

**Western Field Ornithologists
Board of Directors
Special Budget Meeting
Videoconference
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020, 1pm PST
(continued coronavirus pandemic)**

Draft Minutes prepared by Liga L. Auzins-Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y.*

Board Members present: Jonathan L. Dunn, *President*; Kurt M. Leuschner, *Past President*; John H. Harris, *Vice President.*; Suzanne M. Carota, *Treasurer/Membership Sec'y.*; Liga L. Auzins-Wurster, *Recording Secretary*; Matthew J. Baumann, Kimball L. Garrett, Susan S. Gilliland, Homer M. Hansen, Karen A. Havlena, Andrew Mauro, Kristie Nelson, Edward R. Pandolfino, Bryce W. Robinson, Christopher W. Swarth.

Guests: Philip Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds (WB).*

Board Members absent: Wendy Beers, Diane Rose.

MINUTES

1:00pm Meeting called to order, welcome and roll.

Awards Committee:

Discussion: Jon: In reading all of Bob Gill's accomplishments, I find them pretty staggering. He is an excellent fit for the Harry S. Swarth Award.

Background: Chris: Bob got his Master's degree studying under Dr. Richard Mewaldt at San Jose State. He was one of the founders of Point Reyes Bird Observatory and was a giant in Bay Area ornithology. One of his specialties was the white-crowned sparrow migration. Bob was his student in the mid '70's when Bob did an outstanding study of the salt pond avifauna in South San Francisco Bay which was published in a Cal. Fish and Game journal. I followed up on his work and I spent 3 years studying salt pond birds but it was Bob Gill's original paper that was the main and important reference work for what the birds were doing and how they were distributed. I have known of him for a long time.

Kimball: He had so much more involvement on so many levels

Motion: Karen moves that we approve the nomination by Ken Able of Bob Gill for the Harry S. Swarth Award, seconded by Kimball and passed unanimously. Ken will give the presentation at the next conference.

Jon: I will alert Bob Gill, as per Colleen Handel's suggestion, which means, hopefully, that he can to come our next conference in Reno so we can celebrate his work.

BUDGET:

Kurt: Suzanne you can present the budget, but I do want everyone to know that the Finance Committee met, discussed the budget and we all gave it our approval.

Ed: Are we going to have a discussion about the \$3,000 award, because that was new to me.

Jon: The \$3,000 award is for Ken Able for the 3 monographs that he worked on exhaustively. *The LeConte's Thrasher, Trends and Traditions*, and Paul Lehman's *Gambell* book. Dan Gibson feels very strongly that his efforts are above and beyond any Board duty and that there should be an honorarium. The conflict of interest with any Board members getting an honorarium was an issue when I got \$500 for reviewing Paul's *Gambell* book, but Ken is not on the Board currently. We didn't want Ken to be involved in approving his own honorarium. This would have come as a complete surprise to Ken, I assume he did it thinking he was a volunteer. We think it is the right thing to do, and when Bob Gill gets his first monograph it will be the continuing policy. I assume the money would come out of the Publications Fund for this.

Jon: If the Board approves the above, then I will send a thank-you note with our new notecards.

Ed: Did Ken have any expectations that he was going to get reimbursed for this or did he do it with the understanding of a volunteer effort? **Jon:** No.

Ed: I am a concerned about doing this. In retrospect, we are giving a good chunk of money to Ken that we didn't give to other folks that did a similar effort. If I were Dave Shuford I would wonder why I wasn't recommended for something like this.

Jon: Dan Gibson wanted to handle this earlier but I said it was awkward with Ken on the Board. I will have to check with Dan if he said anything to Bob Gill that would promise an honorarium amount. To expedite it, can we have a motion made to give Ken Able \$1,000 per monograph for a total of \$3,000?

Motion: Kimball moves the motion to give Ken Able \$1,000 for a monograph for a total of \$3,000, seconded by Andy (tabled and not voted on)

Discussion: Jon: This sounds like it will go into rough waters and that is fine. Ed's point is well taken. This will come as a complete surprise to Ken. I assume he did it thinking it was volunteer. I need to check with Bob Gill's take on the position that Dan did not promise him anything. Ken would have been the one who mainly talked about Bob.

