

## Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Board Meeting 9/12/23 – Virtual / Zoom

Call to order 5:04 PM

Board Members Present: Jim Maul, Jim Nindel-Edwards, Leslie Lopez, Suzanne Whitney, Alex Earl

Guests: Susan Setterberg, Cathy Allen (The Board Doctor)

Staff: Samantha Zeiner (notes prepared by)

### 1. Agenda Item: The Board Doctor

- a. Discussion: Board Introductions with Cathy Allen
  - i. Presentation: Cathy Allen [Proposal Project Description](#) and introduction
  - ii. Approx 8 weeks from GO date to the actual training – at least 6 hours, if not 8 or more. Giving a full day to a training in person we can bring Cathy out, or we can do virtual at some point. Full process can take up to five months approximately.
  - iii. Jim Maul wants to note that we can still engage people who you think would be good for the board, and just let them know that we are working on strategic planning and getting professional structure help. They can join any time in the process.
  - iv. Cathy notes that fundraising works the same way- just share a neat story of why you're even on the board and then make the ask, it can be that simple.
  - v. Jim Maul - Looks like we have enough unrestricted funds even beyond Director pay, would be worth the investment. Strategic Direction, Alignment with our actions and mission, and result of development of board capacity.
- b. Action: Motion by Suzanne Whitnet to begin the process as described for the amounts suggested. Seconded by Jim Nindel-Edwards to retain as discussed in the scope of work.
  - i. Passed Unanimously.
    1. Suzanne Whitney and Jim Nindel-Edwards have agreed to help.
  - ii. Suzanne agrees that this seems very valuable. \$7,500 plus travel, and travel can be a lot. But based on Sam's recommendation feels it is a good idea.
  - iii. Alex Earl mentions that we can find a grant or corporate sponsor to pay for this training.
  - iv. Need to create a Planning Committee and **choose a date in November for the training day.**

### 2. Agenda Item: Approval of Agenda & Minutes

- a. Discussion: Dark Sky visit from last meeting – Jim wants to know about follow up: They are coming to BirdFest in the partner area, and working with the Refuge on a light meter on the Refuge.
- b. Action Taken: Motion – Proposed from Leslie, Jim Seconded. Passed unanimously.

### 3. Agenda Item: Financial – Treasurer's Report

- a. Discussion: We have the notes and financials from Nicole – she notes that the board please support end-of-year fundraising efforts. Financials are decent at the moment, but the planning part and having more board members / those that can do fundraising will help us since we struggle with that.
    - i. We received the check from Riverview Bank in sponsorship (asked by Alex Earl)
    - ii. Fiber Federal is also sponsoring BirdFest at \$5,000 – it was random, I didn't ask for it.
    - iii. Alex Earl also notes that Tractor Supply just opened and are a big philanthropic giver in the area.
    - iv. Draft budget for review at the November Board Meeting
  - b. Action Taken: None, informational
4. Agenda Item: Walk for the Wild
- a. Discussion: READ INFO SHEET SENT BEFORE MEETING
5. Agenda Item: Harness Round-Up Program
- a. Discussion: READ INFO SHEET SENT BEFORE MEETING
6. Agenda Item: High Tunnel Priorities
- a. Discussion: We have been making good progress on the High Tunnel position description, we met with Juliette and Eric A. and Nicole Mathes to help come up with salary/figure out funding sources. Josie has also provided feedback. Seasonal variation in terms of commitment. Nicole is revising the description to include the nuances mentioned and return it to us.
    - i. Looking at:
      - 1. Where are we getting the money
      - 2. Reasonable expectation of a positive outcome before we make the commitment
      - 3. To Suzanne's point, we have reduces staff significantly, doesn't imply we won't be providing necessary assistance in talent and expertise for the refuge. We are just building that process with a different framework.
      - 4. Not offering a career with long-term aspiration, it doesn't mean it can't happen, but we are held hostage by funding capabilities.
      - 5. Full-time, long-term staff working alongside the FWS because there is a disparity between the wages, work environment, and benefits, not including reporting structure confusion, etc.
      - 6. Going forward, we will be more focused on part-time, temporary. Great experience, retirees, do something they care about. Refined understanding of how we can get things done on the Refuge with a set up that does not create the issues of the past.
  - b. Action Taken: None. Informational.
7. Agenda Item: Honorary Board Members
- a. Discussion: Skip in interest of time/ Tanna not in attendance.
8. Reports:
- a. City of Ridgefield: N/A

- b. **Refuge:** Connecting and engaging with volunteers has been the struggle, we just don't have enough people to manage all the people who want to help.
  - i. Teary eyed on Monday talking about the budget – leaning on volunteers.
  - ii. Monday updates being emailed to Board by Sam Z
  - iii. Josie sends volunteer updates on Fridays, if you aren't on her list, let her know.
- c. **Staff:**
  - i. Sign up for Walk for the Wild and our Harness Round-Up program, and spread the word! Document's explaining were send in Board Documents, let Sam know if you have questions.
- d. **BirdFest & Bluegrass:** We are almost there! Need volunteers in all the places, find your friends and family!
  - i. Need to follow up with Susan Setterberg about spotting scopes on the River S
  - ii.

9. Agenda Topics for next meeting: N/A

Meeting adjourned: 6:09 PM