

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of Grasslands Naturalists Board Meeting, October 6, 2020
Board Meeting via Skype

Present via Skype: Phil Horch (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Hugh Armstrong, Eileen Cowtan, Ian and Angela Turner, Linda Fisher.

1. Call to Order: 1:30 pm
2. Review and Adoption of GN Board Minutes from September 1, 2020. **CARRIED.**
Business arising from these Minutes: Phil reviewed the question of MH News advertising in the Chronicle, which had been brought up at the September Board Meeting. It was noted that the News does not wish to pay for advertising.
3. Additions to Agenda:
 - a. **1)Directors Appointments** (confirmed at this Board Meeting).
Past President- Hugh Armstrong
Directors at Large: Ian Turner, Angela Turner, and Linda Fisher were appointed at the last AGM on September 13, 2020, at a meeting immediately after the AGM. This Motion is noted in an Addendum in the September 13, 2020 AGM minutes. Eileen Cowtan was appointed as a Director at Large at **this** Board meeting, October 6, 2020. (See Item 5.a. below)
2)Committee Volunteers Selection
Committees to meet in October 2020, or as soon as possible after that, to select Chairperson and confirm Budget.
Communications Committee- Phil to check for interested members
Budget Committee- Paul Thibault
Governance Committee- Paul Thibault
Issues Committee-Martha Munz Gue & John Slater (co-facilitators)
MHIP/Operations Committee- Hugh Armstrong
Field Trips Committee-John Slater and Martha Munz Gue
Indoor Program Committee- Linda Fisher
Fund Raising Committee- Hugh Armstrong
3) Projects: (contacts)
Carol Porter Bluebird Trail- Milt Spitzer
Birding Trails- Phil Horch, Milt Spitzer, Bob Frew, Rob Gardner. Hugh Armstrong, John Slater
Bird Tales- Dee Armstrong & Paul Thibault
Butterflies, Dragonflies & More- Dave McKenzie
GN/City Parks Department Projects- Hugh, John, Gerry
Web Cam- Hugh and Paul
4) External Organizations:
Nature Alberta- Ian & Angela Turner
SEAWA- Tina Regehr (Secretary), Martha Munz Gue, and Paula Munro.
UERAB- Gerry Ehlert will let Hugh know about the future of UERAB after an October 22nd. meeting.
Methanex- Ian Turner was selected for another 2 year term
Palliser Airshed Society (PAS)- David Gue
 - b. **AGM Post Mortem:** The Board held a brief discussion of the recent AGM. Some positive comments about the strong turnout included: out of town members attending, a lively introduction by Valerie Martins, and a graceful thank you speech by Jan Scott. Picnic tables were well spaced thanks to staff at the Nature Centre. The strong wind in the outdoor area made hearing difficult, but that was beyond our control.
1)Vice President- Phil noted we need a V.P who would make a good future President. Some choices were discussed, and Phil asked Board members to send any further suggestions to him.
 - c. **Transition Organization:** (transitionmedicinehat.ca)
Hugh noted this is a national organization. SeeTransitionNetwork.org
Phil said he will talk with Rob Gardner about this organization, which promotes sustainable living in southeastern Alberta. A request may be sent to info@transitionmedicinehat.ca for a monthly newsletter.
4. Action Items:
 - a. **Committee Budgets:** Committee Chairs need to have their Budgets to Paul before November 1 please.
 - b. **Letter to Chronicle** about Jan's Presentation. Paul will submit an article to Milt.
Note that Paul would like a bench plaque for Jan.
Hugh will check with John, and will purchase a plaque.
 - c. **Chronicle Listing of Board Members:** Phil will contact Milt about displaying Board members' grasslands.naturalists emails in the Chronicle. Only the President's phone number will be listed

