

MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, DECEMBER 7, 2017

Board members present: Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Gwen Pelletier, Judy Pirani, Sue Searles, Konrad Schultz (by Skype), Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut.

Minutes for November 2, 2017 were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Financial statement was approved unanimously.

Confirmation of 11/6/2017 email vote to approve expenses for Curley Direct for annual appeal. Unanimous vote to confirm these expenses.

\$582.65 for special letter to current BPC members

\$2555.46 for mailing RIPPLES, newsletter, to all Brewster property owners.

Copies of all referenced documents and reports are available upon request.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

- 2018 membership and annual appeal update
 - ❖ Tom and Gwen informed the Board that because of Gwen's traveling schedule around the holidays, both for Thanksgiving and Christmas, he is picking up the mail and processing the donations, providing the information to Judy Valverde for financial records and Dawn for membership records. He is scanning documents and checks so there is electronic documentation and files of everything. He has also created a spreadsheet available at google docs.
 - ❖ Tom reported that as of today there have been 92 donors for a total of approximately \$9,000 since October. 30 people have completed surveys.
 - ❖ Tom shared with Board members a "Flow Chart" he created to show the process when donations are received, from pick up at the Post Office to deposit, and sharing appropriate information with Dawn for membership records and with the bookkeeper (Judy Valverde at this point).
 - ❖ Konrad noted that with the introduction of RIPPLES, the appeal has reach an new higher level. Response rate is slightly higher than last year at this time. Commented that there appears to be good response from new members. Dawn added that her records indicate 20% are new members/donors.
 - ❖ Judy explained that the updates to membership will be two pronged. Konrad will publish an update with the "thermometer" periodically; Judy will provide updates

on the Facebook page, playing off the RIPPLES theme to show how the funds will ripple to newer/higher numbers, i.e. with expansion of the Pond Education Program to the two Brewster Elementary Schools, the program will reach more students and the Citizen Scientist project will expand.

- ❖ Both Judy and Konrad talked about the need to make calls in January to folks who have not yet responded. They will provide guidance and talking points. Dawn will keep the database updated.
 - ❖ In a discussion about thanking folks, Sue suggested that we call it a “WAVE”; for instance both Jim Holland for his design and Sue Spencer for her contributions, should receive public WAVES.
 - ❖ Everyone noted that we have had compliments from folks we know, that RIPPLES is excellent and effective communication.
 - ❖ Gwen asked if the mailing was sent only to “property owners” pointing out that it appears to be so and that there are Brewster residents who are renters and they seem are not included in the mailing. Konrad replied that the mailing is from the Assessors data base so would include only property owners. He will check with Curley to see if there is a way to include all residents in future mailings.
 - ❖ Tom shared with Board members a “flow chr
 - ❖ Judy asked if anyone had picked up the additional copies of RIPPLES from Curley. No one had done so. Gwen volunteered to contact Curley and get them.
- Demonstration of a pilot Client Relations Management (CRM) system
 - ❖ Dawn shared with the Board that she has become familiar with FileMaker Pro through her position at WE CAN and has found it to be a more comprehensive database and that it provides much more information and greater ease of use.
 - ❖ She has been able to obtain a copy free for use by BPC and has begun setting it up for BPC.
 - ❖ Dawn demonstrated the ease with which different sets of information can be searched and the amount of information that can be kept easily, making her job as membership chair easier and making it possible to provide specific information to other board members as needed in excel spreadsheets through google docs.
 - ❖ In the discussion about FileMaker Pro, the following points were made:
 - The copy Dawn has is available to her only on her computer. It cannot be shared. For all Board members to have access to it, BPC would have to purchase the program. Purchase of a single copy has the same limitations as Dawn now has. Only one person would have access to it. Purchase of a “Cloud version” would allow all access. Dawn did not have specific dollar amounts for purchase of either, but indicated it was between \$500 and \$1,000. She will get those costs for the Board.

