

MINUTES

Association for Conservation Information Executive Meeting

Conference Call ● May 6, 2020 ● 10 a.m-11 p.m. MST

ITEM NO. 1: Meeting Called to Order.

ITEM NO. 2: Roll Call.

- ✓ Jenifer Wisniewski (TN, President, Conference Co-Chair, Auction)
- ✓ Lance Cherry (NM, Vice President)
- ✓ Sara DiRienzo (WY, Secretary, Scholarships)
- ✓ Scott Ball (FL, Communications)
- ✓ Judy Stokes Weber (VT, Treasurer)
- ✓ Kay Ellerhoff (MT, Futures)
- ✓ Kim Nix (AL, Immediate Past President)
- ✓ Tim Akimoff (OR, Board)
- ✓ Darrin Hill (OK, Board)
- ✓ Micah Homes (OK, Ways & Means)
- ✓ Aaron Meier (NV, Awards)
- ✓ Ashley Sanchez (NV, Board)
- ✓ Craig Sanchez (NM, Board)
- ✓ Alix Pedraza (SC, Board)
- ✓ Blake Podhajsky (OK, Awards)
- ✓ Patricia Allen (AFWA, Board)

Unable to Attend:

- ✓ Jason Harmon (TN, Board)
- ✓ Nadia Reimer (KS, Board)
- ✓ Kyle Martens (NE, Board)

ITEM NO. 3: Approval of Minutes.

MOTION: Judy Stokes Weber moved to approve the June 2020 board meeting minutes, with amendments. Jenifer Wisniewski seconded the motion.

VOTE: Voice vote taken. All present voted in the Affirmative. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ITEM NO. 4: Opening Remarks.

Presented by Jenifer Wisniewski, President

At this meeting we're going to talk about the conference, awards and forming a committee to manage the multistate grant opportunities.

ITEM NO. 5: Communications Report.

Presented by Scott Ball, Membership Communications Chair

Scott presented the report (below) that he would have given at the annual business meeting. Membership is at the same level as last year; just shy one NGO. The communications side is growing.

Membership – Year-end Highlights

As of 06/30/2020, ACI has:

- 50 Agency-level members, including...
 - 42 state agencies, representing 40 states

- 1 federal agency
- 7 NGOs
- 2 Individual members
- 1 Sponsor-level member

Communications – Year-end Highlights

- 592 subscribers to The Balance Wheel (570 this time last year)
- 616 Facebook likes (554)
- 733 Facebook followers (551)
- 74 Facebook posts through June 30 (90)

Other Notes

- Next issue of The Balance Wheel scheduled for July 15.
- Major Challenge – No conference means no sessions to recap, which = serious shortage of available newsletter content.
- Will soon solicit updates to online membership directory.

Scott asked for input for the upcoming year's content for the Balance Wheel, as it is typically filled with articles about the conference from scholarship recipients.

Jennifer suggested using the Balance Wheel's greatest hits - repurposing articles that performed best over the last few years.

Sara and Kay suggested using award-winners - in featuring work or interviews.

ITEM NO. 6: Treasurer's Report.

Presented by Judy Stokes Weber, Treasurer

Judy reported we are still in a strong financial position at this time. We are closing the FY with 50 "agency members."

As I mentioned in earlier reports we have been building toward a financial position that ensures we can weather any storms that might come our way. Congratulations again to our past and current presidents for advancing this approach. We now have \$25,000 on deposit in a 12-month CD at TIAA.com and enough resources to continue our operations for the next year and beyond.

Earlier this year we made a decision to delay billing for the annual dues and awards entries, usually emailed out in late June as awareness and excitement build for the July conference. We had planned to bill for these items around the time of annual conference, rescheduled for November 2020. Some states are experiencing budget cuts and spending stops at present. The situation in November relative to financial status is unknown.

However, since we made the decision to bill later in the year, we have cancelled the November conference and will be conducting the awards ceremony near the end of August. We will hold the next annual conference in New Mexico in July 2021. So, do you still want our billing to go out in November? Judy is a little concerned that this date gives states 30 days or so to get their payments in to retain eligibility for the next awards program. Many take a full 6 months to get that done.

Board discussion: When would you like dues and awards billings to be sent out?

Lance recommended as soon as possible, as it would be best for states in a new fiscal year.

Blake and Judy discussed the delayed billing for awards. Originally, we announced states would have delayed billing for awards to November. Typically awards and dues are bundled into one payment for convenience.

Judy said some states may pay sooner, but many might miss a November deadline, which could make them ineligible to enter the awards contest.

Jenifer suggested extending the due date but sending the bill now. Lance suggested states can make arrangements to pay outside this.

Judy will proceed with sending invoices now with the deadline in November for maximum flexibility.

Board discussion: Would you approve the attached budget for FY 2021 to guide our spending for the next year?

The checkbook transactions for the final two months of 2020 are noted below.

