

# ACI Board Meeting

Midway, Utah  
07/15/13

## Review Minutes

### ACTION ITEM

Amanda Stroud made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting (05/21/13 Conference Call). Randy Zellers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## Treasurer's Report

ACI experienced a decline in our financial account balance in the past fiscal year. Despite that, our finances remain healthy.

July 1, 2012 we began the fiscal year with a checking account balance of \$19,638.51 and closed on June 30, 2013 with a balance of \$17,891.61 – a decline of \$1,746.90.

Total checking account deposits were \$42,477.86 and withdrawals were \$44,224.76. The checking account register and official bank statement are in balance.

A separate audit conducted on the basic ACI account confirmed balances with no discrepancies.

In addition, ACI accommodates credit card payment through the PayPal system. Our current balance in PayPal stands at \$305. For credit card payments, PayPal deducts \$0.023 out of every \$1.00 as payment for using the system.

The 2012 Conference hosted by the National Conservation Training Center utilized the ACI checking account to help facilitate income and expenses. The final balance for the conference was a negative \$1,454.93.

Membership totals stand at: 43 x \$200 for Agency Membership; 1 x 500 for Sponsor Membership; 1 x \$250 for Supporting Membership; 1 x \$50 for Non-Voting Associate Membership; and 11 x 25 for Individual Memberships.

In November the ACI 5-year CD is scheduled to reach maturity. As part of this conference business, it will be necessary to set a course for action on the next phase for the \$60,000 that is invested. This investment draws approximately \$500 every quarter.

The Treasurer's Office will be forwarding invoices for the next membership cycle in late August. We are appreciative of the many members who are prompt in response and payment. We will follow up with a Second Notice of dues in December; Third Notice in February; and Final Notice sent Certified Mail in April as required in the ACI Constitution.

## **TREASURER REPORT ADDENDUM: ACI Certificate of Deposit**

*Value = \$60,000*

*Maturity Date = November 25, 2013*

In 2008 ACI had accumulated a very healthy checking account balance. On advice from financial experts, we were challenged to consider alternatives to holding all of our funds in our checking account. As a not-for-profit 501-c-3 organization we had the potential to exceed financial standards established by the Internal Revenue Service to maintain 501-c-3 status.

The decision was made to roll funds into a 5-year certificate of deposit. Maturity date on that CD is Nov. 25. As that date fast approaches you are now challenged to decide the next step for handling those funds.

The CD investment has paid \$2000-\$2300 in annual interest. The quarterly interest payment is deposited into the ACI checking account.

Former ACI treasurer Bob Wines created the account through United Bank of Charleston, West Virginia.

Some options to consider are:

- Roll the CD over for another term (years will likely determine interest rates)
- Split the CD into smaller denominations with varying maturity dates making funds more accessible
- Cash and spend the money
- Leave investment at United Bank or move to an online investment source

Chuck Schlueter is retiring from the South Dakota wildlife agency and will no longer be serving as the treasurer for ACI. He has volunteered to work with the new treasurer to assist the transition of ACI business. Don King will make an announcement during the conference of the opportunity to be the treasure and hopefully someone will be interested.

The Board formed an Ad Hoc Audit Committee to look over details of audit and report to the body during upcoming business meeting (during the conference). Laura McLean, Micah Holmes and Mark Martinez volunteered to take on the responsibility.

There was a discussion the possibility of making the treasurer position paid. The reasoning is that it is a big commitment and requires a fair amount of time. Micah Holmes said that if the funds are available the Board should seriously consider it. Laura MacLean suggested that the Board consider paying an actual accountant and have the treasurer simply serve on the Board. That said, an accounting firm might cost more than ACI wants to invest. Someone suggested that the treasure be paid around \$2K and/or have their travel to the annual conference reimbursed.

Micah Holmes said that the Board will need to take a closer look at the by-laws to make sure this position can be paid at all. If that is what the Board decides to do they may have to make

changes to the by-laws. He agreed to look into the by-laws and report on this topic at the next Board meeting.

