

**Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors in Person Meeting – Wednesday October 23, 2024**

Board Members virtually present: Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Jim Freck, Shawn Gibbons, Joe Gonyo, B.J. Grassmann, Makayla Jacobs, Todd Schaller, Kim Shady, Pat Smith and Bruce Urben
Also virtually present: Kelcy Boettcher, Bruce Ross and Brad Strobel (USFWS)
Unable to Attend: Connie Markham

Agenda:

- **6:33 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
- **6:34 PM – September Board of Directors (BoD) Minutes (President Urben)**

The September board meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without any questions or concerns raised.
- **6:35 PM – Little Yellow River Restoration Project with USFWS (Brad Strobel, USFWS)**

Brad Strobel from USFWS with Necedah presented on the Little Yellow River Restoration project, providing a background on the historic landscape and current restoration plans: (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fa9735d899af4ae0940e5c191ecc20be>). USFWS began project work on the river in 2019 and has now, with a new funding opportunity via the Inflation Reduction Act, partnered with WWA to continue to restore the drainage ditches that feed and frequently flood the river and downstream infrastructure. Best case scenario, the project could be completed within a one-year timeframe, but will depend on contractor capability and availability, as well as weather conditions. A Board Member field trip to view the before and after of the project was suggested.
- **7:10 PM – Financials & Calendar Sales Update (Director of Administration [DA] Kelcy Boettcher, Executive Director [ED] Ross, Mike Depies)**

Bruce gave a brief overview of the September financials. All are posted online on the board secure site. While chapter revenues are falling a bit behind budget, and there is some significant concern with the fragility of our chapters, in particular our Waukesha and West Allis chapters, we are otherwise on budget. The 2023 Form 990 has been completed and filed and is posted on our website. We have approximately 800 sold calendars turned in to date with a seller's drawing on Monday expected to bring in more stubs.
- **7:17 PM – What Does a WWA EXPO Look Like? (ED Ross)**

Bruce gave an overview of an updated service proposal from Bast Durbin Advertising (BDA) that was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. There is an approximately 25% increase from last year's contract, which is well in line with the expertise brought to the EXPO by BDA. Todd Schaller motioned to approve the contract and signing by ED Ross. Kim Shady seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Bruce also presented the 2024 EXPO overview of the income/expenses and benefits to WWA, including financial and non-tangible benefits. Moving forward to incrementally professionalize the EXPO, Bruce has asked Swift Waters for a proposal for the 2025 event with four different options to: 1. Maintain their status quo; 2. Expand to manage the EXPO as a co-chair with responsibilities to include relieving some of the burden currently on Bruce; 3. Take on a professional role with WWA that would include social media, but also more marketing and communications, plus capacity relief; and 4. A sum of all options. Bruce has also begun the discussion of having the EXPO cover some of the administrative responsibilities of the EXPO currently being undertaken by Kelcy. Discussion was held over what this would look like as far as steering committee roles, the marketing benefit to WWA of placing our name on the EXPO logo and the potential financial benefits. The EXPO has put a \$1500 deposit down onto a convention center banquet hall for a Friday night vendor/sponsor banquet to financially benefit

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WWA. The consensus was to develop an incremental approach that lays out steps over years to cement WWA's ownership and to leverage the benefits of the EXPO. This plan would then be implemented with the EXPO Steering Committee.

- **7:55 PM – WWA Staff Capacity (ED Ross)**

Bruce reported that the ExComm discussed this week that he, between his responsibilities with WWA and the EXPO, is at capacity. The EXPO could potentially cover some type of financial assistance to hire someone to help with growth and expansion there. He further explained that overall WWA's staff is doing more than can be expected with the staff size we have, entirely due to the help of the Board, but we are at capacity and if we are going to take the next step, we need to discuss how we grow and prioritize. This could be a part of next year's strategic plan.

- **8:03 PM – President (President Urben)**

Russ Olson resigned from the board as of September 30th, creating an open seat on the Exec Comm and an absence in the treasurer's position, which is required by WWA's Bylaws. Bruce asked if any Board members had any interest in filling the position; while no one volunteered Bruce reiterated that he, Bruce Ross or Kelcy are available to answer any questions in regards to the position and its responsibilities.

- **8:07 PM - Eau Claire Sports Show**

George noted that if we are interested in continuing our presence at the Eau Claire Sports Show in 2025, we should begin planning now. Dave reported that we had a good amount of interest at the 2024 show in starting a chapter in the area, but nothing materialized of it. The show, planned for March 21-23, had an approximately \$900 price tag for the booth. We would be allowed to hold a class A raffle to potentially offset booth costs. Bruce Ross and Dave will sit down next month to talk about goals and reserving a booth.

- **8:11 PM - Action Items (President Urben)**

- Bruce Ross will be on vacation Oct 29 – Nov 4
- Legislative Study Council meets again Nov 13
- The Christmas Bash will be held Dec 5, help is needed if any board members are able to.

- **8:17 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting at 6:30 PM on November 20th.