

**Western Field Ornithologists
Board of Directors Budget Meeting
Videoconference
Wednesday, December 8th, 2021, 1-2pm PST
(continued coronavirus pandemic)**

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*; Shaun Wilde, *Treasurer/Membership Secretary*; Suzanne M. Carota, *Past Treasurer/Membership Secretary*; Liga L. Auzins Wurster, *Recording Secretary*; Wendy L. Beers, Kimball L. Garrett, Daniel D. Gibson, Susan S. Gilliland, Karen A. Havlena, Robin Leong, Don Marsh, Andrew Mauro, Kristie Nelson, Diane E. Rose.

Board Members Absent: Matt Baumann, Robert Gill

MINUTES

12:00pm Meeting called to order, welcome and roll.

Jon: The purpose of this meeting is to pass the 2022 Budget. We also hope to pass the Diversity and Equity Inclusion (DEI) Statement. We will also look at the yearend letter and at some technology needs. Two Board meeting dates we picked for year 2022 are January 26th and May 17th. There may be an additional meeting on the investment proposal.

Treasurer's Report: Shaun:

Please look at the budget under the first tab, which is around assumptions.

- Income from memberships may be somewhat lower as some people paid in advance.
- We hope to finalize and get the *Inyo* book out in early 2023.
- For the conference we decided to add an additional \$10,000, i.e., security deposit for 2023 conference.
- We put in \$1,000 for an accountant to do our Federal and State tax filings.
- We put in money for a possible Board Retreat
- Hire someone to do administrative duties for WFO.

All our fund balances are in good shape. We have a Legacy Fund that we will be establishing this year. The conference will add to our costs this year if we move to an in-person conference. This was all reviewed with the Finance Committee.

The Mallory Matching Grant donations are all going to the Pubs Fund so their fund balances will be increased.

We put all the expenses associated with the production of the *Inyo* book in 2022. There may be other outyear expenses for 2023.

Kimball: I worked with Ken along with Bob Gill on adjusting expenses for the *Inyo* book, but the hard part is knowing exactly when it might happen. It seems like we will start incurring expenses, i.e., copyediting, rather quickly. The hope was that we could go ahead with the printing and expenses, i.e., initial cost of fulfillment in 2022, with the caveat that something could get delayed into 2023.

Shaun: We did put in an increase across the general board in the Pubs Fund of about 20% for production costs, considering the supply chain issues and the paper costs going up. We put in a cushion for ourselves after our last budget discussion, where Phil got a notice from the printer saying there was another increase in costs. It is something we need to monitor for this coming year.

Diane: There is one thing we need to notice here for expenses versus income. For 2022 we are down \$81,000. In other words, we must figure out a way to be more in line with what we are making as income.

Shaun: While that is correct, there is a differential. We've got some big expenses that have been already planned for, which would come out of our fund's areas. One of those is the *Inyo* book, some \$20,000 of that would have to come out as well as some of the increases in publications. We do need to be in line but there are also some anomalies. We believe that we will break even on the conference; we may make money. Some amounts are assumptions for income, but when we built these assumptions, we also did not factor in things like the Mallory Matching Grant, etc. The Birdathon is from last year. I have confidence because our fund balances from last year will cover the additional expenses set for this coming year.

Diane: On the assumptions for the conference, you show only about \$4,000.

John H.: With respect to the conference, Diane is right. I took the budget that Ed P. prepared with a few small updates. We produced a budget with low-end and high-end attendance. I took the conservative low-end. There are risk factors. I think it is very likely that we will wind up not renting vans and that would reduce the expenses. That too, is something that we will have to get into next year when we

will get a firm idea of what those expenses would be. Also, this budget has extremely conservative assumptions about donations. It assumes that we get no donations. In my memory, we have never adopted a budget that wasn't a big deficit and that is because we are trying to be super conservative in the beginning of the year. Although I too saw that it projects a large deficit, I think because of the assumptions we probably are not in as bad a shape as it looks.

Shaun: Some of the costs that you are going to see in the budget are going to come out of that Pubs Fund and not out of income for this year. Typically, you would like to have a balanced budget, but in a non-profit, we must also think about those fund balances that we are carrying just for this kind of purpose, i.e., *Inyo* book. The fund balances may go down. I don't have an actual number yet for the Mallory Matching Grant but that donation of \$50,000 is a significant upside.

Jon: We are assuming \$25,000 for the Birdathon in the budget for next year.

Shaun: The budget does not show that for next year, that is for this year's income. We are in good shape because of the Birdathon.

