

SAS Board Minutes

Nov. 24, 2020

Via Zoom call

Participating: Tim Johnson, Michael Babbitt, Maureen Leong-Kee, Carolyn Homan, Cynthia Donald, Judy Brunkal, Lowell Spring, Michael Williams, Jenny Ammon and Laurie Buswell, administrator. (Doug Spencer was unable to connect via phone.)

Guest: Mike Unger

Call to Order: Tim called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Webinar report, Mike Unger – Mike shared his latest report on 14 Audubon webinars presented to date, with 251 people signing up and 76% attending. Of those signing up, 69% are Salem Audubon members. All the numbers are increases over those previously reported. The Christmas Bird Count Tips and Techniques webinar had the best attendance record yet – 95%, 18 of 19 enrollees participating. Income remains at \$560. The Nov. 8 Oregon Ducks and Geese session was canceled due to Mike's illness – the first cancelation so far.

Facebook activity has been good with 847 "likes", up from 800 last month.

Mike got the YouTube channel for SAS up and running and 9 videos are posted there. So far there have been 107 views and 6 likes of the videos, as well as 7 subscribers to the channel. So far 16.3 hours of watch time have been logged and 929 "refreshes" (thumbnails of videos selected); 2.5% viewed the videos.

Most webinar participants are SAS members – 69% -- which is good because we're giving members a way to keep in touch. The down side is that we aren't reaching out to the community as much as we would like. Laurie added, however, that we have added 10 new members because of the online classes.

Minutes from October, Carolyn – Tim noted a needed change in the first line of the financial report: **SAS budgeted a \$7,000 deficit in unrestricted funds but ended...** Cynthia moved approval of the minutes as corrected; Michael B. seconded. Motion approved unanimously with one absent.

Review of Action Items – Michael B. and Tim to meet at the Nature Center with Lee Slatum re: bird specimens: Michael said he, Tim and Cynthia, met with Lee and the bird specimens were taken apart to separate the feathers from non-bird items (metal, etc.) Tim and Graham took the remains to Basket Slough. Tim said a few words of tribute and the remains were cremated.

Michael said the frozen bird remains Judy has will be taken to the Nature Reserve for burial some time in December. He will contact Lee to set a date. Anyone interested in attended should let him know. Cynthia will bring her Hopi sage stick to use in a tribute ceremony.

Treasurer's Report, Tim – He had emailed the 2019-20 Financial Summary and Proposed FY 2020-21 Budget. SAS ended 2019-20 with a \$3,996.88 deficit, a bit less than the 5-year average deficit of \$4,068. It's an amazing result considering the devastating effects of Covid on the chapter's usual fundraising efforts. We also had to spend money on technology to allow birding classes and other programs to continue virtually. Aiding the bottom line: a slight increase in membership and generous response to appeal letters from members and donors.

Tim said he used this year's income and expenses and "best guesses" to propose the 2020-21 budget, which ends in a \$4,475 deficit. He moved acceptance of the proposed budget; Mike W. seconded. Motion carried unanimously with one absent.

He noted that tax preparation data is due to the accountant. Also, the fall appeal has brought in about \$2,000 and the end-of-year appeal has gone out.

UPDATES

Nature Center

DMT call report – Tim will distribute notes from the call via email tomorrow. He said the fundraising agreement for the Nature Center is done and approved by the FWS Regional counsel. This allows SAS to proceed with construction. We will have to file an annual report to FWS on objectives and occasional status reports to Damien. Two more documents still are needed: a Design and Construction agreement for the outdoor classroom and a Facility Use Agreement update. Other highlights:

