

BRAW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 5, 2020

Online

Officers/Directors Present: Pat Ready, Steve Sample, Gene Kroupa, Dan Schroeder,
David Lucey, Steve Fallon, Mary Sobol, Kris Perlberg and Mike Crawford

Others Present: Andy Garcia-Rivera and Val Van Winkle

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by President Pat Ready at 9:10 a.m.
2. **Roll Call.** Roll Call was taken and we had a quorum.
3. **Changes to Agenda.** None.
4. **Minutes.** The minutes of the board meeting held on September 12, 2020 were approved on a motion made by Dave Lucey and seconded by Kris Perlberg.
5. **Communications to the President.** President Pat Ready has received a request from NABS regarding 2019 and 2020 nest box data, which he passed on the Steve Fallon for reply. Pat also received a request for a nest box from an heir of Harold Ramon (Memorial Fund) which he delivered. Person indicated that if BRAW had a project in need of funding, we should submit a request.
6. **Reports.** The following reports were given:
 - a. **Treasurer's Report.** Dan Schroeder reported that all of our accounts check out and balance. BRAW has been in the black with revenues exceeding expenses so far this year. A total of \$8,751 in donations have been received so far this year. Dan will keep moving \$500 per month into I-Bonds. Also, he will move additional funds into the Membership Renewal Project as needed. Dan submitted a Proposed 2021 Budget. Gene Kroupa moved and Steve Sample seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, requested actions and Proposed 2021 Budget. Motion passed unanimously.
 - b. **WB Editor's Report.** Pat Ready noted that the Wintered issue of the *Wisconsin Bluebird* (WB) has been printed and mailed by Econoprint. Issue expanded to 16 pages due to wealth of articles.
 - c. **Website Report.** Andy Garcia-Rivera presented a *Webmaster's Report* which highlights performance metrics. Good trends include return visits to site, improvement in bounce rate, and time spent on site. He cautioned that more data over a greater length of time are needed to draw definitive conclusions. Steve Sample said he sends folks on his Facebook page to the BRAW website because the information found there is so good. Mike Crawford noted that websites are good for supplying information, while Facebook is about engagement.
 - d. **Public Relations.** Steve Sample noted that it is difficult to get other bird organizations to help with our PR efforts. Likewise, it is tough to get corporations, like Menard's to support projects unless veterans

related. Gene said that there has been excellent local media coverage of the 2020 BRAW awards recipients. He added that one thing leads to another, like the spring *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* garden special section article interview with Pat that resulted from Steve's presentation at the Garden Expo. Also, Pat's blog interview this summer with the Badgerland Birding guys came from their seeing the MJS article. Looking ahead, BRAW will need a PR plan for its 35th anniversary celebration in 2021. Mike Crawford showed a Waunakee coupon poster that featured a bluebird photo.

- e. **School & Youth Outreach.** Pat Ready noted that nothing much can be done due to COVID – 19, but hopefully that will change in 2021.
- f. **Data Summary.** Steve Fallon pointed out increases for most species reported except tree swallows. Overall, preliminary 2020 results show bluebird fledglings up 31% and all cavity nesters fledglings up 15%. Steve presented some interesting visualizations of the data, including for his GPS coordinates on two trails. Andy wondered if we could overlay weather data, prevalence of predators, etc. on the graphics.
- g. **Membership.** Val Van Winkle recapped a successful 2020 membership retention and recruitment campaign via follow-up letters to non-renewals, special membership rates at the Garden Expo and the Trail Builder promotion. Memberships are up 37% year over year from October 2019 through October 2020. Total membership now exceeds 750 combined for all categories. Gene noted that personal member engagement by Val, Mary and Andy have played a key role in our success.
- h. **Promotions.** Gene said that the purpose of promotions was twofold: 1) increase memberships, and 2) get more nest boxes put up. Mary reported that 142 nest boxes have been distributed to 36 new members under the Trail Builder promotion which ended November 30th. The February Garden Expo had resulted in 37 new members and a number of nest boxes sold. The current Holiday Season Gift offer has resulted in only one taker so far, but it runs through December 31st. Gene said that without the donation of nest boxes and predator guards by Steve Lang, the Trail Builder program would not have been possible. Dave Lucey said that he would try to get additional nest boxes and materials from Fred Craig in Onalaska after Fred recovers from an operation. Steve Sample suggested extending all special program offers beyond just our membership. Thanks again to Mary, Val, Kris and Steve Lang for their hands-on support of these promotional programs.
- i. **Marketing Plan.** Gene presented the BRAW 2021 Marketing Plan. Many of the 2020 actions had been accomplished. Steve Sample suggested to include folks who attend any kind of BRAW presentation be eligible for special membership deals. He also noted that we would “continue” and not “develop” a program for County Coordinator to recruit more members. Finally, the section about Additional Opportunities was deleted. Gene will send an updated version to BOD and committee chairs.
- j. **Photo Contest.** Our first-time ever photo contest drew over 50 entries. Kris Perlberg said it proved to be a good learning experience. She suggested having a more defined, specific set of rules, plus an entry form with required information, e.g. as where photo taken, story behind it, desired quality, etc. Pat mentioned that the judges also had a free-hand in setting criteria for selecting winners. The 1st place photo appears on the cover of the winter issue of the *Wisconsin Bluebird*, while the 2nd and 3rd place photos grace the back cover. Additional photos appear inside the issue. Thanks to Kris and Pat for making the contest possible, and to the Camera Company for judging entries.

