

## BRAW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 30, 2019

Pioneer Inn

Westfield, Wisconsin

**Officers/Directors Present:** Pat Ready, Steve Sample, Fred Craig, Dan Schroeder, Gene Kroupa

**Officers/Directors Absent:** Dave Lucey, Steve Fallon

**Others Present:** Mary Craig

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by President Pat Ready at 9:15 a.m. at the Pioneer Inn, Westfield, Wisconsin. Thanks was given to Fred and Mary Craig for finding and checking out this new meeting location.
2. **Roll Call.** Roll Call was taken and we had a quorum.
3. **Changes to Agenda.** No changes were noted.
4. **Review Minutes.** The minutes of the board meeting held on November 3, 2018 were approved on a motion made by Schroeder and seconded by Craig.
5. **Communication to the President.** Ready noted that he had received copies of *The Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird* by Dean C. Rust from the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania for sharing with members of BRAW.
6. **Reports.** The following reports were given with attendant discussions:
  - a. **Treasurer's Report.** Schroeder noted that membership renewals were up and materials sales were good. Interest on the laddered I-Bonds was accumulating. The 2019 budget is on target, although the amount was set \$4,000 lower than in 2018. It was noted that BRAW has received \$500 from a past member which is soon to be deposited. Also, BRAW expects to receive another \$500 from the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation which is holding a legacy account on behalf of BRAW. Ready said we need to reprint the information packet for current needs. He added that we might not require as large a packet. Item was tabled until more information about final size and estimated costs were available. Sample asked if BRAW has a credit card – no. Since Schroeder will be stepping aside soon, BRAW needs to find a volunteer to handle the treasurer's duties. Sample moved and Ready seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion passed.
  - b. **Wisconsin Bluebird Editor's Report.** Ready stated that there were delayed delivery and non-receipt problems with the Winter issue. Apparently, use of the nonprofit postage rate gives all postal offices that handle the newsletter 10 days each before actual delivery. Kroupa noted that using a different postage category, e.g. presorted standard first class, might eliminate some of the delay. Discussion turned to overall costs for the printing, addressing and mailing of the typical 12-page quarterly newsletter. Kroupa will check with another vendor to see what the costs might be.
  - c. **Website/Membership Report.** While not able to attend, Mike Ray is making design updates so that BRAW's site is not viewed as being unsafe to access by some servers and security platforms, e.g. Norton. Ray has added email addresses of persons who have signed up at shows and seminars for the free online version of the Spring issue of the WB newsletter. Hopefully, these folks will decide to join as members of BRAW. Membership is holding steady with renewals running ahead of last year. Discussion was held on ways to clarify when memberships are up for renewal. Craig suggested that some words be added to date on the newsletter to read: "Your membership expires (month/year)." Also, it would be helpful to have a combined membership/ fund raising effort via mail. This approach would be helpful for members who want to become life members, designate additional funds, or might be interested in leaving a legacy. Kroupa will devise a plan for review.

- d. **Public Relations/Promotions Reports.** Sample and Kroupa combined their reports. Sample hasn't had any luck trying to get a meeting with the Wisconsin Federation of Garden Clubs. He noted that he would get a video on putting up a nest box on our website and announcing it to members via GroupWorks. Kroupa handed out copies of the *BRAW 2019 Marketing Plan* updated with results as of March 30, 2019. Main focus has been on creating more awareness of BRAW via mailing a news release to newspapers, contacts with news reporters and outdoor writers, and engaging members. Discussion centered on getting County Coordinators and members to assist locally with getting out the word. Schroeder noted that it is important to let members and the public know what BRAW has done to date. Also, Craig said we need to do like various organizations to let folks know that an investment in BRAW is an investment in conservation. Sample said he would contact bird feed outlets throughout the state, such as Wild Birds Unlimited, Farm & Fleet, Fleet Farm, Menard's, Home Depot, etc. to see if they would partner with or donate to BRAW. BRAW has small decals that could be used by members and partners to show their support. Other ideas included putting together an updated BRAW background sheet, getting on University Place like Ready's presentation, being on Larry Meiller's radio show, putting an article in *Our Wisconsin* magazine, writing a "What BRAW Does" article for the Summer WB newsletter, and using GroupWorks to share current news with members. Ready will look into making it easier for members and prospects to get access to GroupWorks items. Kroupa would like to see more member engagement via committees and volunteerism to assist in public information efforts. One way would be to conduct a photo sharing/contest to give them more recognition.
- e. **Nest Box Design.** Craig distributed an NABS Style Cedar House handout describing its design, features and using waxed PVC pipe to prevent predation. A discussion ensued regarding the information provided, including the advantages of pre-drilling holes for installing a Van Ert trap and a wire predator guard. Also, concerns expressed at seminars about the Van Ert sparrow trap suggest a Q&A article in the WB newsletter and on our website would be helpful in allaying them.
- f. **School & Youth Outreach.** Mary Craig held a cavity nester workshop on March 16<sup>th</sup> at the Riveredge Nature Reserve.
- g. **Data Summary.** No report, but there was a suggestion to improve the readability of future charts (maps) and consider changing the format to bar charts or tables to assist those with vision issues.

