

**DECEMBER 18, 2023 MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER**

Meeting Location: Riverside Nature Center

Time: 2:07 p.m.

Attending in Person: Jeff Schwarz, Carla Stang, Patti Guin, Dot Maginot, Lou Hugman, Jane Jamison, and Mark Hults

Absent: Kim Ort, David Matthews, David Drake, Deb Youngblood, and Vern Crawford

Also in Attendance: Sheryl Pender, Patricia Poore, Alice King, Gary Fest, and Brenda Fest

President Jeff Schwarz called the December 18, 2023 Board meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Minutes – Patti Guin

Secretary Patti Guin submitted the minutes from the November 27, 2023 Board meeting. On motion of Carla Stang, seconded by Dot Maginot, the Board Meeting minutes were unanimously approved. The minutes of the November 27, 2023 Chapter Meeting were then submitted for Board approval. On motion of Carla Stang, seconded by Jane Jamison, the Chapter Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Treasurer – Dot Maginot

Dot Maginot's written report revealed that the total amount of income received during the month of November was \$1,956.25, expenses totaled \$1,893.71, and the ending bank balance was \$20,704.34. New Class Co-Director Jane Jamison questioned the amount of new class expenses that were reflected in the financial report, which she stated did not coincide with her financial records. Dot Maginot reported that historically other expense items have been categorized as a new class expense, such as the recent expense for caging materials for the Apache Tree Project tree donations. There was a brief discussion about possibly adding a new miscellaneous category in future financial reports for expense items that should not be categorized as a new class expense, and President Schwarz stated that this would be a matter for the 2024 Board to discuss and approve. There was also a brief discussion about whether we should be paying for caging materials for the Apache donated trees. President Schwarz said this would be addressed at the January 2024 meeting of the new Board. There being no further discussion pertaining to the financial report, Jane Jamison made a motion that the Treasurer's report be approved, Carla Stang seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Vice President – Kim Ort

Vice President Ort was absent from the meeting and no written report was submitted.

Past President – Carla Stang

Carla Stang reported that she had a couple of directors that she still needed to get with and would be ready to present the revised Chapter Operating Handbook to the Board for a vote at the January 2024 Board

meeting. Someone suggested that it might be a good idea to go over the COH at the retreat, so everyone can familiarize themselves with what their duties are in connection with their positions on the Board.

New Class Committee – Jane Jamison

New Class Co-Director Jane Jamison went over the New Class Evaluation Results that she had prepared based on responses that were given by new class attendees throughout the training process for classroom speakers and presentations, field trips, and outdoor education events. A copy of this evaluation in its entirety can be found in the New Class electronic folder located on OneDrive. Jane also announced that she would not be able to serve as 2024 Director but would be willing to help with the class in an advisory capacity. Jane further reported that she, Mildred Dworsky, and Patricia Poore were working on the New Class Committee Guidelines and their goal was to have them updated by the January 17, 2024 New Class Committee Meeting.

Membership – Dot Maginot

Dot reported that we have 60 people who have indicated an interest in attending the next TMN class, and we currently have 214 active members in the Membership Directory. She also reported 9 new recertifications for the month, bringing the total year-to-date recertifications to 155. She stated that VMS hours reported by active members through November 2023 was 27,479, and total VMS hours reported by Members in Training was 799, for a total number of VMS hours reported in the amount of 28,278. Additional membership statistics can be found in her written report filed in the Board of Directors' folder located on OneDrive.

Communications – Mark Hults

Mark stated that all activities in his report are experiencing the typical end of year slow down. He reported that Frank Garcia has volunteered to lead the Audio/Video team and he has recruited three team members. Mark further reported that the Speaker's Bureau project is being tested and his goal is to go public on January 1, 2024. Mark said that all 2023 New Class recorded presentations are on the website for use in the Speaker's Bureau Project. The Board inquired if all speakers had been contacted to obtain permission from them to use their recorded presentations. Mark stated he would contact them for permission prior to the project going live on the website. For additional information and statistics, please refer to Mark's written report filed in the Board of Directors' folder located on OneDrive.

Volunteer Service Projects – David Drake

In the absence of David Drake, President Schwarz briefly went over the written report submitted by David Drake. David's report revealed that there have been two new projects approved since the last Board meeting: Bird Survey for Mo Ranch, with Bob Binney serving as project leader and the UV-12-A Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Garner State Park Natural Area Resource Management project, with Mark Hults serving as project leader and assisting the Brushy Canyonlands Chapter. The report in its entirety can be viewed in the Volunteer Service Projects report located on OneDrive.

