

Final Board of Directors Minutes November 11, 2020

The first ever virtual TOS Board of Directors Zoom meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm Central time by President Danny Gaddy. Secretary Cyndi Routledge determined there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes –

- Chris Welsh noticed an error and it was corrected.
- Approval of minutes was unanimous following the correction.

Reports of Officers and Directors-at-Large:

- VP's: East TN – Chris Welsh – no report
- Middle TN – Danny Shelton – no report
- West TN – Dick Preston –
- Memphis chapter member Knox Martin, director of the Mid-South Raptor Center, once again hosted his annual open house and picnic at the center. In spite of restrictions imposed due to the ongoing pandemic, 26 members and guests enjoyed a pleasant evening in perfect weather.
- The Memphis chapter conducted a full schedule of fall field trips. Unusually high attendance by members and guests clearly demonstrated the need for safe respite from the COVID blues.
- Memphis chapter members James Waldron, David Hill and Dick Preston, built or purchased, and placed more than 50 bluebird nest boxes, and six Barn Owl nest boxes.
- Memphis chapter member Michael Collins has established a banding site in Shelby County, as part of Project Owl Net. The site is on the University of Memphis' Meeman Biological Station.

Directors-at-Large:

E.TN –Susan Hubley –

- Chapter meeting by Zoom with limited field trips.
- Bluebird Trail continues to be monitored.
- Kingsport placed kiosks on Greenbelt thanks in part to TOS grant they received.

Mid.TN – Mac McWhirter – No report

W.TN – Allan Trently – No report

Secretary – Cyndi Routledge – No report

Treasurer –

- Our Insurance company contacted as a question arose about someone contacting COVID on a Field Trip. There is no specific coverage but Agent added it would be hard to prove it came from a field trip.
- TOS now has a FedX account. Contact Pam if you need to use.

Financial Report for 2019 –

- Assets for the Society at the end of 2019 were \$400,241 including cash of \$2,864 and fair market value of our Vanguard investments at \$397,227. The year saw our investments experience a net increase of \$55,046 which includes a \$5,000 transfer to operating checking.
- Non-investment revenue for the year was \$11,865 for dues and subs, \$560 from contributions. Total expenses were \$25,426.
- Publications and communications at \$12,766 are our largest expense and includes 4 issues of The Migrant, all three issues of The Warbler, and maintenance of our old website.
- We were able to award \$10,818 in research and conservation grants. Included in those grants was \$1,500 to Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary for purchase of lots on the island. This reduced our Conservation and Research Restricted fund to \$16,951. Insurance was the same as last year at \$997. Overall, the revenues over expenses was \$47,045.
- As noted above, our Investments had a very good year. Dividends and interest for 2019 were \$11,990 but our assets increased in market value by \$48,055. In 2019, we distributed \$5,000 to our operating cash account for the year. Our current rate of return on our investments are in the 8% range for 10- and 5-year annualized return with 1- and 3-year rates averaging at 7.6%. The portfolio remains defensively structured for any upcoming market volatility with approximately 47% in equity positions.
- Total membership and subscriptions were up slightly, by 11. Chattanooga had the largest increase at 24%. At Large, Highland Rim, and Kingsport had slight increases in numbers, Nashville stayed static and the other chapters had mostly slight declines. Members (only) for 2019 were 639, Up 9 from 630 in 2018.
- As required by the Constitution, an examination of the 2019 financial records was performed. Since there is no Finance Committee in place, and in consultation with the President, I requested Betty Bailey of the Kingsport chapter to perform this exam. She has submitted her report to the president indicating a clean exam.

Financial Report for 2020:

- TOS remains in excellent financial shape. Revenues and Expenses are running as expected, with Individual memberships roughly the same as last year. At Large memberships have almost doubled from last year from 18 to 34 at Oct 31. Attributed to our new website as vast majority have come through there.
- We've published 4 Migrants so far and The Tennessee Warbler have been produced on schedule as always. The Conservation and Research Fund has funded \$15,180 in grants this year.
- We have transferred \$27,500 from Investments to operating checking this year, but our balance remains a healthy \$391,014 at the end of the third quarter. Our investment returns look good for the year so far.
- In September, the Executive Committee voted to support the Swan Conservation Trust in a grant application for purchase of 140 acres in Lewis County, adding to their 1358-acre Big Swan Headwaters Preserve. If their NAWCA grant is approved, we will donate \$5000 in matching funds in each of 2021 and 2022 towards protecting this wetland area.
- As a point of clarification - At the fall 2019 Meeting, the BOD did indeed increase Conservation and Research funding to \$20,000 as a continuing amount, as long as we are financially stable.
- The full results of 2020 will be presented at the Spring 2021 meeting.

