

Empire Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society

Meeting Minutes

Conference Call

1PM – 3:10PM

October 15, 2014

- 1) Welcome – Brad called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.
 - Brad Schwab, Jessica Sargis, Elaine Dalrymple, Ray Mueller, Pat Barry, Lisa Miller, Scott Fischer and Heath Eisele were on the call. Brad mentioned that he invited Daren Usinowicz, a new member he hopes might agree to be a regional rep on the Board, to call in.

- 2) Review/Approval of minutes from the August 20, 2014 meeting. Ray mentioned that there was a small error in the amount listed for the Vanguard Fletcher account. It should be [REDACTED] instead of [REDACTED]. Pat asked if previous meeting minutes were still in draft form and Elaine said other than 8/20 minutes, they were in final form. Pat wants to post them on our website but Brad suggested that we exclude \$ amounts, just put x's where they appear. Everyone thought this was a good idea. Ray moved to accept the 8/20 minutes as corrected, Jess seconded and all were in favor. Pat will post them on the website without dollar amounts.

- 3) Review the Treasurer's Report and Lisa's invoice
 - a) Treasurer's Report
 - Ray went over the main points of the report (Aug 17- Oct 14) that had been emailed to everyone ahead of the meeting. There has been [REDACTED] in total income to date for the year and [REDACTED] in expenses for a net income of [REDACTED]. In the Endowment accounts through June 30, 2014: Vanguard Fletcher Endowment has a balance of [REDACTED] and the regular Vanguard Endowment has a balance of [REDACTED]. Lisa did not enter the end of Sept earnings for these two accounts, as part of this report, as she wants to make sure she is interpreting the spreadsheet correctly but roughly there is [REDACTED] in the Vanguard Fletcher account and [REDACTED] in the regular Vanguard account as of 9/30/14. The accountant assists with interpretation of these account statements. Lisa said there has been [REDACTED] in sales of stormwater books since the last meeting. Elaine made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented, Scott seconded and all were in favor.
 - Jess said she would send in the new paperwork so Ray can help manage the Vanguard accounts in November after the annual meeting so it only has to be done once.
 - Lisa got a letter from the IRS saying our name does not match their listing but Lisa had already filled out a new W-9 with the correction so we don't really need to do anything. IRS made the mistake.

- 4) Status of action items from the 8/20 meeting
 - Brad reminded the Board that he had emailed out a summary list of action items and this was reviewed.

- Brad volunteered to help Pat review the scholarship applicants if Cherie cannot. In the past, Jess and Cherie helped Pat.
- Lisa sent a letter, written by Brad, to Doug Fisher about the Conservation Skills Workshop and it included materials on SWCS for use at the workshop. Lisa contacted Dana Chapman about his lapsed membership but Dana is still trying to decide if he will continue as a corporate member. The check for [REDACTED] from the Vanguard account was deposited.
- Brad checks the national list that is sent out weekly with renewed or lapsed memberships. He believes everyone with a lapsed membership has been contacted. Some have rejoined, some have not. He is not sure about Don Pettite.
- Pat still needs to contact Don Pettite, Dave Mortenson and Josh Hornesky about membership renewal. Pat will post the approved minutes from previous meetings to the website. He has posted his bio and Jess's. The scholarship info on the website has been updated. Pat sent the scholarship info to all the colleges including Brockport.
- Jess will send a picture to Pat for the website. The annual meeting agenda is all set up and the announcement has gone out.
- Ray still needs to write letters to various universities about the development of student chapters.
- Elaine tried to reach Ellen Luchsinger without much luck but Scott has an email for her and Elaine will try again. Brad tried to reach Lisa Fields with no luck.

5) Results of our efforts to bring back lapsed members

- Brad said there have been mixed results, more bad than good. Everyone whose membership has lapsed in the last 18 months has been contacted or an attempt to contact them has been made. Brad is open to new ideas. Ray asked if there was a procedure for contacting potential new members. Loren Lyons-Swift was mentioned (?) Brad said that when a new member joins he sends a welcoming email that explains what our chapter does and mentions upcoming meetings, the scholarship program, the minigrants, etc. Brad gets a weekly report from the national office and he estimates that we are losing somewhere between 1 and 10 members per week as a national organization, which shows that our Chapters declining membership is also being experienced nationwide.

