

**NAI Region 4 Board Meeting**  
**January 15, 2016**  
**Pokagon State Park – Nature Center**

Present: Liz Emerson, Aaron Douglass, Jennifer McDowell, Renell Roebuck, Jill Vance, Amy Gregg, Dorothy McLeer, Nora Sindelar, Becky Parkin, Bob Dispenza, Jenn Kirts, Jenn Wright, Deb Nofzinger

Not present: Cookie Ferguson, Kelly Bently

**Report from National – Deb Nofzinger**

- We set up a booth at Nationals and sold our booklets. We were a very popular booth with our more-than-life-sized Great Blue Heron.
- Deb was a part of the Advisory Council. Region 4 is doing very well in our organization and leadership. Other Organizational Units (OUs) are stealing our idea of a short, weekly electronic news blast (40 Second 4 Thought).
- National is using OneDrive for documents. Each OU will have a folder accessible to other OUs, so we can share information and support each other as we develop resources.
- National is considering a new training opportunity like a Naturalist Camp. They would offer a number of certifications all in one location at the same time.
- National has dissolved three OUs. – Interpretation and Tourism, International Interpretation, Environmental Education. There was a lack of leadership and no member benefits to these organizational units. They could be re-started or others could be opened, but they have to meet minimum criteria to do so. There will be a mentor group to help new OUs get established and meet the requirements.
- **Scholarships and Grants** – National has put together a draft of new scholarship proposals. These would prevent someone for receiving more than one scholarship for the same event/opportunity. These will likely be approved at an upcoming board meeting. National is also in the early stages of re-working the grant process. Right now, according to the IRS, grants can only be issued to 501(c)3 organizations. We will continue with our current criteria until National provides a new policy.
- National is also considering the idea of developing an accreditation program for organizations. This is in the very early stages of consideration.

**Deputy Director – Jennifer McDowell**

- The RIW will be in Newark, OH.
  - Some people who proposed concurrent sessions wanted fees. After some discussion we determined that it's not financially feasible for us to do so and it seems unfair to offer compensation to some and not others.
  - **Action: Contact other organizations you are a part of and find out whether they offer compensation to concurrent session speakers, and if so, what are their policies for doing so. Report back to Jenn McDowell.**
- The RIW registration has been late getting out because National was closed in December (holidays). The recommended deadline for submission to Nationals was November 1, but that was missed (the committee didn't know that was the deadline) and now we are experiencing delays.

- The next RIW is in St. Catharines, Ontario on April 24-28, 2017.

### Secretary Report – Jenn Kirts

- Everyone needs to sign the Code of Ethics.
- **Action: All Committee Chairs need to update the Committee Membership Lists.**
- **Motion: To approve the July and October 2015 minutes (Wright/Dispenza) Passed**

### Treasurer – Bob Dispenza – Report provided by Jen Wright –

- We are financially sound. The 2016 budget was submitted to National this fall and approved by them. We can adjust this as needed at this meeting.
- We ended the third quarter with \$56,607. We have not received the reports for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. We need to get some more details from National because some of the totals in different categories are a little uncertain as to where the numbers are coming from.
- Jen recommends seeing how we can use these funds to better support our membership.

### Budgets Discussion – Jenn Wright

- Jenn reviewed the budget line by line. The following discussions resulted in budget adjustments from what was approved by Nationals. For details, please see the budget documents.
  - In the past, we have discussed moving from a traveling plaque to a plaque for the individual and their institution. We decided to offer an 8x10 plaque for the individual and a 5x7 plaque (or similar size) for the institution. We will offer 1 dinner ticket to each award recipient for them to use for themselves or a guest. We updated the budget to reflect these changes.
  - Interpretive Grant Award – Requested a bump from \$2,500 to \$3,000. This was agreed upon. For 2015, we had 11 applications requesting \$9,000. We dispersed 3 awards totaling \$2,500.
  - Membership – We adjusted the budget to award 4 complimentary memberships. If Nationals provides 2 complimentary memberships, then we will offer 6 total.
  - Scholarships – Based on the 2014 Auction, we will offer \$2800 in scholarships dispersed the following ways: 5x \$260 RIW, 2x \$750 NIW. This was approved of last year.
- For the first time, National required us to submit a balanced budget.
- If you need to be reimbursed, you have the option to sign up for Bill Pay so they will transfer funds electronically. You can still receive a check, but this is the preferred method of payment.

### Policy Manual – Deb Nofzinger

The Regional Policies set by National Office need some clarification from National. We focused on Regional Policies.

- **Action: Committee Chairs need to review your section, update and re-look at timelines. Return them to Deb by February 15, 2016. Jenn is currently working on updating the motions.**
- The Executive Board made some edits to the following areas: Scholarships, Grants, Terms, and Waivers for Regional Workshop Chairperson. We reviewed and discussed these changes.

