

SAS Board Minutes
May 21, 2019
338 Hawthorne Ave. NE

Present: Ray Temple, Tim Johnson, Michael Babbitt, Lowell Spring, Judy Brunkal, Doug Spencer, Maureen Leong-Kee. Carolyn Homan, Laurie Buswell, administrator

Call to Order: Ray called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Previous month's minutes – Three corrections noted: Pg. 1 re: Tim/travel reimbursement policy – Tim has “made” changes. Pg. 1 re: Friends Board meeting – Brian “Root” FWS Biologist. Pg. 2 re: Next Board meeting: Election of “Board Members.” Michael moved that the minutes be approved as corrected; Doug seconded. Motion carried.

Review of Action Items – 1. Ray to review final draft of Travel Reimbursement Policy – On tonight's agenda. 2. CLEAR grant finalization – Ray still needs attendance figures for Birder's Nite from Eugenia and clarification on whether the final room rent stipend is reflected in the \$155 balance in order to finish the next CLEAR grant request.

Treasurer's Report, Tim – He has sent the report via email to the Board. Highlights: \$42,000 Nature Center construction reimbursement has been received from the Service. \$110,071 remains in the Phase 1 Gehlar account and the Nature Center investment account has almost \$300,000, from which we can draw 4%, or \$12,000 a year to use for operations. He thinks we might be able to use that for programs. Since we cannot collect fees at the Center, we could use the investment funds to cover program costs. Ray said we need clarification from Graham on SAS's ability to collect money for functions at the Center and we definitely need to know what we can do before the Center opens. Other financial highlights: \$414,000 in the unrestricted investment fund. We have yet to draw the full interest allotment to support SAS operations, so that fund continues to grow.

Election of Officers – Ray opened nominations for Board officers. Carolyn nominated Tim as President. Tim nominated Michael as Vice President, himself to continue as Treasurer, and Carolyn as Secretary. Doug seconded the slate. Officers were elected unanimously.

Discussion topics –

Conservation Committee report – Ray said he emailed it to Board members yesterday. He believes SAS is poised to have a more effective committee because he and Joe Youren have joined David Harrison to pursue local, state and federal conservation matters. He anticipates quarterly reports to the Board.

An upcoming issue: a letter of support from Salem Audubon for City of Salem's proposal to Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for Minto Island habitat work. He said he will bring that to the Board probably in June. He also said the committee is assembling a list of “consultants” to lend further expertise to Salem Audubon's conservation presence. These include Rick Bastach, Ken Bierly and Mitch Rohse, all retired from high-level natural resource and conservation management work with the State of Oregon. One focus will be more greenway conservation efforts and ways to increase public awareness of the economic, recreational, environmental and ecological values of the Willamette River corridor. He foresees bringing a proposal to the Board for support at some point.

Fundraising opportunities at the Nature Center – Ray queried the Board on the scope of fundraising at the Center that we anticipate. Ideas included workshops, sales at events (bird boxes, caps, etc.) memberships, having a store. A “capital campaign” type event is out but donors could be taken on tours, with the ask made elsewhere. The issue is that any money collected at the Refuge stays with the Refuge. We understand the Friends group can collect funds on behalf of SAS, but we need to know the actual mechanism for that and the eventual transfer of funds to SAS.

Oak furniture for Nature Center – Doug reported on his research into vendors who can build tables from oak boards cut from the aged oak tree at Ankeny Hill that was cut down to make room for the Nature Center. Zena Forest has cut up slabs and rounds and dried the wood but wants the wood out of their storage by June. Zena had two recommendations for vendors – Willamette Valley Fine Woodworking and Jonathan Nussbaum. Doug talked with, and got bids from, both. The bids were very different but also covered different specifications. Nussbaum bid on 10 tables (4 conference tables, 2 large rounds and 2 small rounds) for \$19,870 and Willamette Valley on 6 tables for \$9,135 (all conference). The issue will be discussed on a conference call May 28. Cost will be divided three ways between the Service, SAS and the Friends.

Travel reimbursement policy – Tim noted that this issue came up because Ray discovered that IRS can tax people who receive reimbursements if the organization doesn't have a policy. Also, Tim has changed it to a general expense reimbursement policy to cover more than just travel and broadened it to cover SAS employees, Board members and chapter members. The policy states that reimbursement can occur with Board pre-approval and for Board-approved activities. Tim has developed forms for pre-approval and reimbursement. Michael moved adoption of the policy as presented. Lowell seconded. In discussion, it was agreed to amend the second-to-last bullet point by eliminating “reimbursable” and “mini bar charges.” The item now reads: Unauthorized expenses include personal items such as personal entertainment, personal gifts, traffic citations, recreational expenses, lodging upgrades. The motion was amended to say the Board adopts the policy as presented and amended. Motion carried.