- However, she can export any information anyone wants to a spreadsheet and make it available.
 - There are concerns about only one person having access to any set of information or files.
 - There are other CRM systems available, some available for purchase, some available at no cost.
 - Board agreed for Dawn to continue with FileMaker Pro and that BPC use it as a pilot while we are making decisions as we proceed through the strategic planning process.
 - We agreed that we should all define and list for Dawn what information we would use on a regular basis so that Dawn could set that up in spreadsheets for use through Google Docs.
- BPC Financial Management Options
 - ❖ Tom summarized where we are with the following points
 - Over the last year, Gwen has served as Treasurer and Secretary with bookkeeping support from Judy Valverde
 - Last month she asked the board to take steps to resolve the situation as she had not intended it to be permanent, that it was an interim agreement while the Board attempted to find another Board member to serve as treasurer.
 - At last month's board meeting, Gwen indicated that she had done some preliminary research into firms that manage finances for non profit organizations.
 - The Board asked her to request proposals.
 - Tom indicated that the proposals received had been posted to the Board folder
 - ❖ Gwen then explained the process.
 - She was aware of Glivinski Associates through inquiries last year when the Board was deciding how to move forward after Patricia Monahan's departure.
 - After last month's board meeting she did some research and found two firms in Brewster, Steven Ellard and Suzanne Fratus who provide bookkeeping/accounting services.
 - In addition she was familiar with Richard Bienvenu who had been with an accounting firm performing audits for the Community Development Partnership.
 - She talked with all four of them, outlining our situation, and requested proposals.

- Glivinski Associates and Steven Ellerd responded with proposals. Suzanne Fratus called to indicate she would not respond because of her current workload. Richard Bienvenue currently works full time with the Town of Yarmouth and did not respond.
- ❖ Tom and Gwen reviewed the proposals and recommend to the Board the choice of Glivinski Associates. Tom indicated that they have already contacted Glivinski Associates to schedule an appointment to discuss possible arrangements.
- ❖ Tom outlined what he considers the needs of BPC and how Glivinski can help meet the needs. During Tom's summary, he made the following points.
 - Gwen has asked to be relieved of the Treasurer's responsibility
 - Despite efforts to recruit a person to fill the vacant board and treasurer's position over the past year, the nominating committee has had no success.
 - Treasurer's for non profit organizations generally bring financial expertise to the position and serve in a capacity of overseeing the work done by a bookkeeper accountant.
 - Glivinski Associates offers several levels of service that include basic bookkeeping/accounting as well as Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Management services.
 - BPC should consider solving our interim problem of adequate financial management by asking Glivinski Associates if they could provide the two levels of service,
 - a long term agreement for bookkeeping services at the proposed price of \$250 per month; \$3,000 annual.
 - A short term contract position of CFO on an interim basis while we are proceeding through our strategic planning process. The cost of this is not known at this point and would be part of the discussion in the meeting being arranged for next week.
 - Having systems set up and bookkeeping services outsourced will most likely make it easier to recruit a Board member as Treasurer with oversight responsibilities, not performing the details of financial management.

- ❖ During the discussion by Board members the following points were made and concerns expressed
 - Judy supported the proposal and indicated that she thought it was a good idea for the transition and supported the idea that it would make it much easier to recruit someone to be the treasurer.
 - Karen expressed support for the need but was concerned about the cost and wondered if there is some other way to proceed. She also asked if the proposal included filing the 990 tax forms. Tom and Gwen responded that the “contract CFO” would be interim to get the financial management stabilized; both of them agreed that “outsourcing” is definitely more costly, but that we have not yet found a way with financial management “do it yourself” approach that works long term for us. Tom pointed out that we have been successful with our efforts so far but that we are growing and need to be certain we have a sustainable organization going forward.
 - Relative to the tax filing, Gwen and Tom explained that neither of the companies file 990’s with both indicating that there needs to be a separation of responsibilities. For the required 990 filing for 2017, Gwen and Judy Valverde have agreed to prepare the 990 as they did for 2016, solving that immediate problem. Glivinski indicated that they can provide references for firms that will prepare the 990 in future years.
 - Sue Searles stated she believes we need the bridge and need to do it now. Moving forward we will be in a better place if we take this step now.
 - Konrad indicated support for moving forward as proposed and had nothing new to add to the discussion.
 - Dawn indicated support for moving forward as proposed.