6) Website migration follow-up

- Pat had his wife, Carol, call in so she could explain information that she has obtained.
- Carol said that Webstarts is a website system that is very easy to learn and you would need a Pro Plus account to use Paypal. Phone and email support is only available during business hours. Cost is about [REDACTED] per year. Square Space is another option but it costs twice as much as Webstarts. Both of these systems can be a little difficult when trying to use on a smart phone because of different interfaees.

- Wordpress is an open source system and someone would need to host it. Paypal can be put onto Wordpress. Weebly is another option and Lisa said their office pays █████ per year for the pro version. They do offer support from 8-5, 7 days a week. Paypal will send html code for use on a website.
- There are organizations that will offer website support.
- Brad said that Ancient Wisdom is good but they want quite a bit of money, █████ to build the site and they charge █████ per hour for support.
- It was mentioned that if someone from SWCS is working on the website on the weekend, we might need 24/7 support help.
- We need to decide how we will go forward and pick the right way. We need to figure out who will manage the site. There will probably be a big amount of work up front but then just maintenance.
- Carol is most familiar with Webstarts and likes their phone support. They would help move the domain name. Carol is willing to help rebuild the site; she likes design challenges. She said we need to find out who owns our images and artwork ie. does Ancient Wisdom own them? Just because it is our site does not mean we own them.
- This will be an agenda item for the next Council meeting.

7) Website Updates

- Jess and Pat have updated their bios.
- Photos are still needed for Heath and Jess.
- Heath will send a photo and his bio.

8) 2015 Council Positions open for nominations

- Heath is willing to stay as Region 1 rep but said if someone else wants it he is not opposed.
- We still need a rep for Region 2 (Central NY) and Region 3 (Southeastern NY that includes Tompkins Co.) Pat is an at-large rep.
- Regions 2 & 4 are voted on in even years and 1&3 in odd years. So for 2105, Region 1 & 3 reps will be two year terms but Region 2 will be a one year term.
- President elect is the most important position to still be filled. Pat mentioned that this might be a good position for a retired person as full time employees are so extended with work load. Pat mentioned some NRCS retirees he knows that were previous members (Paul Ray, Mike Townsend). Heath said he may have contact info for Paul Ray.
- Brad said that if any present board members have aspirations for President Elect to call him.

9) Annual meeting planning

- Jess said that the Cayuga Co. SWCD space is small and with 40 people, it will be tight quarters. She said she has contacted the Holiday Inn and we can switch to there if necessary.
- 5 CCA credits and 1 Professional Development credit will be offered.

- On this year's meeting announcement she did not put on info about renewing membership. A meeting reminder notice will be sent out closer to the meeting date. The event has been listed in the National Conservogram.
- Food options can be decided at a later time via email.
- Ray said he sent Jess an updated description of his talk.
- Heath said NRCS will support NRCS staff going to the meeting in terms of taking the time but NRCS employees still need to pay the registration fee on their own. Last year NRCS paid for some attendees to go.
- The business meeting will start promptly at 8 am and end at 9 am so we can stay on schedule.

10) Next meeting

- This will be the annual meeting on Nov 21, 2014.

11) Elaine made a motion to adjourn, Pat seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Minutes taken by Elaine Dalrymple, Secretary

Addendum

The following was approved via email the last week of October, 2014.

The Council approved a change of venue for the Annual Meeting due to limited space at the Cayuga Co. SWCD building. This was done with the understanding that the event will cost us between \$300 and \$400 to hold at the Holiday Inn, whereas it would have been a break even event if held at the SWCD building. The motion was made by Jess and seconded by Elaine. Pat, Scott, Heath, Ray, and Brad voted in favor. Cherie abstained from voting for unknown reasons.