

**The Nature Foundation of Will County
Minutes of the April 1, 2020 Meeting
Conducted by Conference Call**

Chair Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

There was no pledge to the flag.

Roll was called and the following eleven Directors were present. A quorum of eight voting Directors was present.

Voting Directors Present:

- Marcy DeMauro
- Jamie Donovan
- Ann Dralle
- Rachel Feil
- Jim Flax
- Donna Theimer
- Jeff Tuminello
- Ragan Pattison

Non-voting Directors Present:

- Don Gould
- Meta Mueller
- Ralph Schultz

Others Present: Cindy Harn, Executive Director

Approval of Minutes

Pattison moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2020 meeting, seconded by Dralle. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pattison moved to approve the corrected minutes of the December 4, 2019 annual meeting (Chair Donovan's name misspelled), seconded by Dralle. The motion was approved unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chairperson's Report

Donovan reported that she has been in regular contact with Cindy on upcoming programs and events, including the plant sale, and has signed checks.

Treasurer's Report

- Financial Report and Balance Sheet

Harn reviewed the Balance Sheet dated March 25, 2020 (cash basis). Total net revenue is -\$4,759.41 but this does not include the carryover from the 2019 budget which is estimated to be \$75,600. The \$8,935.98 in actual donations (unrestricted) to date are in large part sponsorships received for this

year's native plant sale. The Financial Report dated February 28, 2020 shows total assets of \$224,075 of which \$85,578 are donor-restricted assets and \$138,497 are unrestricted assets. Donor-restricted assets include the Wetland Restoration Fund, Restore Will County and Serve Will County Small Grants Programs, Phases I & II of Lily Cache Project, and the Hammel Woods Dog Park. Total liabilities are \$4,910, which are itemized on this month's schedule of bills. Harn stated the account balances were: \$41,665 in checking, \$105,554 in the Money Market, \$75,756 in the CD and \$1,100 in petty cash/raffle change.

Harn reported that the Foundation donated \$9,500 to the Forest Preserve District at the February 13, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting for the four projects outlined in the Financial Report and approved at the last Foundation board meeting. Harn also noted that pending approval of bills tonight, the Foundation will have completed all outstanding re-imbursements for the 2019 approved grants in the Restore Will Program.

Donovan moved to accept the Budget Report and the Balance Sheet Report as presented, seconded by Feil. The motion was approved unanimously.

- **Schedule of Bills**

Harn reviewed the schedule of bills totaling \$5,683.25 for the dates January 23 – March 25, 2020. There were two credit card payments (February = \$190.20 and March = \$1,163.12) which are itemized in the report. The bills also include Harn's consulting fees for January and February (\$2,000), reimbursement payments to three Restore Will County grantees, closing out the 2019 grant cycle (\$1,429.33), legal fees for services in December 2019, renewal of the Foundation's name and DBA with the Secretary of State (\$150) and miscellaneous costs associated with the 2020 native plant sale.

Harn also noted that interest earned in the Money Market account was \$121.32 in February (YTD is \$255.47). The six-month CD with First Midwest matured on February 7, and earned \$756.16 in interest (2%). The CD was renewed for another six months at a rate of 0.160% with a maturity date of August 7, 2020. This is the best available rate available at this time.

Donovan moved to approve the Schedule of Bills in the amount of \$5,683.25 for the dates January 23 – March 25, 2020 as presented, seconded by DeMauro. The motion was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

Fundraising and Projects Committee

Harn reviewed the status of the May 15-16, 2020 Bringing Nature Home Native Plant Sale. She noted that the Governor's shelter in place orders are in effect until April 30th. All Forest Preserve programs and events are canceled through April 30th, and all preserves and facilities will remain closed through April 30th. It was not yet clear if the Governor's orders would be extended beyond April 30th but the likelihood is high. Harn has been talking with Possibility Place about several options: rescheduling the native plant sale to June 12-13 (this would exclude many of the spring ephemerals which die back by June); cancelling the spring sale but rescheduling a smaller scale plant sale featuring late season perennials and woody plants; and cancelling the 2020 sale and go completely on-line through Possibility Place with a percentage (TBD) of the proceeds to go to the Foundation. Harn also noted that all other contracts in place for the plant sale have no penalty cancellations with one exception – the tent rental company. Harn will be in contact with this vendor to see if an agreement could be reached.

Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of each of the three options presented for the 2020 native plant sale. In the interest of public health and safety, it was by unanimous consent of the Foundation Board that the 2020 native plant sale be canceled and shifted entirely to an on-line system. This will be arranged with Possibility Place as it would be accommodated within their existing ordering system. Plants can either be shipped or picked up at the nursery. Harn will work with the nursery on the details, including how a yet to be determined percentage of the proceeds for orders through the Foundation can be transferred to the Foundation. Harn will keep the Board informed as these details are worked out.

Finance Committee Report

There was no business to report.

Board Development Committee

There was no business to report.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Authorization to Allocate Remaining Funds from Phase I of the Nelson/Lily Cache Restoration Project to the Restore Will County (RWC) Land Stewardship Small Grants Program for 2020

In 2018, ██████████ donated \$25,000 to the Foundation for restoration and management work on the ██████████ to the Forest Preserve in 2007. The ██████████ have been working to restore this area for over 10 years. The easement is adjacent to the Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve and contains a section of Lily Cache Creek. Last year the Forest Preserve contracted with Conservation Land Stewardship for \$15,590 to complete various restoration and clean-up tasks, all of which were done by October 2019. ██████████ further specified in their original donation that any funds remaining from this work are to be transferred to the RWC Land Stewardship Small Grants Program. The remaining balance in this fund is \$9,410.

