

Grand Traverse Audubon Club

Board Meeting Minutes

April 29, 2024

1. Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm by John Imboden
2. Roll Call
  - a. Present: Kathy Flegel, Kathie Wiley, John Imboden, Sharon Benjey, Jared Gugnitz, Tom Comfort, Kirk Waterstripe (joined via phone at 6:42 pm)
  - b. Absent: none
3. Approval of March meeting minutes
  - a. April meeting date is not correct in the minutes.
  - b. With the above modification, motion made to approve minutes by Jared Gugnitz, seconded by Kathie Wiley. Unanimously approved.
4. Agenda
  - a. Additional Items:
    - i. Liaison position discussion
5. Introductory Comments – John Imboden
  - a. none
6. Treasurer's Report – Kathie Wiley
  - a. CD purchased in March for \$2000 at 4.5%, one month interest penalty for early withdrawal
  - b. Balances
    - i. General - \$3421.06
    - ii. Walter Hastings - \$1342.52
    - iii. CD – \$2007.49
    - iv. Total - \$6771.07
  - c. Upcoming expenses
    - i. Print more rack cards – **Kathie to get a quote for this.** Tom Comfort motioned that if it's less than \$100 it is approved. John Imboden 2nded. Unanimously approved.
    - ii. Kathie proposes getting a gift card for Merry Vanderlinden for \$50, as a thank you for covering snacks at the membership meeting. John Imboden motioned, Kathie Wiley 2nded. Motion carried unanimously
  - d. Membership
    - i. 134 members – no new members were gained from the TADL event
    - ii. 122 paid, 5 lifetime, and 7 officers
    - iii. Issue with 1 new member having an sbcglobal email address who cannot receive bird alert. Kathie Wiley has tried multiple avenues to fix, but without success. She will email the person to let them know.
7. Old Business
  - a. Survey results

- i. How should we distribute the survey results to the membership?  
**John to collaborate with Kirk to send an email to membership to share the survey results.**
    - ii. Kathy Flegel observed that membership seems to not find the social aspect important, but maybe it's important to the few that participate, so maybe we shouldn't completely discount it.
    - iii. Tom Comfort suggested we might look into digital meetings. This would help mitigate weather-related cancellations or absences. The Petoskey club has had some success with this. Sharon added that it would help with illness related absences as well. **Tom to get information from other area clubs about their experience with them.**
  - b. Final review of by-law revisions
    - i. The old by-laws do not require the membership to approve amendments to the by-laws, but John is going to send the new version to the membership for review and then vote at the September 26, 2024 membership meeting, as required by the new by-laws.
    - ii. Tom Comfort informed the board that our by-laws need to be sent to the Michigan Audubon once per year, particularly if there are any changes. Once approved, these will be sent to Michigan Audubon.
    - iii. **John to incorporate feedback from the board, as discussed in this meeting, into the final revision.**
    - iv. **Tom to research if Michigan Audubon Society is a part of the National Audubon Society.**
    - v. Discussion cut off due to time after section 6. Additional discussion will be had via email, or, if necessary, in person at a board meeting to be scheduled.
- 8. New Business
  - a. Fall Speakers
    - i. Duke Elsner with MSU said he would do a presentation in the fall.  
**Kathie to follow up to schedule this.**
    - ii. Brian Allen and Nate Crane – have said they would present on a tropical birding trip, but haven't been able to nail down a date
  - b. Nature Fest in Elk Rapids
    - i. June 8 – Kathie said she would like an additional person to sit at the booth with her for this event. Kathy said she can do this.
  - c. Liaison position discussion
    - i. Tom proposes that we remove the Liaison position from the board. It's not a position that exists in other peer clubs, and doesn't seem to add a lot of value to GTAC. Michigan Audubon doesn't seem to share a lot of information with GTAC. Motion to eliminate the position from the by-laws made by Sharon, 2<sup>nd</sup>ed by Kathy. Motion passed unanimously (Tom Comfort abstained).

- ii. This change will therefore be amended in the by-laws and then approved when the by-laws are approved at the Sept membership meeting.
- 9. Agenda and date for next board meeting
  - a. May – Kathie to propose dates and times via email
  - b. Sept 16 at 6PM (tentative)
- 10. Adjournment
  - a. Motion made by Kathie Wiley to adjourn. Seconded by John Imboden.
  - b. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM

# Addendum 1: Draft of Values and mission

Prepared by Kirk Waterstripe, presented to the board 2/15/24

## Values and Mission

As an organization, we value:

- Birds and the habitats that support them
- Wild and wild-ish spaces
- Each other, from the bird-curious to the life-long birder
- Inclusive opportunities for birding
- The club's ability to thrive in the years to come

Our mission is to provide inclusive opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about birds and the ecosystems on which they depend, and to support efforts to protect these ecosystems in our region.

How do we do that?

1. Maintain and grow the fiscal health of the organization
  - a. Increase memberships
  - b. Establish other sources of revenue
  - c. Responsible management of fiscal resources
2. Education
  - a. Birding outings
  - b. Educational programs (meetings?)
  - c. Through media, including online (unpaid internship for social media?)
  - d. Donations to educational efforts of others
  - e. Educational projects (bird book library, Birding Backpacks, etc.)
3. Outreach
  - a. Partnerships with local organizations (TADL, GER, Norte?, ...)
  - b. Presence at public events (MakerFaire, NatureFest, ...)
  - c. Grand Traverse Band?
  - d. Young birders!
4. Citizen Science
  - a. Biodiversity inventories (GTRLC & others)
  - b. Christmas Bird Counts
  - c. Breeding Bird Surveys
5. Conservation (form Conservation Committee to monitor and propose actions?)
  - a. Support for land acquisition projects
  - b. Bird housing & monitoring
    - i. Purple Martin colony
    - ii. Chimney Swift tower
    - iii. Loon platform on Boardman Lake
  - c. Donations to DNR's NFWTF
  - d. Vocal and written support for biodiversity at local govt. meetings
  - e. Promote bird-friendly landscaping
6. Social events, open to the public (potlucks, picnics; at least 2x per year?)

## **Addendum 2: Position duties lists**

### **Liaison**

1. Interact with other Charters and report to the GTAC Board as a summary report
2. Share program opportunities from other Charters and MAS.
3. Forward questions and comments to MAS (staff) as requested by the GTAC Board.
4. Report communications from MAS to GTAC or directed to all Charters.
5. Attend Networking opportunities; either in-person or remotely.

### **Secretary**

1. Take minutes at the Board meetings. The minutes should be sent out to board members once completed, and then again several days prior to the next board meeting, for review. The minutes from the previous board meeting should be read at each board meeting for approval.
2. Take minutes at the monthly membership meeting, with an emphasis on capturing Board business. The minutes should be read at the next membership meeting for approval by the membership.
3. Check the public board email account ([gtac.board@grandtraverseaudubon.com](mailto:gtac.board@grandtraverseaudubon.com)) and the website contact us email account periodically, and follow up or redirect as necessary.
4. Maintain the membership of the Bird Alert mailing list.
5. Generate and send thank you letters to Walter Hastings donors.
6. Print rack cards as needed.