## 7. **Old Business.**

- a. **County Coordinators.** Ready noted that Carol Mc Daniel let County Coordinators know to submit nominations for BRAW's Bluebird Awards. Feedback from one County Coordinator and director fueled a discussion about using/adding a new title, such as "mentor," to describe a person whose function is to provide answers to questions members and the public have about installing, maintaining and monitoring nest boxes. Schroeder pointed out that "mentor" implies knowledge skills while a "coordinator" has other duties and does a lot more things. Ready suggested looking at the current job description for coordinators. Craig thought what we really sought was a "who to go to" person that would be a trouble-shooter to answer or get answers. Kroupa suggested having BRAW members designated by county or area of expertise listed on the BRAW website similar to what SCORE ([www.Madison.score.org](http://www.Madison.score.org)) does in helping match client questions/needs with members' areas of expertise. Directors agreed that no change was needed in the current title, County Coordinators, but that more attention is needed on how best to answer questions.
- b. **2019 Garden Expo Review.** Ready gave an update on our involvement. Sales of boxes and materials were lower than last year, primarily due to his presentations being scheduled later in the afternoon and overall lower attendance for the show. Being located across from the Wild Birds Unlimited booth and in the main commercial traffic flow (as opposed to being with other nonprofits) proved beneficial. BRAW about broke even on cost, while we did get 65 persons interested in getting the Spring WB to sign up. Pros and cons of participating next year were discussed with a final decision put off until more information is received for 2020's event.

- c. **2019 Spring Thing with the Horicon Bird Club Review.** Ready and Sample both felt the benefit of participating was limited due to our not being able to sell boxes. Total attendance was around 100, but only nine persons signed up for the free Spring WB newsletter. Kroupa suggested rotating among different events, including the Garden Expo and Horicon, on an annual basis. This would allow us to better use our funds and volunteer time to gain wider exposure with different audiences during the crucial December-February period. Someone suggested that BRAW hold its own Bluebird Blowout event in March. Craig said we could use donated nest boxes to get attendees to set up their own trail.
- d. **MyGrove Update.** Ready will contact our GroupWorks membership management and communication administrator to check on making access easier and more universal to aid our member engagement and public communication efforts.

**8. New Business.**

- a. **Donation for WI Conservation Congress.** Following a discussion, directors decided that the \$500 requested exceeded the benefit we would derive. Ready will so inform the WCC.
- b. **Garden Expo 2020.** A final decision on whether to participate was tabled until we have more information regarding cost, floor location, etc. Ready noted that a new point of contact and coordinating person will be needed, as Mike Helgren will no longer be able to do it.
- c. **BRAW Convention Update.** For the annual meeting, Ready thinks the speaker line-up will include: Scott Walter, DNR, Sharptails; River Valley Raptors, Inc., Falconry & Birds of Prey; and Sandy Schwab, Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group, Saving Smokestacks. Final titles and schedule TBD.
- d. **Donation for Bluebird Nest Box Store in Darlington.** Discussion was held on the request for \$500. Ready will contact them for more details.

**9. Next Meeting Date.** The summer Board meeting will be held Saturday, June 8, 2019 at TBD.

A motion to adjourn made by Sample and seconded by Schroeder passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gene Kroupa,  
Director