Harn noted that after payments to close out the outstanding 2019 grants, the balance in the RWC Land Stewardship Small Grants Program will be \$1,807.71. The amount needed for the 2020 grants is estimated at \$3,350.

In accordance with the donors' wishes, Harn recommended the transfer of \$9,410.00 remaining from the completed Phase I of ██████████/Lily Cache Project to the RWC Land Stewardship Small Grants Program for the 2020 and future grant cycles. DeMauro moved to approve the recommendation as presented, seconded by Dralle and approved unanimously.

Approval of Grant Awards to Volunteers Stewards for the Restore Will County (RWC) Land Stewardship Small Grants Program

Harn previously reported that the 2020 RWC Grant Application was released to all Forest Preserve Volunteer Stewards on December 30, 2019 with a due date of February 3, 2020. Three applications were received and reviewed by a Forest Preserve team and recommended funding for all three. Harn

reviewed Exhibit A, which provided details of the fund status and project specifications. Harn recommended: grant awards to Phyllis Schulte (\$500), Bernard O'Reilly (\$500) and Dave and Marie Wendt (\$350); \$1,000 be reserved for any new Volunteer Stewards that may enter the program in 2020 and prior to next year's great cycle; \$1,000 be reserved to cover unforeseen maintenance and equipment repair/replacements for all Volunteer Stewards in 2020; and authorizing up to an additional \$50 in reimbursement each to Schulte and O'Reilly should their herbicide purchases necessitate it, which can be paid from the \$1,000 being reserved for unforeseen costs. Harn noted that the grant program operates by reimbursement and grantees need to supply receipts for proof of their purchases.

Harn also noted that the grant award announcements are typically made at the annual Volunteer Banquet, however, this year's banquet has been canceled. The stewards will be notified. Schultz stated that stewardship work is currently restricted in preserves. There are no public workdays and only some stewards have been allowed to go into the preserves to complete work tasks so long as social distancing is maintained.

Flax moved to approve the recommendations as presented, seconded by Tuminello. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of the Serve Will County Small Grants Program

The Forest Preserve District relies on both financial contributions and the donation of time and talents to support its mission, and the role of volunteers to accomplish this is critical. The Forest Preserve has partnered with youth and scout groups for over 25 years to assist them in completing specific service projects in preserves and visitor facilities. These projects typically help with the maintenance and improvement of existing preserve/facility amenities or offer new amenities. Amenities include benches, trail markers, preserve signage, and boardwalks. To meet service project requirements as established their youth organizations, the projects must benefit an organization like the Forest Preserve, and ensure the individual has the opportunity to plan, develop, fund and execute their project from beginning to end. These opportunities are vital to youth/scout groups as civic engagement leads to better outcomes for youth, and in their connections to nature, school, home and work life.

Discussions between the Foundation and Forest Preserve about establishing a grant program for youth engaged in service projects began in 2018, as was a potential donor to fund the program. The Serve Will County Small Grants Program was included in the Forest Preserve's initial 2020 funding request to the Fundraising and Projects Committee last year, along with the likelihood of a donation from the Buckeye Pipeline to fund the program. This small grants program was included in the Foundation's 2020 Budget and Work Plan, and at the December 4, 2019 meeting, the Buckeye Pipeline Company presented a \$10,000 check to establish the Serve Will County Small Grants Program.

Now that the funding is in place, Harn presented the proposed guidelines and application process which outlines grant eligibility, project requirements, proposal content, critical timelines, reporting requirements and other relevant information. Proposals will be reviewed by a Forest Preserve team, and forward recommendations to the Foundation Board for review and approval. The grant fund will operate as reimbursements to the grantee, but there may be circumstances in which the purchase of materials or taking of delivery by the Forest Preserve and holding items for the grantee may occur up front to save costs. In those cases, payment by the Foundation would occur in advance. There is also a provision for administrative approval of grants if a Board meeting is canceled.

Harn recommended approval of the Serve Will County Small Grants Program Guidelines and Application Process, which are included with the agenda packet. This process includes giving the Executive Director authority to award grants when the Foundation Board is unable to approve the grants in accordance with the timelines for the program with the caveat that the Executive Director must advise all Directors via email when this is occurring and must follow-up with a report to the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting. Pattison moved to approve the recommendations as presented, seconded Flax. The motion was approved unanimously.

Reports

There were no reports.

Presentations

There were no presentations.

Comments by Directors

The Board thanked Cindy for keeping the Foundation functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic and for setting up tonight's meeting via conference call.

Comments by the Public

There were no comments by the public.

Comments by the Executive Director

Harn reported that all Forest Preserve and Foundation programs and events were canceled through April. If the Governor's shelter in place order is extended, the Forest Preserve and Foundation will continue to comply. Therefore the May Board meeting may also be by conference call.

Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled meeting of The Nature Foundation of Will County Board of Directors is Wednesday, May 27, 2020 either at the Sugar Administration Center or via conference call.

Adjournment

Pattison moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 p.m., seconded by Dralle. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella M. DeMauro

Marcella M. DeMauro
Secretary