

PSO Board of Directors Teleconference Meeting Minutes  
10/18/2023

The PSO Board of Directors conducted a teleconference meeting with the following members participating: Dan Brauning, Margaret Higbee, Brian Byrnes, Frank Haas, Julia Plummer, Wayne Laubscher, Mary Alice Koeneke, David Barber, Carolyn Hendricks, Doug Wentzel, Chelsea Beck, Jeff Kenney, Karter Witmer, Valerie Dunn, and Emily Thomas.

The minutes of 8/23/23 were distributed and approved with no corrections.

Dan reported that there have been some business requests from the public to become involved in what they believe are PSO related endeavors. One request was to moderate a hummingbird web site page. This request was declined after review by several board members due to time constraints.

**Treasurer's Report:** Frank.

Report submitted

**Festival Review:** Brian.

Plans are moving forward. All 4 speakers for the afternoon have been confirmed as has the banquet speaker.

Two blocks of hotel rooms have been verbally confirmed. The Hampton Inn is to be emailing the contract which has not yet arrived. The contract is to spell out the # of rooms, how long the rooms will be held, etc. There have been a lot of back and forth phone calls.

We have been offered a free room for every 10 rooms that we sell. If we start with a block of 20 rooms, that would give us 2 rooms to offer to award winners or out of town speakers.

Youth Scholarship Awards- I would like to coordinate with the committees earlier this year. We were a little too late last year. We need to publicize sooner. The earlier we know who the winners are, the earlier we can open up registration to our scholarship winners so they can pick the field trip that they want. It makes sense to have the same application deadlines.

I am connecting with Tony to coordinate application deadlines.

Mike is still working on planning out field trips.

Local businesses to sponsor the events - Update from Dan....

I have sent out an unsolicited email to Wild Birds Unlimited close to our location south of Pittsburgh. The initial response was positive but the owner will be selling the store and any promotional commitments made would be up to the new owner.

Brian worked up the categories to circulate to potential sponsors. They were circulated to the National Aviary and Wild Birds Unlimited. I haven't heard back from the National Aviary on either a sponsorship or a behind the scenes tour which would be a good field activity. Western PA Conservancy and few others will be reached out to as potential sponsors. We have to grow attendance to defray the costs.

Have we decided what we would pay the speakers? No one has been offered anything nor has there been any requests. One item that may pop up may be one or more of the afternoon speakers may request a room if they are traveling from out of town, One of the speakers is a past research grant award winner who is traveling from the state college area.

Frank noted that Joshua Potter, who designed last year's logo has agreed to do the logo for next year's festival. The logo should be available to the public shortly. Bobolink is the poster bird. Frank is pursuing a pin with Joshua's design. All the pins through our history have been compiled in high quality photographs and are being prepared into a poster demonstration for next year's meeting. Dan noted that Joshua should be an honorary member. Preview of logo dropped into the chat

Dan - Funds that have been set aside for several specific activities: These are dedicated funds that have been donated for specific activities/causes. As awards and grants (conservation activities), as they go forward we want to recall and draw on those funds to be more generous because the funds were dedicated for that purpose. As we move towards the upcoming events, and those activities are planned, please be more cognizant of that. We don't have to spend it all this coming year but we should get more student awards and have additional conservation recipients because of those contributions. Brian noted 2 conservation awards were given this year of \$1000 each. The Poole award had a \$250 prize. There are balances in one or more of those special funds. Dan's understanding is that the amount in the awards and the number of awards would be stepped up. Continue likewise.

### **Pennsylvania Birds Journal PORC - Julia**

We have been working on the official list of birds and having a clear list of abundance codes. We have a definition for abundance codes but there were some problems implementing them. A subcommittee was formed and PORC has voted on an approved new definitions of the abundance codes that were forwarded to everyone based on the ABA. Next step is to use this to define codes and find definitions to publish.

We will be coming up on elections for new PORC members and we will be sending something out to spread the word. We will probably be electing one or 2 new members. They will need to be nominated. Specifics will be included in the announcement I will be sending out.

Currently there are more things to be tackled but we are focusing on our primary functions and reviewing items that need to be completed. Frank extended Kudos to Emily and Julia for keeping items up to date on everything.

[Pennsylvania Bird List – PORC \(pabirds.org\)](http://pabirds.org)

### **Conservation Committee - Laura**

No outstanding issues to report. Frank posted on our website current conservation issues.

### **Education Committee - Tony**

Next webinar will be Monday evening at 7 with Brian Shema, Audubon Society of Western PA "Building a Future for Chimney Swifts". Currently there are 76 people registered for the webinar. There is usually a 50 percent yield on those registrations.

### **Field Trip Report - Jeff**

Union County was the Spotlight this past weekend: 92 species were identified. Trip Report was dropped into the chat.

**Margaret Higbee** will be stepping down as newsletter editor. We will need a description of the skill set to put out there for possible interested persons. Christmas Bird count is the next deadline within the month. Looking for suggestions.

### **PA Birds - Frank noted for Mark**

Mailing will happen for PA Birds next Monday.

### **Nomination Committee -**

We will need a nomination committee within the next month to find directors for the coming year. Elections happen at the end of May. Recommendation that there be one board member to take the lead and one other member to partner with.

Doug Wentzel: What big bird organization in the state is not currently represented in the PSO? Would there be someone looking for an opportunity to help contribute to a state organization not currently or in the past represented on the PSO? Suggested that board members reach out to these organizations. We are looking for 3 or 4 people.

PA Audubon Council  
Audubon Society of Western PA  
Three Rivers  
Aviary  
Powder Mill  
Erie Bird Observatory  
Erie Audubon  
State Parks  
Bucks County Audubon  
Audubon Society of Bucks Co.

**Meeting night discussion:** We have switched from a Tuesday to Wednesday night. Does that still work for everyone? Maybe alternating the Tuesday and Wednesday nights every other

meeting? Additionally, taking another schedule survey after new members of the board are in place.

1. Related question is what pressing issues need to be addressed next year?

One major topic that needs to be addressed at the next meeting is by laws. Not just minor revisions. Mary Alice has been reviewing the by laws for revision and hopes to present a draft of recommended changes to the board before the January meeting. A round of changes can then be discussed and voted on no later than March in preparation for the May meeting.

Brian - What do the by law procedures say regarding changes? How do we revise by laws/ timeline /distributions?

Doug noted: Section 9.1 The by laws may be altered, amended or repealed by a majority vote of the members entitled to vote thereon at any regular or special meeting duly convened after notice to the members of that purpose, or by majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting duly convened, excepting those matters which are by statute reserved exclusively to the members, subject always to the power of the members to change such action by the directors.

Clarification is needed as to who is required to vote on the by law changes and how and where do we get input from the membership on the changes? Possibly post on our website with a deadline for suggestions and input?

2. We need an ongoing review of the website. Frank has successfully transitioned through software changes from platform to platform. The site is mobile friendly. Frank checks and continues to keep it fresh as it is a public face and sits out there 24/7.

**Meeting adjourned**

**Next meeting is January 16, 2024 at 6:30.**