which included the following: *The Texas Star* newsletter was published on April 17, 2023; website statistics for the last 30 days – 1,369 sessions (decrease of 5%), 3,574 page views (decrease of 11%), and a 6% decrease in the average duration of website sessions (3 min and 30 sec). He stated that this was the first decrease in website sessions, page views, and session duration since he has been monitoring the website. He reported that the top page views included the AT calendar, Pollinator Garden Assistance, Events Calendar, VMS, *The Texas Star*, Approved Volunteer Projects, and the Volunteer Calendar, and we had 46% new viewers to the website who never visited before and 54% returning viewers. He also stated that 11 changes were made to the website in March, and he provided a detailed log of the changes that were made. Mark announced that we currently have 308 subscribers to our YouTube channel, and that 18 people joined during the month of February. Mark further noted that 11 new posts were made on Facebook since his last report, and we currently have 2.6K followers and 2.4 likes. Regarding print media, Mark indicated that the April monthly meet announcement was distributed on April 17, 2023, and he was aware that *The Bandera Prophet*, a new online publication that was added to our distribution list last month, published the announcement.

Carla Stang asked if the PGARP issues on the website had been resolved, and Mark indicated that tech support had not yet fixed the problem. President Schwarz said that he would get with Michelle Haggerty to discuss the problem.

Volunteer Service Projects – David Drake

In David Drake's absence, President Schwarz submitted David's written report to the Board which contained a request to discuss and render a decision on several items concerning volunteer service hours outside of our 10-county area. After a lengthy discussion and a request for clarification of some of the items, it was decided to table the matter until Director Drake's return.

Advanced Training – Deb Youngblood

Deb Youngblood reported that so far in 2023, 192 events have been logged totaling 410 hours. She further reported that they had approved a significant number of training opportunities to date, but training opportunities were significantly down from last year at this same time.

Chapter State Representative – Vern Crawford

Vern had nothing to report at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

As a follow-up to last month's discussion regarding the purchase of laptop computers and necessary software, President Schwarz reported that Mark Hults had researched pricing and found what equipment we would need on Amazon for around \$4,000. President Schwarz further reported that he had filed an application for a grant with the Pedernales Electric Co-op on April 6; however, his recommendation to the Board was to go ahead and make the purchase, since we would not know how long it would take for the grant process to be completed. Mark Hults pointed out that we needed to add Office 365 to the computers. He added that we currently use Business Pro software, and that you can add programs for a charge of \$5.00 per month. Carla Stang indicated that she thought we were either already getting that program for free or could get it for free. She recommended contacting Daryl Pitts, the IT consultant, for clarification before making any purchases.

President Schwarz announced that Tom Collins would be receiving a special milestone pin in June for 10,000 hours of volunteer service, and that State TPWD Director Michelle Haggerty would be on hand to make the presentation. He further stated that two past 10,000-hour volunteer recipients, Gracie Waggener and Stephen Bishop, would also be recognized at the June meeting.

Following a review by President Schwarz of the evening's Chapter meeting agenda, and there being no further business to discuss, on motion of Dot Maginot, and seconded by Vern Crawford, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes taken and submitted by:
Patti Guin, Secretary