Don King will get a list of all the duties of the treasure from Chuck so the Board can discuss at the next meeting.

#### ACTION ITEM

There was a discussion about covering the costs for the webmaster to attend the conference. The webmaster currently receives \$4K a year. ACI has not reimbursed their travel in the past, however the Board felt that would be reasonable (up to \$1,500) if the webmaster agrees to create/host/build the annual conference web site. This way host states will not have to pay to have that done –OR- use internal resources. For example, Robin paid \$1,500 to develop the website this year. It would be better to have it done internally and the same person would be doing it every year Don King agreed that it would be good for the webmaster to have a travel stipend.

Tom Cadden made a motion to approve a travel stipend for the webmaster up to \$1,500 and that payment would occur as a reimbursement – they would have to pay for themselves up front and submit receipts to the ACI Treasurer to be reimbursed. Amanda Stroud amended the motion to add the caveat that the webmaster also create/host/build the conference web sites. There was substantial discussion on the motion and amended motion. There was a substitute motion to table discussion on this until the first of next year. Mark Martinez seconded that motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Awards Committee Report**

Kim Nix said that there were entries were up from last year (309 vs. 242). This bodes well for revenue. The plaques were ~\$1,500. They will be distributed at the Awards Banquet later this week. There were 10 entries for the new online community engagement category. Most of those entries were video and photography.

The winners will be posted on the ACI web site (<http://www.aci-net.org/awards.php>).

#### **Balance Wheel Report**

Randy Zellers, Balance Wheel editor, informed the Board that everyone receiving a travel scholarship would now be required to write an article for the newsletter during the next year. This will help fill the newsletter with valuable content from across the nation, as many scholarship recipients were from states that didn't currently contribute.

The newsletter enjoys a 26 percent open rate and 20 percent click-through rate, with 500 subscribers.

The Balance Wheel will be moving to a monthly format in the next issue to replace the quarterly .pdf. Each issue will have less content, but each topic likely will receive more exposure

as it will be easier to digest. The monthly format also will help keep people's minds on ACI throughout the agency.

Jamey Graham asked if the newsletter would be restricted to members only, and Jeff Eschler, ACI webmaster, said that was possible. Michelle Cain from Indiana asked if the newsletter would be mobile friendly, and Randy Zellers said yes.

Zellers said the post-conference newsletter could be quick overviews of all programs or he could space out more complete articles throughout the year. Micah Holmes agreed that it would be better to spread out the content, but to keep it as detailed as possible. Holmes also wanted to check the bylaws to make sure there aren't any requirements for the publication's frequency.

Overall people liked the idea of monthly newsletter.

### **Futures Report**

Kay Ellerhoff was happy to announce that there are firm commitments to host ACI through 2016.

- 2014 — Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Contact: Jane Gustafson. Possible site: Omaha
- 2015 — Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Contact: Tom Cadden. Possible sites: Flagstaff, Phoenix and Tucson.
- 2016 — Missouri Department of Conservation. Contact: Michael Huffman

Other states that Kay has talked to about hosting down the road include: Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (Contact: Kim Nix), Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (Contact: Jeff Williams), Safari Club International Foundation possibly at Granite Ranch; Jackson WY (Contact: Sue Hankner), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (Contact: Phil Bloom), Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Contact: Kevin Baskins), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Contact: David Lane), South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (Contact: Chuck Schleuter), New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (Contact: Jon Charpentier), and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (Contact: Don Cash).

### **Nominating Committee Discussion**

Don King solicited help from the Board to help select nominees/candidates for four slots on the Board. There are three full term (three year) positions and one single year position.

The Board also needs to find a replacement for Scott Bonnertz's role as ACI's Midwest Liaison. Along the same line, nearly all the liaisons positions are vacant. There was some discussion of Amanda Stroud be the Southeast Liaison, but no decision was made during the meeting.

Jamey said that it might help recruit people if the Board could be a flexible on the requirement that a nominee/candidate must have attended at least three conference.

### **Recruitment and Retention Committee Discussion**

Micah volunteered to lead some brainstorming discussion on how to keep membership up and attract folks to upcoming conferences.

