

Association for Conservation Information
Board Meeting, Lake Tahoe, Nevada
7/11/16

Call to Order: President Micah Holmes called the meeting to order.

Roll Call (Kim Nix): Micah Holmes (President, OK), Kim Nix (Secretary, AL), Judy Stokes Weber (Treasurer, NH), Don King (Immediate Past President, TN), Aaron Meier (NV), Jane Gustafson (NE), Jenifer Wisniewski (GA), Lance Cherry (NM), Michael Gray (KY), Regina Knauer (MO), Blake Podhajsky (OK), Julie Hammonds (Awards, AZ), Kay Ellerhoff (Futures, MT)

Unable to attend: Kathy Garza-Behr (OH), Robin Cahoon (Vice President, UT), Phil Bloom (IN)

Also in Attendance: Darren Hill (OK), Marty Benson (IN) and Jessica Sparger (IN)

2016 Conference (Aaron Meier): Aaron reported that we have 112 registered for the conference, including guests. In addition, a couple of people are expected to register at the door. Cindy Delaney will go through the hotel bill with Aaron before it gets paid to make sure everything is correct. Overall, he is pleased with how using Cindy's company worked out, but he wished that more sponsors could have been obtained by her. Sponsorships total \$30,000.

All of the auction items have been purchased. The only loose end is he needs a complete list of people who will be taking the boat ride Wednesday. At first, he intended to do a group picture on the boat ride, but since everyone is not taking it, he plans to do that on awards night.

2017 Conference: In Phil Bloom's absence, Jessica Sparger and Marty Benson from Indiana reported on next year's conference, which will be held at Brown County State Park. This location is very close to Nashville, Indiana, which has become an artists' colony. Rooms at the state park lodge will run about \$99 per night. The location is 50 miles from Indianapolis airport.

The 2017 conference will take place July 9-13 with the field trip taking place Tuesday afternoon. The board meeting will be on Sunday. The park offers many types of recreation such as hiking and mountain biking.

A hotel on the premises has a restaurant that will cater all the meals. They are looking at getting a shuttle from the airport to the state park. Phil Bloom has started a list of potential speakers. Micah encouraged Jessica and Marty to follow Aaron this week and talk to anyone else who has hosted in the past such as Don King and Michael Gray.

A short video will be shown at the banquet to promote the Indiana conference.

Aaron said he can work with Indiana to try and obtain more sponsorships. He is confident that some social media sponsors like HootSuite could be obtained if they are asked early enough.

Approval of Minutes: With no quorum at the last meeting, minutes from April and June needed to be approved. A motion was made by Regina Knauer to approve them and Lance Cherry seconded. The motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report (Judy Stokes Weber): Judy pass around a copy of the CPA report. She said no anomalies were found with ACI's financials. Currently, she shows 47 agency members; five NGOs; two supporting members; one sustaining member; and three individual members.

The USFWS Region 5 has agreed to pay ACI dues on behalf of the entire agency. Membership targets for next year the remaining states who are not members.

Micah said he is emailing everyone a copy of a proposed budget for the upcoming year.

Auditing Committee: Micah appointed Blake Podhajsky (OK), Bonnie Holding (ME) and Dan Dennison (HI) as the auditing committee. They will get with Treasurer Judy Stokes Weber to obtain the documents that need to be reviewed, and will make a report at the business meeting Thursday.

Membership Recruitment Efforts: (Jenifer Wisniewski): Jenifer reported that several new states have applied for membership during the past few months. New York is the latest to rejoin and they have committed to paying their dues.

Nominating Committee: Micah appointed Judy Stokes Weber (NH), Don King (TN), and Scott Ball (FL, retired) to the nominating committee. They will be seeking nominations to fill vacancies for president, vice president, secretary and three board members. The slate will be presented at the business meeting on Thursday.

Awards (Julie Hammonds): Julie reported that we had a total of 362 entries this year. If not for several disqualifications, it would have been the highest number ever, but we still did well with just two less than last year's 364 entries. The disqualifications were magazine articles that were not written by agency personnel.