2020 Checkbook Register

MAY					
PP Transfer	5.28.20	Lisa Thompson Indiv Member	\$24.15	\$84,542.78	xbalanced
JUN					
PP Transfer	6.2.20	CAHSS 2020 Dues 2019 awards	\$234.42	\$84,777.20	
		Plus \$25,000 on deposit with TIAA.com		\$25,000.00	
		Plus Northway Bank (NH) account balance		2,084.80	
			Total assets	\$111,862.00	

FY 2021 DRAFT ACI Budget					
	Beginning Balance Checking Accounts			\$86,860	estimate
REVENUE					
	Dues, Awards	\$15,000			
	Interest	\$1			
	Conf Returns	\$0			
	Total Income	\$15,001		\$15,001	
FY 2021 Assets Available				\$101,861	\$101,861
EXPENSES					
	Conference Advance		\$5,000		
	Scholarships		\$10,000		
usually \$3,000	Award Plaques		\$1,500		
unknown	Plaque Shipping		\$500		
	Online Awards Platform		\$4,500		
	Webhosting		\$300		
	Treasurer Stipend		\$5,000		
	Surety Bond		\$300		
	Communication Manager Stipend		\$5,000		
usually \$6,000	Conference Travel Reimbursement		\$0	no conf travel	
	Professional Fees CPA Review		\$500		
	Office Expenses		\$100		
NEW!	IRS TAX return if MSCG accepted		\$1,000		
FY 2021 Total Expense			\$33,700		\$33,700
Checking Account Balance June 30, 2021 (VT and NH balance)					\$68,161
TIAA CD					\$25,000
Balance at End of FY 2021(June 30, 2021)					\$93,161
Budget accepted by board on _____					
JSW					
6.30.2020					

Because we are an affiliate member with WAFWA and the dues are \$250. Judy will add a line in the budget so we can quickly pay.

Judy explained the new line to the budget – IRS Tax Return if the multistate grants are awarded. If we earn more than \$50,000, we have to complete a new form. For the first year, we will need help from an accountant to complete – that is the estimate.

MOTION: Craig Sanchez moved to approve the FY 2021 Budget. Darren Hill seconded the motion.

VOTE: Voice vote taken. All present voted in the Affirmative. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ITEM NO. 7: 2020 ACI Conference Update.

Presented by Lance Cherry, Vice President

Lance is encouraged that we made the right choice to delay the conference until next year, given the COVID-19 conditions. The conference is scheduled July 25-28, 2021 with an additional day, July 29, for a Locovore Workshop. Those who made hotel reservations can call to roll them over.

Kay shared her recent experience with an online Delany conference was pleased with the event. She said that expertise could come in handy for us.

ITEM NO. 8: Auction Report.

Presented by Jenifer Wisniewski, Auction Chair

Nothing to report.

ITEM NO. 9: Futures Conference Report.

Presented by Kay Ellerhoff, Future Conference Hosts Chair

Kay plans to add TN to the futures list to encourage people to look forward to great conference locations. She will update the list and send some content to Scott for the Balance Wheel.

ITEM NO. 10: Scholarship Report.

Presented by Sara DiRienzo, Scholarship Chair

Sara asked for guidance on scholarship applicants for the 2020 conference. Following the conference announcement, Sara will contact applicants and ask they apply again next year.

ITEM NO. 11: Awards Report.

Presented by Blake Podhajsky and Aaron Meier, Awards Chairs

We had a total of 361 entries this year. COVID-19 did impact the entries, but not terribly. Blake waived 10 entry fees for three states who requested. With the waiver, states were able to submit up to four entries on per state.

The contest generated \$14,040 for ACI. The plaques are estimated to cost \$2,800-\$3,000, and the awards platform renewal is due July 17 for \$4,400. That leaves \$6,800 that we made on awards this year.

The judging deadline is Sunday. Aug. 9. Aaron has coordinated the judges, but need 6 more. States with entries in the categories outstanding can judge them, but won't judge entries from their agency.

The virtual awards ceremony will move forward on August 30 at 6 p.m. Central Time (tentative). This gives Blake and Aaron the maximum amount of time to prepare the program. This is a good opportunity to think outside the box to engage people to participate.

Scott will send one message with conference and award details next week.

ITEM NO. 12: Ways and Means Report.

Presented by Micah Holmes, Board Member and Ways and Means Chair

Micah provided a summary of his research regarding officer and board positions for the next year. The bylaws tie elections to the conference, so without a conference he recommended the board remains as-is for the next year. Jenifer and Lance agreed.

Blake will retire from his role as awards chair, with Aaron taking over with a new vice-chair. Blake is now free to volunteer for the next difficult ACI role!

Meetings will continue every other month on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Mountain Time. Sara will send invitations. The next meeting will be in September.

ITEM NO. 13: New Business.

Jennifer asked for volunteers from the board and suggestions of folks from the ACI network who could serve on a committee to manage up to three multi-state grants. The commitment would be 1-2 conference calls a month.

The grants include:

- Locovore workshops through DJ Case
- Digital or social media marketing projects through WMI
- Email communication projects through Southwick

Darren and Sara volunteered. Lance recommended Tristanna Bickford from NM as well. Jenifer asked others to send emails with suggestions.

Jenifer asked if old award winners and content could be shared with the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports in the communications campaign clearinghouse. Blake said there could be an issue with old entries given the awards platform shift; he would check the archives. Alternatively, we could reach out to past winners for their work. It is a closed website so contract/reprint concerns might not apply.

ITEM NO. 14: Adjournment.

MOTION: Craig Sanchez moved to Adjourn. Jennifer Wisniewski seconded the motion.

VOTE: Voice vote taken. All present voted in the Affirmative. Motion carried unanimously.

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m. MST. The next meeting will be Sept. 2, 2020.

Submitted by Sara DiRienzo, Secretary