- ❖ Tom summarized the discussion
 - Thank you for a good discussion
 - Gwen and Tom will meet with Glivinski Associates
 - With our fiscal year beginning in January, it makes sense for us to make a change with the FY
 - We will report results of discussion by email and ask for vote to proceed if appropriate.

- Preliminary budget for 2018
 - ❖ Gwen and Tom presented a draft budget for 2018
 - ❖ Comments included
 - It is based on activities considered for the next year over the last few months
 - The strategic planning process will have a bearing on how the budget is finally determined
 - Changes in the budget will be made as we move through the year
 - Estimates prepared by Gwen were based to a certain extent on expenditures over the past year. For new activities, estimates were based on “best guess”.
 - Board members were asked to review the draft and recommend changes based on information currently available or expected expenditures. i.e. For the Pond Education Project, the transportation costs are now available.

- Support for APCC proposal entitled “State of the Waters: Cape Cod”
 - ❖ Tom had provided a draft of a support letter for a proposal APCC is submitting to the MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST for funds for a program to “evaluate water quality data, provide report cards to identify problems and monitor progress in addressing problems, provide a Water Action Plan to guide public policy, and build an informed citizenry working for clean water”.
 - ❖ Board voted unanimously to support the proposal and for Tom to send letter.

- BPC strategic planning updates

Tom reviewed schedule and decisions for actions/activities. Discussion included the following:

 - ❖ Sue and Konrad agreed to be members, with Tom, of the overall coordinating team for the strategic planning process
 - ❖ Member survey. 30 responses so far. Mailed to approximate 500 people/families in our database
 - ❖ Helpful to have online version. Judy volunteered to create and set up through “Survey Monkey”.
 - ❖ Dawn, Judy, and Sue volunteered to work with Tom to coordinate results from survey.

- ❖ Judy is developing a template for interviews to be conducted with community members.
 - ❖ Gwen and Dawn have created a list of area environmental organizations/people as possible interviewees. Judy will take that list and put into a database for Board members to review. It will be posted for Board members to review, narrow list, and determine how we will divide interviews among us. Decisions will be made at January meeting and interviews will be conducted prior to February meeting.
 - ❖ Results of the survey and interviews will be discussed at Feb Bd meeting
 - ❖ Everyone has indicated they can be available for the Facilitated discussions on April 7 and May 12.
- Other business
 - ❖ Tom informed the board that he had set up a confidential “pass word document” in Google docs that has a list of all passwords for BPC’s access to various accounts. At this point, Tom, Konrad, and Gwen have access to that document.
 - ❖ Tom also asked the board for assistance in meeting one of the requirements of our D & O insurance policy that we have not yet addressed and which, in the current news climate, has drawn our attention to it. The insurance policy requires policies including “employment practices”. Although we do not have employees, the policy would apply to us as Board members and to volunteers.
 - Board members agreed we need to create policy for harassment, of all levels, including sexual harassment.
 - Tom pointed out the our insurance company provided some guidance in creating a policy
 - Dawn volunteered to develop a “draft policy” for Board review in January.
 - Tom will send Chubb guidance to Dawn. Karen will send copy used by her employer, Town of Barnstable.
 - Board acknowledged that we will then also need to develop “procedures” for addressing. Doing so will be a challenge since we are a small board.
 - In answer to question of whether we have an attorney, we do not. However, Tom pointed out that if there should be a claim, the insurance policy provides defense.

REPORTS & WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Written reports submitted:

Education Committee Report: Karen Malkus-Benjamin

Communications Action Team Report: Judy Pirani

Discussion of the reports included the following:

❖ Education

- Interesting to have report from Karen re inquiry about Algae bloom in Cliff Pond and follow-up by her and BPC volunteer Chuck Madansky and subsequent involvement with Nickerson State Park director
- Going forward BPC can have a role in public education around algae blooms, the lack of knowledge of cyanobacteria and toxicity of levels.

❖ Communications

- Deadline for articles for January 1 newsletter is 12/22
- Agreement on articles as outlined
- Additional suggestions
 - WAVE to Jim Holland and Sue Spencer for work on RIPPLES
 - Welcome to new members joining through Annual appeal

Next Board Meeting: January 4, 2018

Submitted by:

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary