

Minutes - **OFFICIAL**
ACI Board of Directors
Annual Conference - Nashville, TN
July 14, 2008

Meeting called to order at 4:01 p.m. CDT

Call to Order - **L. Saldaña**

Members present:

Officers

President: Marianne Burke, Louisiana

Vice President: Nels Rodefled, Oklahoma

Secretary: Lydia Saldaña, Texas

Treasurer: Bob Wines, West Virginia

Board of Directors

Don King, Tennessee

Scott Ball, Florida

Craig Rieben, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Jon Charpentier, New Hampshire

Stephanie Hussey, RBFF

Kim Nix, Alabama

Robin Thomas, Utah

President's welcome - M. Burke

Marianne thanked Don King and Tennessee for hosting us. The agenda looks great, there's lots of good things planned and we've got a lot to cover today so let's get started. She welcomed all for attending and passed out background material on agenda items. She noted that there was one change...the ACE award idea would be discussed under "Old Business."

Approval of minutes for the 5/13/08 conference call - L. Saldaña

Bob Wines moved to approve them.

Scott Ball seconded

ACTION: Motion approved

Policy and Procedures - N. Rodefled

- Adopt policy and procedures on waiver of membership dues

General discussion on the need for relief on membership dues. Board has already approved a change in the bylaws to provide relief for member agencies or agencies who would like to be members.

Any member agency or potential member would be eligible, but not associates or individuals.

Request would be submitted to the ACI president and would have to be signed by a division chief or equivalent.

Other key points:

- Relief for one year

- No restrictions on number of years requested

- Board would approve relief at board meeting or conference call

Lydia Saldaña moved to approve

Seconded by Don King

ACTION: Motion approved

Treasurer's Report - B. Wines

Bob Wines reviewed 2008-09 budget approved by the board. He provided a financial report which contained a transaction ledger of all financial activity for ACI over the last year. Bob explained that we would see "bank draft" listed several times. The first draft was to move 10K out to CD. There are seven additional drafts in the amount of \$30 for PayPal which covers our monthly service fees. When there is money in the account, it comes out of PayPal; otherwise we have to pay it from the general ACI account. Marianne asked why is one \$40 and one \$30? Bob explained that we had more than the maximum number of transaction for our type of PayPal account, which is why we got hit for \$40 on that one particular month. Bob explained that there is another ledger item for pass through for credit card registrations...funds that Bob collected for last year's conference and sent back to MA (that's why it says pass-throughs). Marianne asked who "batman" was and Bob explained that it's the company that does all the engraving for the perpetual plaque. Bob commented that obviously we're in very good financial shape.

Next item is the bound financial report. There were a few concerns expressed by the auditor. We now exceed FDIC limits... of 100K. He recommends that we keep that in mind as we move forward. It would be best to keep balances below 100K so we would be protected if something happened. Also- he really cautioned us about the revenue coming in and expenses going out...a lot of that is due to the profit from the MA conference. What that does is puts us on radar screen of IRS. In the past we have not had more than 25K in revenue. If this happens for three years in a row, we must file with the IRS. We won't owe a tax. According to auditor we need to watch this. We can think about lowering the dues to decrease the revenue stream. We can drop back off the radar screen if our revenue drops back down.

The audit committee consisted of Judith Hosafros, Micah Holmes and Craig Rieben.

Bob is presenting a balanced budget of \$25,900. With board approval we increased the Balanced Wheel and webmaster contracts. No one projected any other expenditure that may change. We budgeted \$2,000 for awards for competition as we did for this year and we will exceed it.

Nels encouraged the board to lower registrations at the conference and not require the state to return the advance. Marianne said we should be spending the money for high quality speakers at our conference. Bob would rather increase conference advance ...not write a bunch of checks to

speakers. Lydia commented that was fine as long as the host state understands that a certain amount would be earmarked for speakers Stephanie Hussey asked how not returning the advance would affect revenue? Bob said that the advance would not show as revenue when it is returned. Marianne suggested that we develop a conference budget and start using it to improve the conferences..... which in turn will bring in more members. The board also voted to start funding travel scholarships. There may be opportunity to bring folks in for conference. Don said he spent about \$2,500 to bring in speakers We agreed to discuss this issue at our next meeting.

Marianne also brought up awards. In the past, recipients have received framed certificates... we have moved back to award plaques. Host state handles awards. Need to increase the amount we are spending on awards. Right now we're making money on awards...if we make 6K we should spend 6K on the awards we give out.

Scott Ball moved to adopt the budget.

Kim Nix seconded/

ACTION: Motion approved.