Ed: I certainly feel the effort that Ken put in is worthy, but I feel that doing it in retrospect is inconsistent with the past and is something that I am a little worried about.

Karen: I agree with you and if he gets a nice award in the future that should be worth something, rather than piling it on this next year.

Chris: I think Ed makes a good point. The only thing I would add is that, Ken did his work as a volunteer, never expecting to be paid or get a monetary award. Perhaps it can make Ken feel awkward that he is receiving something that he never intended to receive.

Kurt: What if we reduced the amount to \$500 per monograph and then maybe add Dave for \$500 or would that open the door to having to pay a lot of other people as well?

Jon: That's a good suggestion, Kurt. *Rare Birds of California* has 3 editors and that was a different sort of format. If the honorarium was reduced to \$500 and \$500 for Dave, that's a path forward. Ken wasn't just an editor. He edited the monograph series. He had to do everything that was involved with production of the monograph and that is pretty different than going back to *California Bird Species of Special Concern*, where they had a grant to do that. In *Trends and Traditions*, corralling the authors was a huge amount of work. Ken's role was to shepherd these monographs from manuscript to actual print. We are talking about two different things when you go back retroactively and/or pay editors or authors of volumes beforehand.

John Harris: Kimball's point makes sense to me: organizations change and evolve over time and certain policies of the past don't necessarily have to be kept to the future. I think WFO is now in a different position, and it is appropriate to garner a new policy to reward extraordinary efforts that goes beyond what we would normally hope to be provided by a volunteer to the organization. I think it might be appropriate to go ahead and allow this special recognition to be awarded without passing any aspersions on those that volunteered their efforts in the past.

Jon: We are in transition. If Bob Gill were to get a manuscript and shepherd it through publication the answer would be yes. What we are giving Ken is for the 3

manuscripts that he did. It is an after the fact thank you. Once we address this issue, I don't know where we stand on Board members getting paid for peer review.

Suzanne: I can respond to that, because we clarified that through Howard Wade. Board members can receive remuneration for duties outside the standard Board member responsibilities. The only thing about it is that when we file the form 990, which is our public face in documents, we have to indicate that any Board member that did receive remuneration that there was "no conflict of interest." We have to report the number of Board members that received remuneration.

Jon: I will be reviewing *Birds of Inyo County* and will not receive money for that.

Ed: I'd like to hear from John Harris, if this is going to be a new precedent of some sort, he is going to have to live with budget implications.

John Harris: I guess I hadn't really thought about this, in terms of having Dave finish that massive volume. It does concern me. I like Kurt's suggestion, although I realize they were somewhat different tasks, as Kimball pointed out. I am a little bit undecided now.

Jon: Could we amend to motion the put in Dave for his work on *Trends and Traditions*?

Phil: Remember that Bob Gill and Colleen Handel were co-editors of *Trends and Traditions* and they did a huge amount of work as well.

Suzanne: My understanding is that Ken was in fact our publisher. He moved it through every stage and dealt with the printer, the pricing and the budget.

Jon: He did a lot of that, but also with Cat Waters. I don't know how much of it Cat did and Ken did.

Chris: What about the idea of the Publications Committee taking this issue up in committee and we forgo a vote today. We come back to the next Board meeting after there has been discussion since it seems to me that Ed is just learning about this for the first time. John Harris mentions that he is undecided, and I am kind of in the same boat. An alternate would be to let the Publications Committee come up with a policy on this.

Jon: Suzanne, we need to allocate some money for the budget. It was going to be \$3,000 which can always be folded back in if we don't use it, depending on what the Publications Committee decides to do. If it is included, Colleen and Bob and

Dave - that might be \$1,500 for that one monograph and the \$500 each for Ken Able, so that would still be \$3,000.

Ed: Keep the \$3,000 in there but change the line item to something like Special Publications expense. **Suzanne:** We can do that.