A motion was made to accept the Financial report as written and presented – Passed unanimously.

Migrant - Bob Ford, Editor –

- Next issue, June 2020 will be received in December.
- A photo gallery beginning in the March 2020 issue.
- Good content available for the next few issues. As always, a call for major articles.
- A year's worth of Migrants will always appear on the TOS webpage and all issues are now on SORA and searchable.

TN Warbler Newsletter – Theresa Graham –

- Next issue has been proofed and will be forthcoming.

Committee Reports

TN Bird Record Committee – Ruben Stoll – no report

Conservation and Policy Committee –

- Dick Preston / Melinda Welton - Actions taken by the CPC focused on legislation concerning pesticides, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and Bird-safe Buildings Act. All bills that weren't passed during this session of Congress must be re-introduced when the new Congress convenes.

- **Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act H.R. 7940, S. 4406**

This Act would ban the most damaging pesticides including neonicotinoids, which are known to be exceptionally toxic to birds and pollinators. Introduced in the House and Senate August 2020 but not voted on yet.

TOS Action:

- TOS officially signed on to the letter prepared by ABC for organizations
 - CPC members wrote individual letters
 - TOS chapters were contacted asking members to write personal letters.
- **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**
The Trump Administration made a Rule in 2017 ending protection for migratory birds killed by industrial activities, including open oil pits, power lines, and oil spills. To codify this Rule a Draft EIS was promulgated to make this rule permanent. Comment period ended in July 2020

TOS Action:

- TOS comments were submitted on the FWS comment page
- CPC members submitted comments and created a list of talking points to make it easier for others to submit comments
- An Action Alert was posted on the TOS website and on TNbirds

- **Migratory Bird Protection Act - H.R. 5552**

The intent of this bill was to prevent the Trump Administration from gutting the MBTA legislatively by affirming the act's intent to prohibit the unauthorized take or killing of migratory birds includes incidental take by commercial activities. Introduced Jan 2020

TOS Action:

- TOS officially signed on to the letter prepared by ABC for organizations
- CPC members wrote individual letters

- **Bird-safe Buildings Act - H.R. 4447**

This bill was imbedded in the Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act. It would reduce bird deaths caused by collisions with glass by requiring the use of bird-friendly building materials and design features into public buildings for new construction, and retrofits to existing buildings. Passed both the House and Senate September 2020

TOS action:

- TOS sent a letter encourage Senator Alexander to become a co-sponsor of a Senate bill.
- CPC members sent letters and solicited others to write letters

Conservation Research Funding – Dr. Michael Collins –

- Advertised for proposals.
- Deadline is February announcement of grants in March.

Curator –

- Chuck Nicolson will step down in April 2021 and Stefan Woltmann will take over the position.

TNBird - Rob Biller –

- There is a continuing drop in bird reports on TnBirds due to all the additional social media options. Rob reminds everyone to continue posting to TNbirds.

New Business:

- Website- Cyndi Routledge reported that the new website was launched on March 4, 2020.
- Dick Preston proposed a proposal by Amy Wilms for yearly maintenance contract for the webpage to be reviewed and renewed annually. Mac McWhirter moved to approve the contract. Voice vote – passed unanimously
- Pam Lasley and Dick Preston presented a proposal for a change in procedure and a consolidation of committees regarding conservation awards. Final rules, guidelines and amendments are to be developed and a final document will be presented for a vote at the Spring 2021 Annual Meeting. General guidance to develop this document is sought from the all BOD and TOS members.

President Danny Gaddy announced that Dr. Michael Collins, from the Memphis Chapter of TOS, has accepted the nomination and agreed to become the next President of TOS.

Melinda Welton made the motion that Dr. Michael Collins become the next TOS President. Chris Welsh seconded. Passed unanimously.

President Danny Gaddy said that after a discussion with Michael Collins, regarding technical logistics and the ongoing pandemic, and with subsequent approval of the BOD, Dr. Collins has agreed to begin his tenure as the next TOS President on January 1, 2021 instead of waiting till April 2021.

Dick Preston made the motion that Dr. Michael Collins begin his tenure as TOS President on January 1, 2021, as a one-time exception to the normal installation of officers, due to extenuating

circumstances of the pandemic. All other officers and committee chairs will be installed at the regular annual meeting in the spring. Mac McWhirter seconded. Passed unanimously.

General Announcements

- Susan McWhirter – Brought up the subject of the need for new field cards.
- Cyndi Routledge announced that the TN National Wildlife Friend's Wings of Winter Festival and TWRA Hiwassee Crane Festival have both been cancelled for 2021.

Pam Lasley made motion to adjourn the virtual meeting. Mac McWhirter seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm central time.

Respectfully submitted,
Cyndi Routledge, Secretary