

Saint Paul Audubon Society  
Board of Director Meeting Minutes  
April 1, 2024  
Ramsey County Public Library

**Call to Order**

The monthly St. Paul Audubon Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, April 1, 2024. President Greg Burnes called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Those attending were Vice-President Kiki Sonnen, Treasurer Jim Stout, Secretary Craig Cox, VP of Communications Martha Douglas, Neil Carlson, Rebecca Flood, Monica Bryand, Debbie Brown, and Amanda Rice.

**Welcome Amanda Rice**

Greg welcomed Amanda Rice, a nominee to join the Board. She explained that she is an Industrial hygienist, a beginning birder, and a participant in the Minnesota Naturalist Program. She is also increasing her volunteer work with natural resources issues and organizations.

**Recent Bird Sightings – Announcements**

Board members shared their bird sightings.

**Approval of March 2024 Board Minutes**

Kiki moved approval. Jim pointed out revisions he thought should be made to the Treasurer's Report. Debbie seconded the revisions. The motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurers Report**

Jim reported he had received a note from Hope Flanagan expressing gratitude for being invited to present at the Chapter meeting and gratitude for SPA's work. The Board discussed how much they enjoyed her presentation and suggested we consider bringing her back again at a future chapter meeting.

Jim provided the following update on our current assets:

US Bank Checking	\$21,957
US Bank Savings	\$3,009
US Bank Certificate	\$25,916
TruStone Certificate	\$32,997

Jim noted that the increase in checking account balance reflects the \$1300 annual donation from Jean Wirsig. Jim suggested we consider acknowledging these ongoing contributions. Greg volunteered to contact family members and thank them for their continued support. Jim also confirmed that we had received the funding from National Audubon.

### **Approve 24/25 Budget**

The draft budget, approved at the March board meeting, was [posted on our website](#) for member comments or questions. We receive no feedback from members regarding the draft budget. Martha moved that we approve the 24/25 draft budget. Neil seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Board of Directors**

#### **Board of Directors Election**

Greg noted that every board member except Monica needs to be re-elected. Rebecca and Jim are rotating off the Board, and Amanda has been nominated to fill one of the vacancies. If the slate of candidates is approved as it currently stands, we will have eight members. The Bylaws state that the board shall comprise between 9 and 12 members.

Martha noted that the call for nominations has gone out to members. We may receive additional nominations in response to that call. Failing that, the board agreed that we would continue to recruit nominees who could be appointed to serve before the next election.

The Board agreed to continue the traditional practice of holding an in-person election at the May chapter meeting.

Greg drew the Board's attention to Monica's Demographics and Skills Matrix. The Board agreed that the matrix would benefit our ongoing work to diversify and strengthen the skill sets represented by the Board. Board members were asked to fill out the matrix and send it to Greg.

#### **Anne Phibb's Workshop**

Greg drew the Board's attention to the backgrounder and agenda for the DEIA training to be held April 22, 2024, between 5 and 7 pm, at the Wilder Foundation Building, Room 2410, 451 Lexington Parkway North, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104.

#### **Chapter Name Change Assessment**

Greg brought the Board's attention to the fourth version of our plan to assess the Chapter name assessment he circulated before our meeting. There was consensus among the board members to move ahead with the plan. Martha said she would begin working on the frequently asked questions piece to be included in the packet circulated to the target audience specified in the plan.

Greg asked for comments on survey questions. Questions or proposed revisions should be sent to Greg as soon as possible. The Board also discussed the challenge of pulling together a list of emails to send the informational packet.

After a complete discussion, Board members expressed their enthusiasm for a name change to rebrand SPA, clarify that we are all about protecting birds and their habitat, and attract more

people interested in supporting our mission.

### **Upcoming Events**

- June Board/Volunteer Thank You Party. The Board supported moving ahead with a volunteer thank-you party. Greg, Monica, and Craig volunteered to start planning it.
- Landscape Revival – June 1<sup>st</sup>, 9 am – 1 pm
- Maplewood Nature Center Event, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 pm. The event will be groundbreaking for the expanded planting of native, bird-friendly plants around the nature center, which SPA supports through a grant to the Center. Kiki noted that all Board members are welcome to participate.
- Greg reported that leaders are still needed for the May 21-23 Big River Journey.

### **Bill to Fund Bird-safe Glass at US Bank Stadium**

Kiki briefed Board about legislation to be introduced to fund retrofitting U.S. Bank Stadium glass with exterior visual markers to make the existing glass bird safe. A copy of the proposed bill was circulated to the Board before the meeting. The Board asked Kiki to draft a letter of support.

### **Committee Updates**

#### **Conservation Committee**

Debbie and Monica reported that all Kestrel boxes have volunteers to implement and monitor.

This will be a pilot year for the Chimney Swifts project. Urban Bird Collective (UBC) will lead the project's volunteer management, focusing on Saint Paul. This will be a reconnaissance year to monitor and locate sites for future work in this long-term project, which is part of the Twin Cities Urban Bird Association.

Work is ongoing to compile the history of SPA engagement in Audubon Woods in Como Park and to shape our future engagement.

UBC may return to the Board for support installing a camera at a local site, perhaps at the Mahtomedi Junior High School. Monica noted that Swifts does not seem to use artificial “chimney” sites, and more work is needed to understand why and determine if such work is practical.

Monica also reported that Great River Passage has provided funding to support UBC's outreach and planning of several events to engage people on the east side of Saint Paul at Pig's Eye Park. UBC is planning several events to ensure people on the east side have a voice in what is happening in their community, particularly at Pig's Eye Park.

Debbie and Monica reminded the Board that Earth Day is 4/20. Saint Paul Parks is organizing a park clean-up that day. The Cardinal has details about the clean-up initiative.

### Communications

Martha reported that the Cardinal has been posted, and the News Update has been sent out.

She also alerted the Board to an opportunity to approach J. Drew Lanham, the author of *The Homeplace: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*, about presenting at an SPA Chapter meeting. Such an event would likely be more significant and involve more partners in delivering it. Martha intends to attend Mr. Lanham's upcoming reading at Milkweed Books on April 17 to connect with him about such an event.

### Education Committee

Kiki reported that, in the Chip Notes of the April-May Cardinal, she invited interested people to an organizing Education Committee meeting in early April (date TBD). p notes-asking for volunteers for the committee. Kiki is working to organize a committee meeting and recruit people to attend.

### Program Committee

Greg reported that the speakers for the fall and winter Chapter meetings have been lined up. They are still working to find two BIPOC speakers. He asked board members for help identifying possible speakers.

### Grants Committee

Kiki reported that we had gotten a response to our questions from MN Seed that had been raised in our consideration of their grant proposal. Based on those responses, Kiki recommended that we approve the grant. Kiki will monitor how the project is going.

Kiki moved approval of the grant proposal. Neil seconded the motion. After further discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### UBC Partnership Update

Monica met with folks in North Carolina. One of the participants was the co-founder of Black Birders Week. She was possibly coming to UBC's big event, the bird festival. Bird-by-Bird will shadow UBC leaders at the Annual Bird Festival.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Rebecca moved to adjourn the Board meeting. Debbie seconded. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

**Next Meeting**

Monday, May 6, 2024: Roseville Library (this has changed)