Membership dues waiver

New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept. is requesting a waiver of dues for calendar year 2008.

Lydia moved to approve the waiver

Stephanie seconded the motion

ACTION: Motion approved

Membership committee report - J. Charpentier

Marianne commended Jon for his work in trying to move the membership needle. Jon thanked folks who helped. He has been able to follow up with most states. 8 members did not renew, including NSSF and NWTF. There was concern as to why we didn't join their orgs. Playa Lakes Joint Venture has also dropped out. Outdoor Channel no longer sponsoring. Some of the states have new directors in play. So we need to plant some ACI seeds. There might be a lot of states that have financial issues. All they have to do is write a letter to request a dues waiver. Some comments we've received indicate that some folks are having difficulty in putting a value on ACI membership. Perhaps we need to develop an exclusive package of member benefits. We need to work on focusing these benefits, maybe do a password for special content on the Web site. Lydia expressed concern about making info inaccessible. Bob said our award program has value. The conference should also be a big draw. Hosafra suggested training sessions and workshops. We also need to communicate the value of networking with ACI colleagues around the country

Nomination Committee - M. Burke

- i) Scott Ball (FL) - Chair
- ii) Robin Thomas (UT)
- iii) Judy Stokes (NH)

Only two folks said they were interested in serving- Marc Sommers and Micah Holmes...so we need to talk to more folks and see who else might want to be on the board.

Annual Award Program - A. Wethey/Marianne delivered report

Big ideas small budget category seems to be picking up.

305 entries for this year.

They will meet tomorrow and are requesting a few changes. There was a suggestion that the winning submission should be sent back to Thomas and Ashley so they can be brought to the conference. Some folks would like to see the winning magazine, etc.

Future Conferences - K. Ellerhoff /J. Stokes

2009 Baton Rouge Louisiana

Marianne confirmed dates: July 12-15

Lots of historic events... shuttle from airport

Lots of restaurants etc

Good location...right on river

Marianne wants some feedback on how the conference went this week? This year we used a different structure. Come in on Sunday or Monday. Everyone seemed to like the field trips on Friday. Only 65 people registered this year.

2010- Michael Gray has expressed interest in having it in Kentucky.

2011- NCTC with WV

Balance Wheel - D. Head

Nothing to add outside of the written report. Thanks for increasing the line item.

How is readership? Dottie said we get lots of hits in a month. We can tell how many people open it.

Stephanie asked whether there is a way to determine whether people are reading it. We spend a lot of time and resources on it.

Web Site - J. Eschler

No report from Jeff- he's not at conference.

Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship - M. Holmes

Micah says it is exciting to see it happen. We appreciate all who helped get this going. Getting the word out earlier will allow more people to come. Micah will follow up to get something from the new folks who attended ACI for the first time. 7 applications were awarded and 5 will be at conference.

Liaison Reports

Regional Associations

Northeastern – Jim Sciascia- no report

Southeastern - M. Burke- working on getting committee reorganized
Midwest – No report
Western - J. Hosafros- Western association is meeting now

AFWA - ACI prez (Nels) will provide report.
OWAA - K. Ellerhoff/J. Stokes

New Business

Do we need a professional coordinator to assist us with our annual conference? We had a general discussion on this.

Stephanie Hussey- We should have a committee that includes board members. We should be more active in making sure the conference is the best it can be.

Marianne Burke- We can put together a committee along with a professional planner to guide what that person does.

Lydia – It ain't broke....most states put together a strong internal work team to execute a conference, so we don't need to put together a committee to do that – but a committee to have input into the agenda is a good one.

Judy Stokes asked whether we are we still doing research...asking evaluation questions after the conference. Should there be a more formal way of gathering input for the conference?

Stephanie volunteered to serve on the committee. Lydia thought there should be some representation by officers.

The immediate host state and the past two host states should also be involved.
The treasurer is a de facto member.

New conference committee
Chaired by Stephanie Hussey –
Lydia Saldaña
Judy Stokes
Don King
Bob Wines
Judith Hosafros

Old Business

Judy brought up an old topic of discussion....the possibility of doing another award from ACI....called the ACE award (Annual Communications Excellence). The idea is to recognize excellent conservation communicators on an annual basis. The idea is that it is not just communicators, but directors, biologists, etc. Discussion centered around the presentation being made at AFWA, perhaps the annual meeting (although there is a lot going on already.) We also discussed the idea of presenting an annual media award as well. Judy said she will discuss the idea with Corky Pugh to see if there is any interest at all in pursuing it.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m. CDT