Jon: In the yearend letter, I put in \$30,000, is that reasonable?

Shaun: That's a reasonable projection.

Jon: I think John H. or someone else talked about how our members could have an easy way of seeing what we made, i.e., what our budget looked like, via the website, so that we are transparent. Maybe we need Board approval for that.

Shaun: I would prefer to have that conversation in the January meeting. I can do some research and share some thoughts around that. I would agree on the transparency. **ACTION ITEM: See above 2 paragraphs.**

Diane: Do we know how many scholars we will have next year at the conference?

John H.: We budgeted for 10 scholars. Last time we had 8. We have gone 2 years without an in-person conference. We will advertise this and put applications out.

Jon: We have scholarships for 3 undergraduate, graduate and post doc students, but one of them could be an advanced high school student too which would leave 2 scholarships.

MOTION: Don moves to accept the budget as listed, seconded by Diane, and passes unanimously.

Birdathon: Andy

Report: With regards to the Birdathon, we will be issuing a recommendation to the Board at the January 26th meeting. Currently our plan is not to conduct the Birdathon until the following spring.

Shaun: Our income from the Birdathon is going to be about \$31,000 after expenses. We had almost 300 donors. Which is phenomenal. That's even more important than the dollar amount because some people gave \$5. and some people gave a few hundred dollars, and it was incredibly inclusive from a financial perspective. Hear, hear, to the Birdathon group.

Jon: Thank you Andy, Robin and others who participated.

Robin: I still haven't got a thank you for my donations. The point is that you have a letter that says it's tax deductible, and it must be done for 300 participants.

Suzanne: There is no requirement for the organization, per IRS code, to send out an acknowledgement. It's up to the donor to request such documentation if they want it. We do not send out mass acknowledgments.

Shaun: This brings up a point. I took it upon myself for the Mallory Matching Grant to write a handful of contributors a quick note thanking them. I suggest that the organization figure out a process. Maybe it will be one of the duties of the admin that we are hiring. I had people responding to me from the thank note for the Mallory Matching Grant with both questions and appreciation.

Robin: A thank you from an organization is really needed. You might want to determine where to draw the line as to the amount when the President steps in, and hand writes the thank you note. **ACTION ITEM: See above 2 paragraphs.**

12:35pm Outreach/Fundraising Committee: Robin

Diversity and Equity Inclusion Statement, (DEI)

Report: Judith and I met, and we decided to change the wording to what Kimball said. I submitted that with all the information to John Robinson, who is a former ABA Board member when I was on the Board and an author. I like his counsel on various ABA issues. He said all the heavy lifting was done by us. Kurt had some pretty good changes for the ending of the statement.

The statement now reads, "*The mission of Western Field Ornithologists is to promote the study, appreciation, and protection of birds of western North America. To reach the goals of this mission, we welcome all those who want to learn and share learning about western birds--their identification and science, where to find*

them, and habitats to be protected. By striving to assemble a board of directors and membership that are as diverse as the population of western North America, we recognize the need to be inclusive. We are committed to providing opportunities to people of all backgrounds, to encouraging and supporting their involvement in our programs and activities, and to valuing and respecting their varied contributions to WFO."

Dan Gibson is the one who rewrote the statement.

Jon: You're being awfully modest, Dan. Do we have a motion to pass the revised DEI Statement as written now with the striking of those 5 words "rather than to be exclusive"? Robin will send the final approved statement, once it is passed to Don to put on the website. **ACTION ITEM:** See above statement.

MOTION: Don moves to accept the revised DEI Statement as written now, (see above) seconded by Kimball, and passes unanimously.

Jon: Of the groups that we had targeted for free memberships, particularly black persons, there are so few that have attended our events. If we encounter somebody in our birding adventures or ornithological explorations, who looks serious about birding, ask if they want to be a WFO member and if this is the sort of organization that would interest them. I ask that we individually pony up the \$20 gift membership and then encourage them to subscribe after one year if they enjoy being a member. We do want to bring in these groups, but it is best done individually, as a reach out from Board members. **ACTION ITEM:** Give out gift memberships.

Conservation/Science Policy Committee: Kristie

Report: The motion is for the Farallon Mice Eradication Program, for which I sent out a letter. That is the only motion I have at this point. There was the previous motion where I asked for a specific email response, and I didn't hear back. I don't even know if the Migratory Bird Treaty Act(MBTA) accepted the email because the update already happened.