7. **Old Business.** The board addressed the following items:

- a. **Garden Expo.** The live event was canceled and BRAW was not selected to give a virtual presentation. Gene will check into other venues that might be holding garden expos virtually that would allow BRAW to present a webinar or participate other ways.
- b. **Storage Locker.** Pat Ready reported that a storage locker we had been using will be increasing its fees and wanted to sell us insurance coverage. As a result, he has selected another site and materials will be move before December 31st. Details to follow.
- c. **Spring Thing 2021.** Pat Ready reported it is doubtful that the event would be held, but that the remodeled Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary near Green Bay would be a good place for the 2021 state convention.
- d. **Review Strategic Plan.** Gene Kroupa explained that a new item 11 – Recognition – has been added under the Tactics heading. With its attendant public relations opportunities, this effort has proven beneficial to well-deserving recipients and BRAW. The plan will continue through 2021 with quarterly reviews.

8. **New Business.** The board addressed the following items:

- a. **Old WB Issues on Website.** After extensive discussion, Dave Lucey moved and Steve Sample seconded a motion to make digital copies of the last five years of the *Wisconsin Bluebird*, sans personal identification information of BOD members, available to the general public on the BRAW website. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Extend Board Member Terms.** Steve Fallon moved and Dave Lucey seconded a motion to extend the terms of Mary Sobol and Kris Perlberg for three more years. Both have made exceptional contributions to BRAW.
- c. **Online Store.** Pat Ready explained that the BRAW online store gets few orders but it also doesn't cost us anything for inventory. He personally handles requests to purchase nest boxes. BOD decided to keep online store.
- d. **Webinars & Blogs.** After sharing thoughts about opportunities and how to handle content, length and timing, Mike, Steve S. and Pat agreed to flesh out the cost and other aspects of the effort.
- e. **Green Bay Garden Show.** Steve Sample noted they would welcome BRAW's presence. He will check on opportunities to do webinar and other things if live show not held.
- f. **BRAW Historian.** Pat Ready noted that BRAW's historical materials appear to be in separate locations and should be consolidated. Dave said he had some materials. Steve Sample said it would be helpful in preparing a chronology of past presidents that Andy could post on the web. Gene suggested getting a UW-Stevens Point or UW-Madison graduate student to prepare a BRAW history. He also noted that the State Historical Society might take our materials because of its relevance in saving a threatened species.

- g. **Board Members' Bio's.** Andy suggested having a short bio with a picture of each officer and board member so that a connection could be made with folks seeking information. He will send a sample for us to review.
- h. **BRAW'S Next President.** While emphasizing that he did not plan to leave his post immediately, Pat said BRAW should be planning for a future transition. In a very thoughtful and insightful manner, he explained how he came to be president. Although he currently plans to stay on as president through 2021 when his current 3-year term expires, he sincerely expressed the importance of BRAW's preparing for that event. A motion by Steve Sample and seconded by Dan Schroeder to award President Pat Ready a Lifetime Membership effective January 1, 2021 in recognition of his many years of service and contributions to BRAW passed unanimously.
9. **Next Meeting Date.** The next meeting was set for March 6, 2021 via online.
10. **Adjournment.** Steve Sample moved and Steve Fallon seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gene Kroupa, Secretary