- 1) **Native plantings** – About 500 natives have been planted around the Nature Center thanks to Lee Slatum and others.
- 2) **Well water treatment system** – The auto flush and temperature control system proposal seems to have solved the water quality issues. Dalke is paying for it. A final water quality test is pending.
- 3) **Refuge roads update** – A security gate still is needed and the overlook trails aren't finished. Portapottys will be needed for a while until the Center can be opened to the public.
- 4) **New website platform** – Mike W. has shifted to SquareSpace, which is more functional and somewhat cheaper than the original Ionos platform. He's working on content to fill in the framework and shared pages for the Board to see. It should be live in a few weeks but will need a day-to-day manager and will need constant updates. Photos, for instance, can be changed with the season.
- 5) **Timing of Center opening** – The rough date is still sometime after Jan. 1 to open the Overlook and trails to the public. Gehlar Hall can't be opened until the pandemic is past.
- 6) **Mike Williams' Building Environmental Engagement (BEE) program proposal** – The Board reviewed a proposal Mike prepared for Gray Family Foundation. Tim said his vision has been that SAS would offer programs at the Center and secondarily would market the Center and its resources to other educators. Mike said his idea was to create environmental literacy through a curriculum drawing on Center resources and reaching out to Latino students in particular, grades 3-8. His thought was to emphasize the importance of understanding the Center's potential to raise awareness of the natural world and to make a place for SAS in the community of educators and to become a catalyst for sharing of learning. Board members offered various comments on the proposal. Jenny noted that environmental education has not been a priority in area schools in recent years so a proposal to boost that is welcome. Lowell wondered how this effort would work out in actual classrooms and noted that what's observable at the Center during the proposed summer workshops is quite different than in other seasons. Maureen said it's a good initiative to build on. Carolyn had some technical questions particularly about personnel proposed in the grant but felt it was a fit with SAS strategic plan goals to increase involvement in education and develop a plan for programs and other education/interpretation opportunities at the Center. Because of the short notice to get the grant ready for this fall's deadline, Mike has tabled the grant but will continue to gather input from area educators and fine tune it for possible submission next year. Tim said he would work on stipend/1099 tax form issues raised by personnel proposed in the grant.

Laurie's office arrangements – Marion Soil and Water Conservation District has purchased new office space in Stayton and wants to maintain the partnership with SAS. The proposal is for Laurie to telecommute for the most part but to set up an office at the Stayton building where she can meet with the public when necessary – when picking up nest boxes, etc. She said those meetings are infrequent. She can work at home but has no room for the SAS office equipment there, so those items can move to the Stayton office. The arrangement will save SAS money on rent and we can use the P.O. Box in Salem for mail deliveries.

Committee Reports

Field Trip Committee – Cynthia had signed off so Tim reported that the committee had decided to cancel any further pod field trips until Covid numbers improve. Even the pod trips don't meet the current guidelines of outdoor gatherings of no more than 6 people from two households.

Conservation – Ray has stepped down from the committee. Tim said David Harrison will take over as chair and he and Joe will continue committee work while seeking another member. They are focused on Elliott Forest management issues right now.

Christmas Bird Count – Tim has sector leaders in place and they are proceeding with safety-first plans that will comply with Covid protocols for the Dec. 19 CBC. Sector leaders will meet Dec. 6 via Zoom. The post-count countdown also will be handled via Zoom. New this year is coverage of Illahe Golf Course and Minto Growers also will do a survey of their property.

Birder's Night – The fourth Zoom presentation is set Dec. 8. It presents a technical challenge because it involves two presenters in two locations covering their trip to Thailand. The November program had the best attendance yet – 41 people signed up and 35 attended.

In a related issue, Tim said he had asked Jenny whether SAS should return the \$450 in CLEAR grant funds from Marion Soil and Water that are earmarked for rental of Birder's Night meeting space and stipends for speakers as well as \$925 for Education programs that can't be held in public schools because of the pandemic. Jenny said using the funds for the chapter's Zoom license and webinar fees -- \$450 and \$335 so far – is still a conservation education purpose and organizations have to adapt to the times. Giving the money back would not accomplish anything. Mike W. made a motion that SAS shift the CLEAR grant funds to cover Zoom and webinar fees. Michael B seconded. Motion carried unanimously with two absent and Jenny abstaining.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Next Board meeting: 6 p.m. Dec. 22 via Zoom