

WAEF Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 27, 2006
Treehaven, near Tomahawk, Wisconsin
recorded by Heidi Conde

Board members present: Jeremy Higgins, Rebecca Westfahl, Betsy Parker, Tanya Zastrow, Amy Workman, Heidi Conde, Joella Zocher, John Heusinkveld

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m.

New board members Joella (“Joey”) Zocher and John Heusinkveld were welcomed. Joey teaches several subjects at El Puente High School, a partnership school with Milwaukee Public Schools serving “at-risk” students. John is Assistant Director at Treehaven, a residential natural resources education and conference facility owned and operated by UW-Stevens Point. “Old” board members introduced themselves to the new board members.

The order was changed for some agenda items. The approval and installation of board officers was moved up.

Tanya moved that Jeremy be elected as the Chair and that Rebecca be elected as the Chair-Elect. Betsy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jeremy suggested that Carol Weston, WAEF Administrative Assistant, serve as Treasurer. Brief discussion followed. Treasurer does not have to be a board member, only a member of WAEF. Board members agreed that it made sense for Carol to serve as the Treasurer, if she is willing, as she takes care of the books already.

Action Item: Jeremy will ask Carol if she would like to serve as the Treasurer.

The minutes from the last meeting were briefly discussed. There was some confusion about which Marys were referred to on the second page. Last names were added to the minutes for clarification. Betsy moved to approve the minutes as amended. Amy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jeremy reported that Carol did not submit a report to him, as her mother is ill. There was discussion about what the Board can do to show Carol our appreciation of all the good work that she does for WAEF. Suggestions included a laptop computer, tuition reimbursement, paid conference fees, office equipment, a cash bonus, and a letter of recognition.

Action items: Jeremy will ask Carol what she would like.
Jeremy will work with Past Chair Carrie Hembree to draft a letter of recognition from the Board.
Rebecca will write a newsletter article about Carol.

There was no budget and finance report. We agreed that we need a year-end report before the spring retreat.

Action item: Jeremy will see about working with Carol to put a report together after Winter Workshop.

Heidi passed out copies of the current Membership Committee report, briefly reviewed it orally, and also gave each of the new Board members a copy of the last Membership Committee report.

Heidi distributed copies of the finalized membership survey, which she reviewed for the benefit of the new members.

Action item: Heidi will ask Carol to check on postal regulations regarding reduced rates for non-profits.

Rebecca reported on conference committee activity. She said that they are very organized and are doing well. The committee is working on requests for presenters and exhibitors, and these requests should be on the website by next week. Rebecca also mentioned that auction items are needed.

Jeremy announced that David Kuckuk resigned from the Board, as he and Rebecca are from the same small nature center. So, there is a vacancy to fill. The Board discussed filling the vacancy, and there was consensus that the vacancy should be filled by appointing one of the two candidates who had not been elected in the last election—Brian Arnold and Mike Ring. There was some discussion about the attributes of the two candidates, followed by a vote by paper ballot. Brian Arnold received the most votes.

Action item: Jeremy will contact Brian and offer him the appointment.

There was consensus that Mike Ring would be offered the position if Brian does not accept the appointment.

The two vacant student board positions were discussed. Amy wrote in Jessica Huxmann, and two other members wrote in Marjorie Rychlock, in the last election. Both students are from Steven's Point. Amy told us a little about Jessica. Joey said that she could ask a friend who is a professor in Milwaukee to talk with her students about serving on the Board. Betsy reminded the Board that Karla Lockman said that she is willing to serve another term on the Board. Jeremy suggested that Board members who are interested in this issue, and in the possibility of changing the term of student board members to a school-year term, meet and bring their ideas back to the Board. Joey suggested that we discuss it by e-mail string.

Action items: Board members who will be at the Winter Workshop this weekend and who are interested in discussing student board member issues, will meet after dinner on Saturday.
Betsy will e-mail the results of this discussion to all Board members, and we will vote electronically.

Discussion turned to the spring retreat. Joey suggested using a facilitator to work on the strategic plan.

Action items: Tanya will get contact information for an excellent facilitator used by another group of which she is a member.
Heidi will provide the State of Wisconsin facilitators list and check with Darrin Harris.
Betsy will ask Kathe Conn if she is interested in facilitating the meeting.

Heidi suggested having the new board members look at our priorities from last year's retreat, then add their input. Betsy mentioned that we have previously discussed mainly focusing on membership issues and development at our spring retreat.

The Board set dates for the rest of this year's meetings, and locations for some of them. Meeting information is as follows:

- Friday, April 7, through Sunday, April 9 Spring Retreat at Treehaven
- Saturday, May 13, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Meet at one of the Aldo Leopold Nature Center sites (perhaps the Black Earth site)
- Saturday, September 9 Meet in the WAEE office in Stevens Point
- Saturday, October 28 Meet at the fall conference in Manitowoc
- Saturday, December 9 Meet in Milwaukee, perhaps at the Urban Ecology Center

Jeremy suggested monthly work days, at which interested members (not just the Board) could participate in organizational activities like stuffing envelopes. He suggested that we publish them in our newsletter, and that there could be different activities and topics. Jeremy proposed a regional networking get-together in February to start things off. There was considerable discussion about this suggestion, but no concrete action items came out of the discussion.

Betsy related Kath Crowley Conn's offer to give an advocacy workshop, focusing on citizen advocacy (rather than lobbying or PR). The goal would be to train our members to advocate for environmental education. There was a discussion about whether or not to tie the workshop in with our conference. We would "sponsor" the workshop by giving Kath permission to use the WAEE name. WAEE members would be able to attend the workshop at a discounted rate or for free. There would be a small charge for non-members. There was consensus among the Board that we would support this endeavor in some way and allow Kath to use the WAEE name.

Action Item: Betsy will meet with Kath and report back to the Board at the April meeting. She will find out what Kath's needs are.

Betsy brought up the newsletter. No one is sure about the schedule for the newsletter, as Carrie and Carol worked on it last year.

Action Item: Jeremy will check with Carol on the newsletter schedule and let the Board know what he finds out.

Rebecca inquired about getting a copy of the member list for all board members.

Action Item: Jeremy will have Carol send the member list to all board members.

Rebecca moved for adjournment. Amy seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.