Advanced Training – Deb Youngblood

In Deb Youngblood's absence, President Schwarz presented her written report to the Board which revealed that a total of 502 AT events had been submitted to date totaling 1,146.25 hours of training possibilities. The report also included a statistical graph reflecting AT Events and Hours Available to HCC members through the month of December. The graph revealed that the month of September provided the highest number of events and hours of training possibilities. Deb's report further revealed that Patricia Poore will

be taking over as Advanced Training Director on January 1, 2024, with Vicki Schmidt and Susan Parker serving as team members. Deb stated that she would remain in the background to coach and continue training the new AT team until she is no longer needed.

Chapter State Representative – Vern Crawford

No report was submitted.

New Business

\$750 Donation Recommendation for RNC

Dot reported that an anonymous donor has pledged to match up to \$20,000 in donations for Riverside Nature Center for the year 2024. Historically, we have donated \$750 in the month of December to Riverside Nature Center for allowing us to use their facility for meetings and events throughout the year. Because of the matched donation pledge for 2024, Dot recommended that we give our annual donation for 2023 in January of 2024, and then give our 2024 donation during the month of December 2024 so Riverside can receive a matching donation from the anonymous donor. Carla Stang made a motion to send both our 2023 donation and our 2024 \$750 donation to Riverside in 2024 so that Riverside would be able to receive matching funds from the anonymous donor. Mark Hults seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

2024 Officers, Directors, and Committee/Special Positions

President Schwarz announced the names of all officers, directors, and committee positions that have been elected or appointed thus far to serve in 2024. He indicated that he was still searching for someone to serve as New Class Director. Carla Stang pointed out that he would also need to appoint someone from the Board to serve on the plant sale committee.

2024 Retreat Date

Jeff Schwarz announced that the retreat would be held on January 16, 2024, with the time and location to be determined.

2023 Financial Review

Carla Stang reported that the Financial Committee consisting of Treasurer Ron Scoggins, Incoming Treasurer Dot Maginot, Past President Carla Stang, Vice President Kim Ort, and Secretary Patti Guin had met via Zoom in October to conduct a review of the 2023 financial records of the organization. It was pointed out that the report would need to be submitted to the Board for approval, so it was decided that Carla would prepare a written report to be emailed to the Board for an online vote, and that the results of the online vote and the written report would be made a part of the December 18, 2023 minutes.

Report of Assessment Committee – Fall 2023 HCMN Training Committee

An assessment committee consisting of Vern Crawford, Lisa Flanagan, Brenda Fest, Gary Fest, Lenore Langsdorf, and Joyce Towers were allowed to observe all 2023 new class Zoom online training sessions. Representing this Committee at the December 18, 2023 Board Meeting were Gary and Brenda Fest, who submitted a written and oral report reflecting their observations. The report consisted of both positive and negative aspects of the Zoom training, with the committee concluding that although the use of Zoom for chapter meetings has worked out well, for a long-term training event, the committee felt like it was less

desirable than in-person training. A copy of the report in its entirety is attached to these minutes for inclusion in the records of this organization.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Carla Stang made a motion that we adjourn, seconded by Dot Maginot. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Patti Guin, Secretary

Online Voting for Approval of Financial Review Summary

The October 25, 2023 financial review summary was originally emailed to President Schwarz on November 2, 2023, and submitted for inclusion in the November 2023 Board meeting documents. However, the financial summary failed to be discussed at the November meeting and was not brought up again until the December Board meeting. At that meeting, President Schwarz requested that Carla Stang, the Board member heading up the financial review, email a copy of the summary to all Board members requesting they review the document and email her their online vote. On December 18, 2023 at 5:22 p.m., Carla emailed the 2023 Financial Review Committee's findings to all Board members for their approval. In addition to Carla Stang, other members of the Financial Committee who participated in the Zoom meeting were Treasurer Ron Scoggins, Incoming Treasurer Dot Maginot, Vice-President Kim Ort, and Secretary Patti Guin. Jane Jamison, New Class Representative, was unable to attend. The following Board members, which represented a quorum, voted to approve the Committee's financial summary: Jeff Schwarz, Dot Maginot, Carla Stang, Patti Guin, Kim Ort, Mark Hults, Lou Hugman, Vern Crawford, and Jane Jamison. A copy of the financial summary is attached to the December 18, 2023 Board meeting minutes.