- The executive committee can serve two two-year terms, this is not new, but is now spelled out.
- Waivers for Regional Workshop Chairpersons - We spent time discussing how this might work. It was agreed that we should provide some support to the committee since they work hard and are pretty much required to attend. There was some discussion about whether this support should be tied to making a profit on the conference. We have decided to provide funding equal to basic registrations (food only, not profit) for 6 people for the conference. It will no longer be tied to the profit of the conference. For the committee members, they will only be charged the 'food rate' for the conference, not the full fee.
- If we want to do Mini Workshops, we will do it by state. If mini-workshops are held, registration fees will be charged and those funds will be used to support that workshop.

### **Operational Plan – Jen Wright**

- Jen went through it and updated as people shared what they had done.
- **Action: Challenge everyone to get a new person to join a committee.**

### **Committee Reports**

**Cookie Ferguson – Archives** – She was absent so there was no report.

**Liz – Awards** – Discussed much of it during budget. She was able to get three new members, but no Canadian representation. Deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup>. Nominees must be members of the region. Professional development – the Zoo and Aquariums Organizational Unit is very good at online conferences, consider attending this as it's not all zoo and aquarium related. Liz will be on maternity leave this summer. She has received 3 nominations so far.

Action: Consider requesting media contacts on the application form so we can send out press releases directly.

**Jen – Interpretive Grants Awards** – They received 11 requests for a total of \$9,000. Awards went to Kensington Metro Parks Farm Center, Sturgeon for Tomorrow in Michigan, and Wood County Park District in OH. Our grant made the front page of the Cheboygan Daily News. Jen and Bob are leaving the committee and Kelly is taking over the Chairperson and Andy Avram is joining the committee.

**Renell – Membership** – Looking for members. Bird-A-Thon is going to be Friday through Sunday. She will include an end deadline for submitting information. May 6, 7, and 8 is the Bird-A-Thon for 2016. Canada won the Golden Binoculars. Comp memberships, we will be posting shortly – the deadline is in April. They will review for a month and announce in May.

**Aaron – Communications** – A lot of positive feedback from the 40 Second 4 Thought. He appreciates the freedom that he gets to have for putting it together. We are at a 24% open rate right now. Information is currently fed through Jessica, feel free to send stuff directly to Aaron too. Aaron is looking for some more information to help understand the context of the 4 Thoughts. If people are not receiving the communications, contact Aaron directly and he will sort it out.

**Action: Provide a range of publication dates for people who are writing so they can be sure topics are seasonally appropriate. And authors should provide Aaron with an appropriate range of publication (based on deadlines or seasonal issues).**

**Action: Look into Flipbook and see if it would be worthwhile for our regional website.**

Dan Conroy manages the website. Contact him for changes on the website or you can give the information to Aaron to pass along.

**Jill – Scholarships** – We changed name from Grants and Scholarships to Scholarships. Two new members have joined. They have received 10 applications for the RIW. The deadline is Sunday. We will offer 5 \$260 scholarships. The NIW conference scholarship deadline is June 30 and will go up on the website in the next two weeks. We have 2 \$750 scholarships to offer that.

**Motion: For 2017, offer 7x \$300 RIW, 2x \$750 NIW and \$300 designated for the Professional Development Scholarships. The Professional Development Scholarship would not be able to be used toward an RIW or NIW. (Moved by Jen McDowell, seconded by Nofzinger) Passed**

**Action: Jill will write up proposal guidelines for the Professional Development Scholarship applications.**

**Motion: Start a \$1000 scholarship plus a student membership academic scholarship beginning in 2017. These funds would come out of the operating budget (not the auction money)(Dispenza/Nofzinger) Passed**

**Action: Add this to the budget for 2017.**

We need to consider making the Academic Scholarship a nomination *and* application based process.

Interpreter Roadshow gatherings: These would give interpreters the chance to see behind the scenes at different institutions – separate from RIW. Ideally it would be free with no fee and the institutions would donate their time and resources.

**Action: Send out an invitation in the 40 second Fourthought seeking hosts for site visits.**

**Dorothy and Amy – Student Involvement** - They have been in contact with Ohio and Michigan Universities and are seeking students to present at the RIW. Deb is interested in reaching out to other regions to see about student involvement.

**Becky and Nora – Ways and Means** – We can't produce a whole new booklet every year. We need to re-do some of our other books because they are only in hard copy form. Right now discussion is focused on re-working some of the old booklets.

### **Last Minute Business**

Deb – One of the other regions has a postcard with upcoming dates for NAI that they share at their RIW. It includes the location and dates of next NIW, RIW, Bird-A-Thon, Scholarships, etc.

**Action: Send deadlines to Deb by February 15<sup>th</sup>. Renell will produce the postcard.**

**Upcoming meetings:**

- **March 3 at 2:30pm**
- **July 7 at 2:30pm**
- **October 6 at 2:30pm**
- **Operational Planning: January 12&13, 2017 Exec Board morning of Jan. 12, Operational planning on afternoon/evening January 12.**

**Requests for future discussion:**

- Request to revisit the idea of Academic Scholarships for the future.
- Discuss the possibility of a Sponsorship Committee to solicit sponsorships for RIW and the region in general.