The newest category, Conservation Post of the Year, garnered 14 entries in its first year, which is a great start.

Changes to the awards contest included making clarifications to some of the rules, adjusting the video categories and improving the scoring criteria for six categories.

This year Julie created a web page for category chairs that was well-received. A common question that she receives is why ACI does not have an all electronic contest. Many people are asking if they can submit entries online, which is common for other contests.

Some discussion took place about online versus physical documents. Micah said the consensus from the board is that we go online, but he wants the awards committee to make a

recommendation. Julie said she would make discussing an online contest a priority at the awards committee meeting and she hopes to be able to make a recommendation at the board meeting.

Scholarship (Michael Gray): Michael reported that we were able to offer 20 scholarships this year. The purpose was to offer them to new people and 14 of them fulfilled that requirement. Some initial recipients had to decline, but he was able to replace those with other attendees.

In all, the hotel rooms totaled \$13,108 and the registration fee totaled \$6,600. The total cost for scholarships was \$19,708.

All scholarship recipients are required to submit an article about a successful program in their state or take notes at a session so those notes can be used for an article in the Balance Wheel.

Future Conferences Report (Kay Ellerhoff): Kay thanked Aaron for stepping up to host this year. The lineup as it now stands is the following:

2018 Missouri

2019 - TBD

2020 New Mexico

2021 New Jersey

2022 Georgia (possibly joint with SC)

2023 Hawaii

2024 Oklahoma

Pennsylvania and Iowa are still on the futures list. She will be trying to fill 2019 as soon as possible.

New Business: Micah handed out a letter from lifetime member Marianne Burke. She is requesting a scholarship be designated to assist lifetime members to get to the conferences. Micah has some concerns on expanding our scholarship offerings as it might take away from current members.

There was a discussion on several options that might be offered to lifetime members to assist them in getting to the conference. It was decided that a free registration would be the best way to handle this. Jenifer Wisniewski offered to write up a paragraph for the bylaws that offers one registration to a lifetime member and describes how it will be distributed. The membership can vote on this at the business meeting.

Bylaws (Micah Holmes): Micah recommended rewriting Bylaw number five to help the treasurer. In the past, because of late dues payments, it has been difficult to decide who was a member at the time the awards contest opens. Treasurer Judy Stokes Weber recommends the rewording to say that an organization must be a member by Dec. 31 of the previous year to be a member in good standing for the awards program. Judy will draft a re-write of the dues payment bylaw to make it clearer and simpler.

Preview of Business Meeting (Micah Holmes): Micah asked that if there are any items to be added to the agenda for Thursday's business meeting to let him know.

Lifetime memberships (Micah Holmes): Micah would like to nominate Scott Ball of Florida. During the business meeting we will accept nominations from the floor and take a vote.

AFWA (Micah Holmes): Micah attended the AFWA annual meeting last year and thought it was good to have an ACI representative attend. He encourages the next president or designee to attend. Judy suggests that person attend the North American as well since the same committees meet.

Bylaws Review (Micah Holmes): With both the webmaster and Balance Wheel positions being vacant, we have an opportunity to restructure. We have been paying \$4,000 a year to both the Balance Wheel editor and webmaster. Micah suggests changing this to a membership communications position. That position would include website, newsletter and social media, and we would pay this person \$5,000 a year. With the money saved, he proposed paying for the awards chairman's registration, air fare and hotel up to a designated amount. This would be some incentive for the awards chair.

Doing this would strike out Article 8. We would need to create a membership communications committee in the bylaws; that description would be outlined in policies and procedures. This membership communications person could be an ACI member, but does not have to be.

Article 7 needs to change as well to define the compensation for the awards chairperson. Micah will rewrite the bylaws and policies and procedures and get them to Secretary Kim Nix. Changes will be voted on at the board meeting.

Adjournment

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Kim Nix, Secretary