Summary - Fall 2023 HCMN Training - Report from Assessment Committee

Vern Crawford, Lisa Flanagan, Brenda Fest, Gary Fest, Lenore Langsdorf and Joyce Towers

This committee was allowed to observe all online training sessions. In the beginning we were placed in a “tech” breakout room. Later we were moved to other breakout rooms but none of us knew where the others in this committee were placed. Overall, the training sessions were well executed and Zoom seemed to work for us. We’re not sure how that worked for everybody because there were some glitches ongoing about people trying to get in. The breakout rooms were awkward and did little to contribute to an already fragmented situation. The time spent in these rooms seem to be longer than necessary.

The speakers presented their information, but lacked interaction. What was not accomplished, was a cohesive group of trainees that developed a camaraderie between themselves as a result of the training.

Here’s a list of positive and negative aspects of the training.

Positive

- Allows for easier access to classes. Eliminates the need for driving in our ten county area for our chapter.
- Some evaluators thought that some of the slides were easier to see online, other evaluators did not.
- Recording the training sessions would be helpful for makeup opportunities.

Negative

- Breakout rooms were variable but did not add to connecting participants to each other as a whole class group.
- Limited opportunities for developing camaraderie and relationships that lead to volunteer opportunities.

- The presenters could not use the props that make learning more effective when you can see or touch items related to the instruction.
- If a participant is not able to commit to the training, they will not likely be able to commit to participating in volunteer activities.
- Very little interaction between the class committee and the trainees.

Other Considerations

- The members of the new class committee should be made up of at least at least 50% of more experienced members, not just graduates of the most recent class.
- When done in person, there were people present who were experienced and could clarify because they had already been through the training. Also, they were able to give the trainees information on how to get more information or places to volunteer. There was very little interchange of ideas between people during the training sessions, which limited mentoring opportunities.
- The UGRA auditorium is available for our chapter's use free of charge as a result of a partnership we have to maintain their Eduscape.
- We need to conduct a survey in January of chapter members about the use of continuing our training via Zoom.
- Although the use of Zoom for chapter meetings has worked out fairly well, for a long-term training event, it is less desirable than in person training.

Oct 25, 2023

Hill Country Chapter TMN
2023 Financial Review Summary

Date/time held: Oct 25, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Present: Carla Stang (Past President. Jane Jamison, the Class Representative was unavailable to attend meeting), Kim Ort (Vice President), Patti Guin (Secretary), Ron Scoggins (Treasurer), Dot Maginot (Membership and Incoming Treasurer)

1. The 2023 Financial Review was held on this date because Ron Scoggins will be leaving the chapter and Texas prior to the end of this year. The Board of Directors voted that Dot Maginot would serve as treasurer for the remainder of the year. Assuming Dot is voted in by chapter members to continue serving as the treasurer in 2024, this review will serve as the 2023 review.
2. The Review was held via Zoom to be able to expedite the process. All electronic and hard copy treasurer documents were available for reference and review.
3. Dot and Ron previously met and had a thorough turn-over of duties. Ron offered his remote assistance in the future should any questions arise.
4. Topics of discussion:
 - a. Chapter merchandise: Currently managed by Gracie Waggener. She and the treasurer communicate regarding merchandise purchase (single source supplier) and sale activities, use of the "Square", and documentation to support these activities, which are reflected in the monthly treasurer report. There are no concerns related to this function.
 - b. Dedicated donation from Exon: Sarah Hilburn is a member who coordinates this generous annual donation. She volunteers at TMN projects (Love Creek and Old Tunnel) and directs that the donation from Exon go to those projects specifically. Exon contacts the chapter treasurer to validate Sarah's volunteer hours and then they send their donation electronically to the chapter bank account. No concerns here.
 - c. Project leads submit requests for any project expense reimbursement to the treasurer vs individual project members. This helps the treasurer authenticate approval and reimbursement.
 - d. Treasurer spreadsheets: Ron described the Excel documents have formulas built into them and recommended routinely backing up original spreadsheet. All concurred. Additionally, Dot will also upload the original spreadsheets and working documents to the Treasurer folder on the chapter One Drive (repository for chapter documents). The treasurer also uploads the monthly documents in the Board of Director monthly meeting folder.
 - e. Dot will likely purchase a second "Square" to be maintained by the treasurer. The original Square is held by Gracie to manage the chapter merchandise sales. Dot will also ask Jeff Schwarz (President) to serve as a third person for back up for the Square.
 - f. Checks written over \$1000 requiring two signatures: This occurred only once in 2023 and the group was able to electronically view that the signed check did have the treasurer and president's signatures as required.
5. There were no issues of concern raised about the 2023 treasurer's processes and procedures. The meeting concluded at 9:52 AM.
6. This document will be sent to the President and submitted for inclusion in the November 2023 Board meeting documents.

Submitted by: Carla Stang