Kimball: I am happy to have the Publications Committee look at this. It will be a little awkward in that there are potentially one or two people who would stand to get an honorarium but we can figure that out. In terms of dollar amounts, it is more the idea of it, the dollar amounts are more a finance thing. We could get a recommendation from the Publications Committee, since this is coming put of the blue to a much of the Board right now. I am happy to withdraw the earlier motion as I don't intend to pursue it further. I would like to see this happen for the editor who is actually the publisher of these 3 monographs.

Kurt: \$500 is a nice chunk of change for someone who is not expecting to be paid for doing these things. If we are going to set a precedent with this and if it is a \$1,000 now, we are going to be stuck with that.

Suzanne: We should be clear that we are not committed to anything and in future years it is all dependent upon project and financial situation and Board approval.

Kurt: If we pay Ken a \$1,000 per, then that would be a precedent that is set. It's a little hard to reduce it for the next person. Everybody works hard on these things.

Jon: Remember that the peer reviewers get \$500. Kimball, consider that as the Publications Committee's overall issue as to what is an appropriate amount of money.

Resolution: Jon: The Board agrees to table the motion. We will deal with it on January 27, 2021 after the report from the Publications Committee.

Suzanne: If we need more money, the President can appropriate \$2,000 more. We would be transparent with the Board on this. I have 2 quick things. I just pulled up the Form 990 and the first question is, 'How many voting members do you have on the governing body?' The second question is, 'How many of them are independent?' If any of the voting 14 or 15 Board members receive any money during the year, you have to not include them in the independent count. It is not a conflict of interest, it is a manner of being an independent when you do your voting. If someone received \$500 last year, then we should say there are only 13 independent voting members.

Jon: There are 14 voting members and Kurt votes in case there is a tie.

Suzanne: I want to show everyone the notecards that has Jonathan Alderfer's Sabine's Gull artwork on the front for Jon to use when he is writing thank you notes. The back has a copyright NGS. It came out of the *NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Thank you Bryce for doing the layout, etc. They are pretty.

You have all seen the budget. I am going to run quickly through the assumptions and stop me if there are any questions. Ed put together a very nice budget on our Reno Conference this fall with several different scenarios. We decided not to use the break even case which was based on 170 adult attendees, but to use the 190 adult attendees one, which drives a profit of \$4,000.

Ed: Just to let people know how conservative these figures are, the last 5-7 conferences we've had, have averaged 260 attendees and the ones in CA have averaged 310 attendees, so 190 is pretty conservative. We still have some people concerned about traveling. Most people will be able to attend.

Suzanne: The Scholarship Committee submitted the Student Programs Committee budget and they have received \$5,000 in donations for scholarships this year. We assumed there would not be any trips due to the coronavirus pandemic and therefore no income and therefore the assumption for the budget is zero dollars. The assumption of the Year-End Appeals is zero in 2021. We received close to \$18,000 in 2020. We had a great influx of money come in, but none of that will roll over into next year. Conservatively thinking, we could get more money next year. Jon Dunn has put together a committee to work on the 2021 Bird-A-Thon. The assumption again is zero dollars. At the time I put together the budget there was no Bird-A-Thon Committee so the Finance Committee said we should take the conservative road and assume zero dollars as of right now. All those numbers are pretty conservative assumptions.

Jon: The Bird-A-Thon Committee is headed up by Andy and Robin Leong.

Andy: That is correct and we are not projecting any income at all, however we do have a goal of \$50,000. I do have a question on another related topic, i.e., I didn't see anything about 2021 Year-End Appeal as an income source.

Suzanne: We don't normally do an annual Year-End Appeal. I guess that is something the Board can discuss for 2021. We have done only 3-4 Year-End Appeals in the last 20 years or so.

Jon: I wrote the Year-End Appeal letter in response to the havoc the pandemic has caused. The other 2 appeals letters that Kimball and I wrote were in response

to significant expenses for special publications. It would be an issue for the Fundraising Committee to consider. If you do it annually, the letter needs to be spun differently. I think those are issues to be decided down the road.

Chris: The sentiment in the Fundraising Committee is that this is a good idea, as it has worked so well in the last several weeks. I think we should certainly consider doing it again next year.

Suzanne: Chris, should we put some revenue for that in the budget?

Chris: I would be hard pressed to give a figure.

