



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, April 19, 2021
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Board of Trustees Attendance

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Karen Thomas, President | ✓ Charles Fernette | ✓ Juan Rodriguez |
| ✓ Lynn Fox, Vice Chair | ✓ Richard Godin | ✓ John Sammon |
| ✓ Jack Ryder, Vice Chair | ✓ Meadow Hackett | James Schoff |
| ✓ Joseph Beck, Treasurer | ✓ Sally Hart | ✓ Nancy Simpkins |
| ✓ Linda Rosenstock, Secretary | ✓ Nancy Howard | ✓ Charles Svenson |
| ✓ Paul Alioto | ✓ Michael Hunsinger | ✓ Joel Treisman |
| ✓ Michael Bettmann | ✓ Peter Kindler | ✓ Virginia |
| Valkenburgh | | |
| ✓ Terry Birdsong | ✓ Elizabeth Lowe | |
| ✓ George Cigale | ✓ Paul Maroun | <u>Emeritus Trustees</u> |
| ✓ Larry Clifford | ✓ Pamela Matt | G. Thomas Aydelotte |
| ✓ Kathleen Colson | ✓ Brooks Reynolds | ✓ Lynn Birdsong |

Advisory Board Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Martha Bullock, Advisory Chair | Robert Gillis |
| Lee Bailey | Mary Beth Reiss |
| Ed Forbes | Stanley Rumbough |
| Emily Hunt-Forbes | John Sargent |

Wild Center Staff Attendance

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Stephanie Ratcliffe | Nick Gunn | Charlie Reinertsen |
| Hillarie Logan-Dechene | Amy Harvey | Derek Tepe |
| Robert Kronenberger | Shannon Surdyk | Kerri Ziemann |
| Jen Kretser | Robin Ellis | Michael Trumbower |
| | | Corinne Conlon |

I. Administration

Karen Thomas called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM

K. Thomas

A. Approval of January 27, 2021 Minutes

Edits: Claire Leonardi was not the first Wild Center Treasurer
Spelling Errors - Valkenburgh, Moroun, and DANC

- **Nancy Howard motioned to approve edited minutes**
- **Nancy Simpkins seconded the motion**
- **Edited January 27, 2021 Minutes were unanimously approved**



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B. Chair & Executive Director Reports

a. Announcement

K. Thomas announced the incredible news that members of the Board of Trustees have generously donated \$1M to The Wild Center's permanent endowment.

While this information was shared with the full Board and those in attendance at the Board meeting it was determined after the meeting that the donors wished to remain anonymous. Therefore this information is to remain confidential to the general public.

b. Chair Remarks

First Board Meeting as Board Chair K. Thomas expressed her excitement of becoming Chair and the pride of following great leadership from previous Board Chairs and being inspired by the leaders of TWC staff. As Chair, K. Thomas wants to focus on building the endowment and continuing to have the Youth Climate Program shine on a national level.

c. Executive Director Remarks

S. Ratcliffe

Stephanie Ratcliffe began by offering her and the staff's deep gratitude for the remarkable trustee gift announced. It is an inspiration to continue our work particularly now.

During the month of April TWC staff have taken the time to 'catch their breath.' Leadership wanted to ensure that everyone on staff was refreshed and had the time to utilize their vacation time.

With new guidelines from NYS coming out on a regular basis, Board Members are eager to hear plans of reopening the indoor attractions. Once guidelines are announced leadership will amend the current reopening plan and reopen on a gradual scale.

During the meeting at 2:00pm NYS announced that museums would be permitted to open to 50% capacity. This new announcement will be taken into account for TWC's revised reopening plan.

Lastly, TWC sponsored the recent **BIPOC Climate Conference**. Jen Kretser spoke on TWC's role during this conference and the significance of making these important partnerships. J. Kretser and TWC aid significantly in national level conferences by helping with logistics and connecting with expert speakers. This important work helps keep Climate Education on the forefront of The White House Administration's agenda.



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II. Audit Committee

P. Alioto

A. Approval of 2020 Audit

R. Kronenberger

Paul Alioto reported that there were no difficulties in the audit, there were no misstatements from management that needed correction, no disagreements with management, no deficiencies in internal controls. It was noted that a thorough risk assessment was not part of the scope, it was not required to have a full risk assessment. The financial statements accurately portray the financial position of TWC. It was an overall clean audit.

Highlights from the 2020 Audit

Statement of Financial Position

- Total cash and investments at \$9.2M (up \$8.3M from 2019)
- Refundable Employee Retention Tax credits are COVID relief funds pursuant to Consolidated Appropriations Act.
- Long term debt obligations were paid down in 2020 and the remaining \$600k balanced refinanced over six years.
- Line of credit was increased to \$1M in 2020
- Current ratio 4.6:1 (Very good)

Statement of Activities

- Total Support and Revenues were \$4.0M in 2020. This is down \$450K from 2019 - primarily (\$1.1M) decrease in earned revenue, partially offset by \$666K of Federal COVID relief funds.
- Total Operating Expenses were \$3.7M in 2020. This is down \$600K from 2019. Program expenses down \$400K and Support expenses down \$200K.
- The COVID Employee Relief was their own line items because they are unique and almost treated as grants.
- The tax credit helped put TWC in a positive financial position.

Robert Kronenberger opened the floor for questions - there were no questions.

- **Charlie Svenson motioned to approve 2020 Audit**
- **Peter Kindler seconded the motion**
- **2020 Audit was unanimously approved**



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III. Finance Committee

J. Beck

A. Financial Reports

Joseph Beck reported 2020 was a successful year and based on recent donations and possible government support there is hope of eliminating the budgeted deficit for 2021.

The priority of the Finance Committee in 2021 is now that TWC is at \$10M in total reserves in its combined endowment and board designated funds, the committee is going to look into socially responsible investing. Once more research has been done, recommendations will be brought back to the full Board.

R. Kronenberger then reviewed the financials for Year to Date.

Highlights

- 2021 earned income 119% above budget
 - TWC is having a successful first quarter
- 2021 operating expenses \$22k under budget
- 2021 total operating support \$80K over budget
- Overall 2021 operating results \$174K ahead of budget and \$229K better than prior year

B. Status of Government Programs

R. Kronenberger

R. Kronenberger reviewed the federal funding opportunities that TWC are eligible for, the three programs include Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Employee Retention Tax Credit, and Shuttered Venue Operations Grant Program (SVOG).

Employee Retention Tax Credit - TWC claimed \$200K last fiscal year and has claimed \$204K for FY2021 First Quarter (This has not been reflected in the financials yet). TWC may be eligible for additional funding in the Third Quarter, but the eligibility for this tax credit is based on revenues so we will not know for certain until the end of the quarter.

In regards to the **PPP** and **SVOG**, organizations can now apply for both programs. TWC applied for the PPP and received \$467K in March 2021. The SVOG application is still an opportunity, with applications to be open by the end of April 2021, assuming TWC meets all the criteria in the application. The SVOG could provide up to \$1M in funding. If awarded, TWC would have to deduct the \$467K already received from the PPP funding from the SVOG.



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Questions:

- What is the Finance Committee's advice to best utilize the funds received through the Government Programming. With a number of capital projects and fundraising goals approaching is there a plan to use these funds appropriately?
 - Answer: There has not been a set plan discussed yet, however long term capital planning and sustainability of TWC programming are a priority. In addition it has been discussed that while the total endowment currently sits at around \$10M, TWC would like to be closer to \$20-\$30M to keep the organization sustainable.

Additional Comments: The Finance and Investment Committees are looking into taking \$400K of cash and adding to its investments in a preferred stock fund to generate additional investment income. Consideration will also be given to using cash to pay down TWC's term loan. This plan will be further reviewed and brought back to the Board for further discussion.

IV. Committee on Trustees

T. Birdsong

A. Committee Charters

The COT is currently working on formalizing the structures of TWC Board Committees with the help of Board Member, Kathleen Colson. In the process of formalizing, the COT is asking that all Committees create Charters. Criteria and templates have been created and sent out to Committee Chairs. Guidelines have also been included in this meeting's advance materials.

Charters are to be finalized prior to the July Board Meeting.

Terry Birdsong wanted to keep on the front of the Board's mind that one of the COT's priorities is recruiting new board and advisory board members. With summer approaching now is a good time to introduce new prospective board members to TWC.

Criteria for WC Board Members:

- Passion for TWC
- Interest in Education, Environment, Nature, Climate
- Added Diversity
- Connection to the ADK
- Capacity to be supportive

If Board Members have anyone in mind as a board prospect please reach out to the COT Committee.



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V. Development Committee

L. Fox

A. Take 5 Update

The Take 5 program in 2020 had 14 Board volunteers who connected with over 100 WC friends and donors. This program will continue into 2021, volunteers will continue to steward and keep in contact with prospects sharing great news of TWC and additional updates.

Lynn Fox asked the Board if any additional volunteers would like to join the Take 5 program and start working with their own group of WC donors.

In addition to working on the Take 5 program the Development Committee is also working on setting up small groups or 1:1 Stewardship Zoom calls with WC major donors/prospects and Stephanie, Hillarie, and additional Board members.

In May, the Development Committee will finalize the 2021 Development Plan and Annual Appeal schedule. Reports will be presented during the July board meeting.

Board took 15 minute break - Returned at 2:45pm

VI. Programs and Marketing

H. Logan-Dechene

A. Summer Programming/Operational Plans

Staff is currently developing and revising the programming and operations plan. In 2021 outdoor, digital, and member only programming will remain the primary activities but TWC will start to slowly incorporate indoor programming as NYS continues to release new guidelines.

Schools programs have also been successful reaching 26 schools and community groups with over 2,500 individuals served. Thanks to the virtual platform TWC has reached areas like California, Washington D.C., Vermont, Michigan, South Carolina, NYC, and Buffalo.



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New this season:

- Artist Barney Bellinger - Recycled material sculpture to be installed in Forest Music, June 2021
- Stickworks - Artist Patrick Dougherty - Stick sculpture to be installed near Wild Walk, August 2021

There is no pre-design that will go into this artwork. The artist will use inspiration of the space and the moment to create his design. Construction of the sculpture will be on display for the public.

B. Youth Climate Program

J. Kretser

Throughout the pandemic the YCP and TWC continued to be a leader in climate education. Youth Climate Kits were created to help other institutions and summits around the world put together conferences. Also in July 2021 TWC will put together a virtual Teacher Climate Institute, a national event that educates teachers on delivering climate education to their students.

J. Kretser and Erin Griffin have taken leadership roles in the following Climate organizations:

- U.S. Action for Climate Empowerment Coordinating Team
- CLEAN Leadership Board
- NYC Climate Resilience & Education Task Force
- World University Winter Games (2023)
- WeAct for Environmental Justice
- Climate Smart Communities Task Force

Progress continues on the *Climate Change Solutions Exhibition* that is set to open in 2022. Also TWC was awarded additional funding from NOAA to continue educational work on *Empowering Rural Youth for Climate Resilience (2021 -2023)* in the ADK and Finger Lakes around climate change while working with additional locations around NYS.

C. Initial Marketing Results and Impact

N. Gunn

2020 - 2021 Attendance Review (7/15/20 - 3/31/21)

- TWC Outdoor Experience: 42,787 (59% of 2019 - 2020)
 - Due to COVID TWC was reduced down to 33% capacity
- Canoe Trips: 269 (135% of 2019 - 2020)



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- Digital Member Events: 1,207 (12 Events Total)
- Wild Lights: 7,976 (31 Nights - 87.1% Occupancy)

Wild Lights was a revelation for TWC. Looking at attendance during past winters, this winter brought in almost triple the amount of visitors then the next highest winter attendance year which was 2014 - 2015 (13,000 compared to 5,500). TWC Net Promoter Score for Wild Lights was 8.7 (How likely are you to tell your friends about this event, measured on a scale of 1-10, 5=good, 7=great)

2020 -2021 Digital Footprint (3/2020 - 3/2021)

- Web Traffic: 398,815 (+4.42% Y-o-Y)
- Social Media Followers: ~100,000 (+30%)
- Total Social Media Reach: 14,297,847 (+204% Y-o-Y)
- Minutes viewed Social Media Videos: 525,424 (+828% Y-o-Y)
- Number of Views: 1,200,000 (+732% Y-o-Y)

Digital Programming also brought a lot of success to TWC. Some of the new Digital Programming that was launched included Animal Club, Loon Conservation with Dr. Nina Schoch, Virtual Field Trips, Nature Lab, Lunchtime Live, Stumped Trivia, and World Otter Day.

Lunchtime Lives contributed to 75% of the reach and engagement for social media numbers. There were almost 400 videos created with subjects even expanding outside of TWC.

Ways to Improve for 2021 - 2022

- Keep increasing Web Traffic, what else can be produced on the website that will drive visitors to visit the website
- Build Youtube and TikTok audiences
- Systemize digital content production - formalize a small studio space

VII. Generative Session

S. Ratcliffe

A. Pavilion Design

As part of TWC Master Plan initial planning has begun for a new Pavilion Design that could be included on TWC Campus. A rendering for the 3 season building was created by one of the original architects of TWC. This one story multi-use building will be an



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extension of TWC campus providing space for educational programming, school groups, Youth Climate Conferences, special events, and private rentals. It would be accompanied by 3 auxiliary buildings that would provide more utilities like a full kitchen, conference room space, and restrooms. After more planning and putting together an overall budget this plan will be brought back to the Board for a vote of priority within the Master Plan.

Questions brought up involving designs:

- Could plumbing and utility hook ups be added to later install a full kitchen and bathrooms inside the Pavilion?
- Could a covered walkway be added that connects the Pavilion to the auxiliary buildings?
- What is the capacity of the building in regards to a lecture/theatre seating layout?
- Would the building be able to house solar panels?

S. Ratcliffe will bring these questions to the architect.

B. Options for Waterfront Planning

S. Ratcliffe

During previous board discussions the idea of upgrading the canoe docks and investing in a pontoon boat for waterfront programming was brought about. S. Ratcliffe provided a run down of the current condition of the waterfront dock and the layout of Raquette River to provide an insight of what it would look like to have a pontoon boat and upgraded boat house on the water.

The Board was divided into breakout groups to discuss two main topics.

- a. Does TWC want to invest in a Pontoon Boat?
- b. Does TWC want to invest in upgrading the waterfront dock?

Questions that arose before dividing into breakout sessions included:

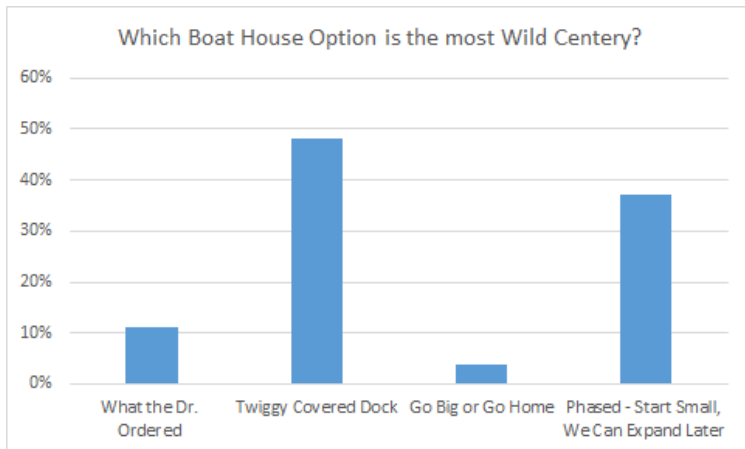
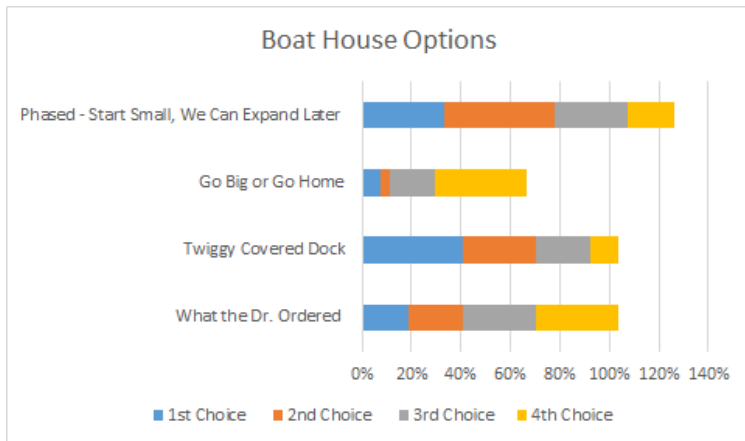
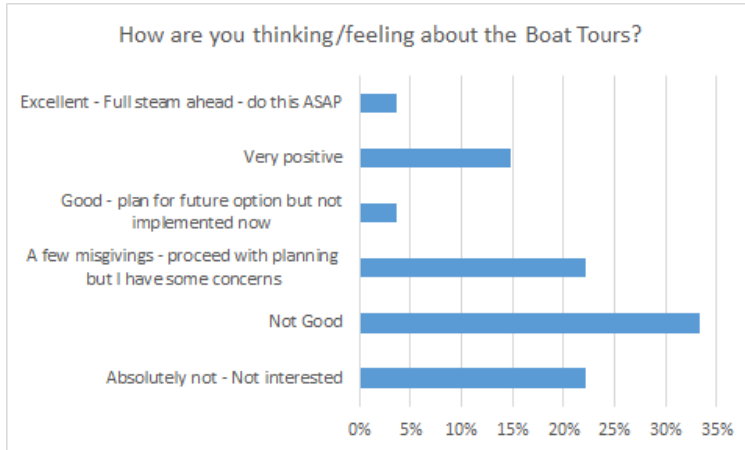
- Would the spot for the updated dock be ADA accessible?
- Would the pontoon boat accommodate school groups?
- Have the DEC guidelines on powered boats in the area been considered?

Board members were divided into breakout groups and discussed the Generative Session topic for 15 minutes. After the break out session Board members were asked to participate in a poll regarding plans for the pontoon boat and the upgraded dock.



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The following are the results of the poll:



The Board then entered into the Executive Session at 5:06pm