Jon: I haven't read the account written in *California Bird Species of Special Concern*, but that reference should be put in your motion acknowledging the account written in the book. It's a way to proclaim our own publication where the issue was addressed. Is there a mouse problem elsewhere where ashy storm-petrels breed?

Kristie: That's a good question. Not that I know of in the Channel Islands.

Don: There are reports of where mice have gotten in, i.e., New Zealand. Other places where they have eradicated the rodents, the bird populations start going up.

Kristie: There is a reference to the *California Bird Species of Special Concern* in the letter, but I could add more. They are going to attempt to trap and hold any owls or raptors in general on the Farallons. They don't use mice as bait for the trapping. They will use mist nets and play recordings of owl calls. Chances are there could be some incidental mortality. It is a one point in time situation to remove the owls.

Jon: Where do they take the owls? If they release them on the mainland, they will go right back to the Farallons.

Kristie: The language said they would be 'held.' After the mice have been eradicated, they would return the owls. When the poison is broken down some may return and hopefully, they won't hang around as there would be no incentive for them to remain.

Jon: They ought to color band the owls so they can recognize them in the field.

Kristie: They have been doing that for years. In working there and in trying to capture the owls my impression was that the vast majority were new birds. Overall, throughout the years I don't know what the rate of returnees is.

Jon: They are all wintering migrants. They come in October and leave in March, the beginning of ashy storm-petrel nesting season.

MOTION: Kimball moves to support this Kristie's letter, seconded by Diane, and passes unanimously.

Diane: Is the pileated woodpeckers painting going to be raffled or will it be a silent auction?

Suzanne: There are very strict rules about non-profits doing raffles. It requires a lot of reporting as it basically is considered gambling. You should probably stay away from that.

Diane: Line 6 should reflect that the painting will be sold at a silent auction.

ACTION ITEM: See statement.

Yearend Letter: Jon

Regarding the yearend letter I made numerous changes. **ACTION ITEM:** If there are other grammatical or punctuation corrections, please let me know.

Robin wanted a banner at the end of the yearend letter with a hot link to donate to the Mallory Matching Grant. Is that possible or even desirable?

Robin: I wasn't thinking of a hot link, I just thinking of the wording on the bottom.

Jon: I am asking you to volunteer to help on this if I send a letter.

Don: Just say, "Visit our website and hit the donate button and you will see it right there."

Jon: Just go to the website and hit the donate button? How do they identify that it is the Mallory Matching Grant?

Diane: They ask you that question when you go to check out, there is a line there and I wrote in Mallory Matching Grant.

Jon: I am going to copy you guys and I will make the final version of the yearend letter. **ACTION ITEM: Jon will send final copy of yearend letter.** Secondly, Robin had suggested that John Harris and I put in a picture of us. **ACTION ITEM: Jon will send a picture to Don and see if he can put it in the letter.** Andy, do you have an image of the pileated woodpeckers? Maybe you can send that to Don. Is there any reason why we can't use it on the yearend letter, one of our proud achievements of the year? **ACTION ITEM: Andy will send a picture of the pileated woodpeckers to Don and see if he can put it in the letter.**

Don: I will work with Tim to get both images in the yearend newsletter. **ACTION ITEM: See above sentence.**

Andy: If you want to raise money, we must ask for it and you must make it easy for people to contribute. If we are telling them to go to our website and do it, then they must figure out how to get to the website and then to navigate through it, etc. Anytime you can give them a one-click ability to get to where they need to get, we are dollars ahead. We control our website, and we should have it on our opening page, just like we did for the Birdathon. The first thing people see is that we have this special matching grant and have this opportunity for the Publications Fund, we are excited about it, here's the information and click here to make your donation, so that we don't have to leave it up to them to try to figure out how to give us money. You want to make it easy.

Don: I can ask Tim to add a link on that letter, right on top of the web page and on the bottom, it says, "If you wish to contribute, click here," and it will prepopulate the line with the Mallory Matching Grant if you want.

Jon: **ACTION ITEM:** With Andy and Don, feel free to reword what I write for the yearend letter, and make sure that Andy is on the approval and that the mechanism is there on the website prominent enough to encourage giving. Make sure there is the picture of John Harris and myself. I wasn't going to ask for any money in the yearend letter because we are \$30,000 in the black, but I will write something for the newsletter very shortly. **ACTION ITEM:** Jon will work with Judith on an item in the newsletter for the Mallory Grant as soon as possible. Hearing no comments, I will entertain a motion to close the meeting with thanks to everyone who attended.

1:03pm **MOTION: Andy moves to adjourn, seconded by Don, and passes unanimously.**