LINDHEIMER MASTER NATURALISTS

BOARD MEETING

MARCH 28, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Teeling, Darlene Varga, Val Lefebvre, Cheryl Trock, Rich Nielson, Susan James, Joel Dunnington, Kim Wright

GUESTS: Art Williams, Brian Trock (VMS coordinator), Troy Luepke (county agent and advisor)

ABSENT: Judy Brupbacher, Rich Bradley

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Kim had sent out the minutes via email. Several corrections were made and the final draft sent out prior to the board meeting. Joel moved the minutes be approved; Darlene seconded. Motion passed. Minutes were approved.

**OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Treasurer---**Rich reported that the February end bank balance was $8753.57. The register balance was $8268.30 after several checks were written. Troy said that our chapter does not need to contribute $300 toward the purchase of the portable PA system because there is one that can be used. So the $300 allocated for the PA system can now go toward the purchase of the new water testing kits. Rich will find out from Coco exactly what 2 new kits will cost. He reported that according to Coco, GBRA will be reducing the training for the old water testing kits. They will support the maintenance and replacement of the old probes annually. The new kits will cost $429 each, for a total of $858 for 2 new kits. Susan said she might be able to get us a discount on the kits. She needs more specific information from Coco about the kits. Rich moved that the chapter allocate $900 for the purchase of the 2 new kits; Joel seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Vice President---**Joel sent out a copy of his committee meeting minutes (see report). The April chapter meeting speaker will present the topic of devastating flood events in South Central Texas. May’s topic will be Hill Country snakes. There will be a field trip to the Meadows Center in San Marcos in May.
3. **Past President---**Rich Bradley was absent. No report.
4. **Communications---**Susan had William Suddith come to this meeting to take pictures of the Board prior to the meeting. The pictures will be posted on Facebook and the website. William needs about $100 annually to pay for the drop box storage management. Susan said Jennifer needs more input from Henry Hahn for the digital scrapbook. Marie is doing a good job keeping the website updated. Susan said she will propose to Sara Riggs (Out and About) that she remove some items from the weekly messages to make it more concise. Events that occur every week or on a regular basis, such as Gorge workdays, should be placed on the calendar and not necessarily be posted each week. Susan will discuss this with her committee.
5. **Education---**Val and Darlene reported that the class went to the Fish Hatchery in San Marcos and birding field trip at Crescent Bend with the Inglets. One person has dropped out of the new class. Rich asked if he needed to adjust the t-shirt order to reflect one less shirt and was told that he would.
6. **Membership---**Cheryl reported that some categories on the VMS system have been combined to make it more user friendly. There are audits being done by the State, but Cheryl has not heard anything about our chapter yet. She is waiting for the hours of transfers out of our chapter to be credited back to our records. She sent out 21 emails to members who have not reported any hours for 2016 to see if they are still active or are having trouble reporting their hours. She heard back from 10, who had various excuses for not reporting. One hundred seven members have reported hours for 2016, which is 84% of the membership. Three students and sixteen members have not reported any hours yet. David Wilson attended the Gault Field Trip and Susan said he wants to get involved again. Transfers into our chapter from another chapter will need to contact their old Membership Chairperson and have them contact Cheryl about the transfer of their hours. The State VMS coordinator should be able to help with this.
7. **Outreach-**--Pat Gonser has resigned as Chair. Folkfest is on April 9. Jim has met with Kathy Nichols (head of the fest) and all paperwork has been taken care of. Jim is trying to schedule a meeting at the storage barn to see what we have there that can be used at the fest. He has a list of volunteers already that will help with the fest. They will be manning the exhibits. Rich N. reminded us that the chapter has 4 new canopies to use. We will bring the Rain Harvester. Cheryl asked if there are any brochures that can be placed at our booths. Art said that there are about 200 brochures in the Agrilife office that were not used at Arbor Day because of the rain cancellation. Susan suggested that we could use business cards that people might prefer instead of a brochure. The cards would list our website, meeting times and places, etc. We need to use the brochures first since we have them.
8. **Projects-**--Judy was absent. Cheryl said since many options on the VMS system have been consolidated, members are doing a good job of reporting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Rich wants to create 2 new categories on the monthly financial report---Income Pass Through and Expense Pass Through. This would reflect monies that come in for certain items that will quickly be paid out for the purchase or payment of items.
2. The request from William Suddith for the money to maintain the drop box storage was addressed. Rich moved that the chapter pay the $99 annually for the storage; Susan seconded. Motion passed.
3. **Pat Gonser’s Resignation---**Jim reported that Pat had resigned as Outreach Chair.
4. **Folkfest---**Jim reported that he has 10 volunteers lined up.
5. **Earth Day-**--April 23, 2016 at TPML
6. **Open House---**May 14, 2016 at Agrilife.
7. **Issue of Background Checks vs.** **Privacy---**Jim spoke about the issue of background checks. A member has refused to consent to a background check and was denied his recertification pin for 2016. Cheryl proposed that until the chapter can make a determination on this issue, the pin will be held. The consensus of the Board was that the 2016 pin should be awarded at the next opportunity since it was in recognition of past service and does not have any bearing on future standing with the chapter. Unless the chapter has a policy that requires members to return service pins if they leave or are expelled from the chapter, there is no basis for withholding the award of a pin in the current situation. Troy said the way he understands the rule is that if a person refuses the check or fails to pass, that person is no longer considered a volunteer for the Texas Master Naturalists. As a result, that person would not be allowed on Texas A and M Agrilife Extension or Texas Parks and Wildlife properties or be able to use any of their resources or equipment, be allowed to work at events where anyone under the age of 17 was present, or be allowed to handle any financial matters or the Chapter’s financial administrative functions. This is for liability purposes. Cheryl and Troy both said that if someone does not pass, the chapter would never know the reason, but would be notified that that person is no longer a volunteer for the TMN. Cheryl only sees “Yes” on the system if they passed. She has seen no “No’s” yet. Brian asked what the chapter would do if someone refuses the check or the person fails the background check. Darlene read the TMN statement from TMN regarding the background checks, which reflected what Troy had said about the restrictions imposed on the person, but didn’t go so far as to say that person was no longer considered a Master Naturalist. This statement is not found within the State By-Laws or Handbook at this time, only as a separate guideline. Also, VMS only asks if the person will submit to a background check and there is no message given if the person chooses “No”. Because of these issues, Joel will contact Mary Pearl Meuth this week, if possible, to determine the exact effect on Master Naturalist chapters and whether or not wording is to be added to the Chapter By-laws and Handbook. Rich asked if someone already has a valid background check through another agency, such as Master Gardeners, would that be able to be reported to Master Naturalists and count as a current and valid check? Cheryl thinks that it could count for both organizations. Troy agreed it should count as both are using the same VMS. Cheryl mentioned that several members have not filled in their date of birth or their driver’s license number, or left the Yes or No blank on the request for the background check. This means that a background check cannot be done without all the needed information. Joel will ask Mary Pearl how it should be addressed when a member has not chosen “Yes” or “No” or entered their birthdate. Cheryl will send out emails to non-compliant members to try to get them to complete the information on their profiles. She will also ask how a background check can be transferred from another chapter to our chapter’s records.

**COMMENTS AND ADJOURN:**

Cheryl was asked if she wanted a table at Earth Day and she answered in the affirmative. Cheryl and Brian volunteered to hand out the TMN brochures at Dinosaur Days.

**ADJOURN:** Joel moved the meeting be adjourned; Darlene seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

**Next Meeting---**Monday, April 25, 2016 at 6 PM at Agrilife.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Wright, Secretary

Lindheimer Master Naturalists