Jon: Maybe \$5,000 just as a first time projection.

Chris: That would be more than reasonable, maybe even \$10,000. We are seeing evidence, that when asked, people do want to donate. I don't see why it would change a lot next year, so \$10,000 sounds like a good suggestion.

Jon: I think there was a special need this year and the letter was framed that way as opposed to 'You should give every year.' If I were to write the letter I would write it differently than I did this year, but I might not write it next year. I always prefer going conservative and then be pleasantly surprised if you get more so I like the low total at least for the first year. It will be a trial balloon to ask when there is no apparent need.

Kurt: We did discuss this at the Finance Committee meeting to make this an annual event, so putting in \$5,000 sounds like a good start.

Jon: Andy, thank you for becoming a Patron. Susan and Frank Gilliland also became Patrons so we thank them.

Suzanne: We thank people who became Patrons, Andy Mauro, Bernie McHugh, Lena Hayashi, David and Janice Levasheff, Ed Harper and Susan Scott, Larry Allen, and Patricia Bacchetti.

Jon: Pat is the President of the Central Valley Bird Club, Ed Harper is a former Board member. Ed and his wife Susan are our ombuds to WFO.

Suzanne: Of the over \$18,000 that we received, over \$10,000 was from the 7 new Patrons.

Jon: We have been generously supported in the past by a couple who wish to remain anonymous. I had a phone call discussing another donation which has not arrived but it's an amount we can claim for the Year-End Appeal.

Suzanne: Back to the budget, shall I add \$5,000 for the Bird-A-Thon and \$5,000 for the Year-End Appeal? For expenses we do have the *Birds of Inyo County* book. We will need to raise some more money for this book. Ken is going to handle that book and he has asked me that we don't put it in the budget until 2022 when it goes to the printer, but he has budgeted \$11,000 for the copy editing in 2021. The budget also includes \$8,000 for 8 Conference Scholars this year. I'll put in \$5,500 for a deposit for a future year conference. \$2,000 is for the donor reception in Reno. The only thing we added was the \$1,500 as a rollover to the Scholarship Committee. The recipient hasn't finished her project and John Harris agreed to give her a few more months.

John Harris: I work with her and she has her advisors support so I think it will work out okay.

Chris: *(Votes for budget and has to sign off.)*

Suzanne: I will just run through some items that are new to the budget from previous years. We all know about the special \$3,000 award now. We did add \$500 for a Board retreat in Palm Desert. We added \$500 for Outreach Committee initiatives for the Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee. We would like to increase Liga's remuneration for her services from \$200 a year to a total of \$600 a year. That's pretty much for the assumptions in the budget.

Kristie: Thanks for compiling this. It looks really thorough.

Suzanne: Just so you know we are going to approve the budget with 3 changes. It will be \$5,000 income from the Year-End Appeal, \$5,000 from the Bird-A-Thon, and \$500 additional expense for the donor reception in Reno.

Motion: Homer moves that the proposed budget with the additional expenses and income added and the change for special publications language be adopted for year 2021, seconded by Ed, and passes unanimously.

Suzanne: I want to thank everybody for putting up with a 5th board meeting for the year. This is a new process - to have a special Board meeting just to approve the budget for the coming year. My job was easy, I just put it all together, you guys do all the legwork.

Jon: We appreciate that and all your time with Tom and Matt on the Financial Review and the issues involved with that, and keeping us straight with the recommendations made by Tom based on that review.

Suzanne: One quick change of topic, on the Year-End Appeal we sent out an e-mail and got a really good response. The donations are starting to taper off from PayPal, but I think the checks will continue to come in somewhat. We had the original form of the appeal letter in the Newsletter and we had also discussed sending a snail mail hard copy of the letter to all of the 900 members, and I would subtract the ones that already made a donation before the end of the year. My question is, 'Are we bombarding people with this request?' **Kimball:** Yes.

Ed: My suggestion to Suzanne earlier was for the people we don't have e-mail addresses to send them the appeal letter because they would not have gotten it otherwise. It's less than 10. The Board agrees.

Motion to adjourn made by Kimball, seconded by Andy and passed unanimously.