Insurance update – Tim talked with Diane at our agency about canceling volunteer medical insurance. She supported that because our carrier covers field trip leaders through liability coverage. Also, most trip leaders and many trip participants are covered under Medicare.

He also offered a clarification between our Director and Officer coverage and general liability. D&O covers employment practices and financial loss (through misappropriation of assets, etc.) General liability offers protection if someone is hurt during an SAS activity or if there is property damage. There is a \$500 premium to cover trip leader liability. He said we may be able to save some money by going with the D&O carrier for this liability coverage. For now he asked for approval to cancel volunteer medical coverage. Michael so moved; Maureen seconded. Motion carried.

Oregon Audubon Council Education meeting – Tim attended. He said six of Audubon's 13 chapters were represented. Portland presented a lot of detail on some of their many programs. One current initiative is to get a lighting ordinance in Portland, which includes eliminating blue lights and putting motion sensors on parking lot lights. Portland Audubon also has assessed its image, marketing and effectiveness reaching 20- to 40-year-olds and have come up with some strategies. One is to downplay the use of “Society” attached to their name. Apparently, it is deemed elitist by millennials. They've also redesigned their newsletter and they're asking their education committee to come up with programs to reach out to the 20-40 age group and to Latinos. Tim has the name of a contact who said they are happy to advise other chapters on these areas.

Portland also gave a long report on their backyard habitat certification program. They now have a full-time person doing it and several thousand people have certified their yards. There are three levels of certification and yards must be re-certified every 5 years. **Action item: He said he would share his notes from this presentation with the Board.**

Saturday Market booth – Tim reported a great turn-out at the booth May 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Set-up didn't go smoothly, however. The canopy borrowed from Santiam Flycasters was missing the awning so we borrowed one from Marion Soil and Water Conservation District, which had a nearby booth. Booths at the market have to have a cover. Despite some setbacks, the booth was up and running by 9 a.m., welcoming a pretty steady stream of people. Kestrels and bird checklists were passed out and many questions answered about bird boxes, bird identification, attracting birds to yards, etc. He also had queries from several groups interested in using the Nature Center for future events.

Tim thinks we should return to the market. **Action item: Laurie to call to secure a date in September if possible.**

He also said we need to invest in a canopy. Nick and Maureen have said they will donate one to the chapter. **(Thank you Nick and Maureen!)**

To streamline booth set up for events like the market, other items need to be secured and a checklist of items to take has to be created. These items need to be organized in an area of the storage unit so volunteers can easily access them. Among needed items are a new accordion file, a smaller SAS banner and some large clamps for securing items to tables.

Nature Center items – Doug said today's conference call was to cover the opening ceremony for the Center. However, word has come from the Federal Highway Administration that projects are behind schedule, including the new entry road into the Ankeny Hill site. One issue is that a new entrance to Baskett Slough off Highway 22 is planned and both the Ankeny and Baskett contracts have to go at the same time.

Thus, the Center probably will not be available until June 2020. This will give us more time to plan opening ceremony events, including the date and time, speakers, refreshments and guest invitations (including inviting congressional representatives.) Tim said the delay will be disappointing to members.

Doug also said he had been at the Center recently and is disappointed that the cement pad for the outdoor classroom has been stained with outlines of boards that were piled up there during construction. He believes this is an issue for the contractor. He will bring it up for discussion with the DMT.

OSU class – Maureen asked the Board for permission to post a Facebook and web notice about a class on ducks at OSU. The Board agreed it was OK.

Potential Board member – Tim followed up on an email from Eugenia suggesting contact with Laurie Aguirre, who is retiring, about potential involvement with SAS. He has talked with her and will schedule a lunch to discuss any advice she has on marketing the traveling education program and could she play a role in programming at the Nature Center.

Legacy gift – Tim said new SAS members Beth and Dick Afton have contacted Laurie about making a legacy gift to SAS. He will be contacting them about this.

Office closure – Laurie said she will be leaving on vacation soon (probably by next week) and the office will be closed for two weeks.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Next Board meeting: 6 p.m. June 25, 338 Hawthorne NE, Salem, OR