Need to keep R&R at the top of our mind. Attendance has declined a bit. The bigger the conference the better, more networking, better speakers, etc. Letters sent to the directors about awards and invites to the conferences. Kim—interesting to look at attendance and see if centrally located states attract more attendees and how much the site has to do with getting people there. Amanda will help with the committee. Budgets are a major factor—Tom. Have to sell this conference every year to get to come to this.

There was discussion about the importance of making sure directors know about ACI. While it is challenging to get a director to the conference for an entire week, getting them involved would really help ACI remain solvent. Creating an opportunity for director's to network during the ACI conference might be worth a try. Dave Chanda, the wildlife agency director from New Jersey (who was at the 2013 conference as an attendee) said that his small agency has really benefited from ACI. He stressed that networking was key to everything they've developed and that is a strength ACI needs to leverage with your own agency . . . . ACI needs to sell itself to the agencies.

### **OWFAA Report**

Phil Bloom said it's been a year of major changes at OWAA, beginning with the December departure of Robin Giner as executive director and the hiring of Tom Sadler as her successor in April.

Tom previously worked as development director for the Trust for Public Land, conservation director for the Izaak Walton League of America, outdoor columnist for a Virginia newspaper, and most recently as owner of a consulting firm that advocates for outdoor recreation and conservation. Tom also serves on the boards of the American Fly Fishing Trade Association and the National Fisheries Friends Partnership and is past president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.

Other changes:

Sections, or subcategories, are an important part of OWAA's makeup. Examples are the newspaper, photography, magazine, radio and TV/video sections that provide greater opportunity for members to network with peers, share skills, collaborate on common professional objectives and advance in their chosen field. OWAA recently added a new section that may have appeal to ACI members – the Media Relations Section.

The Media Relations Section is open to OWAA members who work in communications, public relations and media relations for nonprofit and for-profit entities, including government agencies. Katie McKalip, director of media relations for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, is head of the Media Relations Section.

After meeting last year in Alaska, the 86<sup>th</sup> annual OWAA conference is in Lake Placid, N.Y., from Sept. 14-16.

The 2014 and 2015 conference sites were previously announced as Knoxville, Tenn., and McAllen, Texas. The sites have since exchanged years, with McAllen scheduled for May 23-25, 2014 and Knoxville for June 26-28, 2015.

Newly elected board members are Brent Frazee, outdoors editor for the Kansas City Star; Colleen Miniuk-Sperry, a photographer from Arizona; and Paul Smith, outdoors editor with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

OWAA members approved a bylaws change to expand student membership options to include high school students. This allows a larger range of up-and-coming communicators to join OWAA within the student membership category, which previously was limited to college students. Student membership dues are \$10 per year. The measure also deleted a previous course of study requirement for student members.

### **Scholarship Report**

Robin Cahoon reports that ACI received 12 applications for the Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship in 2013. Nine scholarship were available for the 2013 conference (based on the \$5,200 budgeted by the ACI Board). Only nine of the 12 applications qualified for consideration, because one individual was not employed by a member agency/organization and multiple applications were received from Nevada and Indiana.

The scholarships were allocated on a first-come, first-served basis . . . all nine scholarships were awarded. Each scholarship covered four nights lodging, (\$90 per night excluding taxes and fees) and a registration fee waiver (½ of the \$300 fee).

Travel scholarship recipients\* represented nine member agencies/organizations: Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Nevada, New Jersey, South Carolina, Texas and Wyoming. Only persons employed by member agencies/organizations or persons employed by potential member agencies/organizations are eligible to receive a Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship (Article 7(a) of the ACI Bylaws).

\*Scholarship Recipients: Florida – Scott Ball, Indiana – Phil Bloom, Iowa – Julie Tack, Kentucky – Michael Gray, Nevada – Aaron Meier, New Jersey – Dave Chanda, South Carolina – Amanda Stroud, Texas – Alan Fisher, Wyoming – Judith Hosafros (transferred to Amber Leberman).

### **Meeting Adjourned**