5. Reports:

- a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen/Angela. Eileen created a detailed update of Treasurer/ Book Keeper Duties for the GN 'Club', Casino, and MHIP. Thank you for that.
Also, Eileen noted that she sent in the Alberta Societies Report and completed the T3010-CRA after the recent AGM.
Eileen reported that the **I.P. Balance** for today is \$222,606.68. The **Casino Balance** as at October 1, 2020 is \$3,041.85
The 'Club' **Savings** Account stands at \$16,576.27 as of October 1, 2020, and the **Chequing** Account Balance is \$6,531.78.
Common Shares are \$1.35, bringing Total Current Assets to \$23,109.40. Other Assets of prepaid Insurance expense (\$332.11) bring **Total Assets** to \$23,441.51. The **GN Net Income** for January through September 2020 is \$1,705.55.
Eileen Moved Adoption of the Treasurer's Report. **CARRIED**
Change of Banks and Signing Officers:
Motion: that the Society of Grasslands Naturalists bank at the SERVUS CREDIT UNION LTD, Crescent Heights Branch, Medicine Hat AB. The two new signing officers will be Phil Horch as President (replacing Hugh Armstrong) and Angela Turner as Treasurer (replacing Eileen Cowtan). Hugh Armstrong and Eileen Cowtan are to remain as signing officers and Anne Bernhardt and Betty Rainville are to be removed. All cheques written for the Society of Grasslands Naturalists must be signed by any two of the above identified individuals. **CARRIED**
Change of Treasurer:
Moved that Eileen resign as Treasurer of Grasslands Naturalists and Casino Treasurer, and that the Board appoint Angela Turner as Treasurer. **CARRIED**
Moved that Eileen be appointed as Director at Large. **CARRIED** (See Item 3.a. (1) above, under Directors Appointments).
- b. **Membership:** Eileen reported the list currently stands at 82, which includes families and individuals.
She has sent out a new membership list to each Board Member.
Eileen noted that the Casino will want to know about any new positions of Board Members.
- c. **Correspondence:** None
- d. **MHIP/ Operations Committee:** Hugh reported the Committee will be meeting today. He said 2 more positions need to be filled, at present.
- 1) Hugh noted the 2021 Budget will be sent to Board members later this month.
The City Contract is up by 2% while merchandise sales etc. are down drastically because of the pandemic.
Hugh reported the Budget was approved at a Committee meeting September 21st.
It will be put on the Agenda for the next Board meeting November 3.
 - 2) Chief Interpreter Position: Corlaire Gardner is retiring at the end of 2021, and the Operations Committee will begin the search for a new Chief Interpreter starting in the New Year.
- e. **Issues Committee:** Martha and John (co-chairs)
- 1) Letter of Support to Parks Department: This letter was composed by Gerry Ehlert, with assistance from Hugh and Phil.
The City received funding to be used by the end of 2021, but construction shortages may pose a problem.
 - 2) City Infrastructure Money Letter :
 - 3) Wind Turbines: Letter from Gerry Ehlert, concerning a study on greatly reduced bird mortality by painting turbine blades black.
 - 4) Riverside Homeowners' Letter from Martha: Regarding homeowner tree removal to river edge on 1st. Street NW. Martha suggests distributing factsheets or booklets in appropriate mailboxes. Factsheets suggested by Cows and Fish.
 - 5) Suggestion GN adopt a restoration site for weeding and watering: (Martha had suggested the Connaught Pond area.)
Some Board members noted that lifting two, five gallon buckets of water per tree is quite a physical exertion.
Phil suggested we should publicize this request in the Chronicle.
Ian suggested contacting SEAWA for details of the project.
It was noted that the new trees behind Ogilvie Flour Mill appear to be doing well.
- f. **Indoor Committee:** Linda Fisher noted there is nothing planned presently because of seating requirements.
Indoor Programs during Covid: Phil suggested we do a membership survey through the Chronicle, to find how many people would be willing to attend a GM if sufficient spacing was provided, masks were worn, and Alberta Health conditions followed carefully. Linda will send a draft document to Phil for posting in the Chronicle.
The Board discussed various locations such as gyms with sound systems, cleaning options, and possibly bringing individual lawn chairs.
- g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported that fund raising is quiet at this time.
He noted new requirements for Casino volunteer participation were received, but said the next Casino as fund raiser opportunity would likely not be soon. There is a backlog of volunteer groups waiting for their turn.

- h. **Field Trip Committee:** Phil noted we need to follow strict regulations on our GN outings that follow Alberta Health guidelines. He will work with John and Milt to review participant registration before field trips, maintain social distancing, develop new waivers that reference Covid-19, as well as ensuring that current waivers are always available before field trips, and that carpooling is only done with cohorts. Fieldtrip guidelines will be posted in the October Chronicle.
Moved that we designate October 14, 2020 as a Grasslands Naturalists Field Trip subject to our regulations. **CARRIED.**
 - i. **Communications Committee-** Angela noted there is nothing to report at this time. The Committee has met 3 times per year previously, but members will be holding a virtual meeting once a year for now.
 - j. **Birding Trails:** Phil reported that more Birding Trail Guidebooks were delivered to the Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, Saskatchewan, as well as to Cypress Hills Visitor Centre at Elkwater and to the MH Tourist Centre.
 - k. **Bird Tales:** Hugh reported senior facilities are still closed to Bird Tales volunteer participation.
 - l. **Web Cam Updates:** Hugh noted that access to the MH College is restricted, so MH Interpretive Program will put the camera to good use to produce videos.
6. Other Business
- a. **GN Boys and Girls Club:** Phil asked for Board recommendations for such a club, as advocated by John Slater. Angela said she will talk to Zoe MacDougall, Program Coordinator of Nature Alberta Kids Club, and return the information to Phil
 - b. **Growing our Society- The Future:** Phil noted he touched on this topic at his AGM address September 13th, when he talked about our Society needing “a vision that is going to capture the interest of young people.” See the October Chronicle.
The Board will continue to discuss this topic at future meetings, and will continue to look to members for their ideas.
 - c. **Next Board Meeting:** 1:30 pm, November 3, 2020 via Skype.
 - d. **Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 3:37 pm. **CARRIED**