

**Minutes of the  
American Birding Association General Membership Meeting  
Saturday, December 5, 2020**

American Birding Association Headquarters

93 Clinton St #744, Delaware City, DE 19706

The annual general meeting of the American Birding Association (ABA) was held on Saturday, December 5, 2020 at the American Birding Association Headquarters, 93 Clinton St #744, Delaware City, DE 19706. Twenty-eight people were in attendance, both members and non-members. Of the total in 28 attendance, 28 were identified as ABA members, 3 of whom had not returned proxies to ABA and who were therefore eligible to vote at this meeting.

In attendance from the Board of Directors – Julie Davis (Chair), Willie Hendrickson, Carl Bendorf, Ann Nightingale, Sara Pruneda Beesley, Jordan Roderick, Magill Weber, Judy Pollack, Amanda Mangan, Karyl Gabriel, Arnella Trent, Matt Faker, Neil Hayward, Paul Riss

In attendance from the ABA Staff: Jeffrey Gordon (President), Kelly Smith (Board Secretary), Greg Neise, John Lowry, Frank Izaguirre, Nate Swick, Michael Retter, Ted Floyd, David Hartley

Guests- Liz Gordon, Lou & Joan Morell, Suann Hosie, Karen Snapp

**Introductions**

President Gordon asked for introductions while we waited for the rest of the attendees to arrive.

Board Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

**Chairman's Remarks**

Chair Julie Davis introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair Davis thanked Carl Bendorf, Jeff Gordon, Kelly Smith, Ted Floyd, John Lowry, and Neil Hayward for their extra effort to meet and help the ABA navigate the pandemic challenges.

**President's Report**

President Gordon thanked the RSEC Committee for their work revising the Code of Ethics at the very end of 2019 and included a Spanish and French version. The ABA had a very good start to the year with the Bird of the Year Reveal in Chicago (thank you Greg Neise). When Covid started, RSEC and the organization reacted swiftly to let the public know birding is still a safe and healthy way to get outside

and enjoy nature and wildlife as well as one of the safest ways to interact with other people. The ABA relies on travel as part of its fundraising each year and Covid caused all travel to be postponed including the Antarctica Safari. The advertising revenue also went down because so many of our advertisers are in travel. Covid also caused a lot of what birders do to move online and into virtual rooms, and the ABA was able to really pivot into that with almost no challenges since the ABA was already using Zoom and Slack. The podcast has moved from every other week to every week and started up a Virtual Bird Club program. Another good thing was the response by donors to the Spring Appeal. Thank you to Kelly Smith for going after the PPP loans offered by the government. Membership has remained steady over the past 10 years and increasing this number is going to be a big priority in 2021. Online reach has greatly increased even though all those people are not members. Birding News traffic is increasing and will be on the main website with new features soon. All the magazines we publish were sent out on schedule through the pandemic. The ABA was able to focus on the equity, diversity, and inclusion aspect of birding through the incident involving a birder in Central Park and the George Floyd incident. The October issue of *Birding Special Issue* focused on Conservation and Community with an article specifically about Black Birders Week. We also offered free online memberships to Black, Indigenous, and other birders of color. In response to that we have given out over 150 online memberships. The ABA was also involved in advocacy with one of the main items being the issue of a border wall through Salineno, a prominent birding location in South Texas. To save money for the organization, the ABA gave up half of the floor space it was renting at the headquarters building in Delaware City, DE. Liz Gordon resigned as the Events Coordinator and Young Birder of the Year Contest Coordinator in October. Ioana Seritan has taken over the Young Birder Contest, and Events are on hold due to Covid. President Gordon also noted the birding world recently lost Ned Brinkley and there would be an article about him in the next issue of *Birding*. The ABA is continuing to make progress with *North American Birds* including print issues and online regional reports. As part of the membership level reorganization from the end of 2019, members can now get NAB as part of the membership; it is no longer a stand-alone subscription. President Gordon offered a special thank you to all the hard work from everyone who helped keep the organization on track during a very tumultuous year.

### **Remarks by Chair Davis**

Chair Davis thanked many outgoing Board Directors. Carl Bendorf served three full terms on the board (total of 9 years), which included time as Vice Chair and on various committees. Scott Fraser served over two terms including time as Board Chair and Chair of the Awards Committee. Linda Rockwell served 2 full terms and used her legal skills to help the ABA in many ways. Bill Sain served two full terms and served as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Jennifer Owen-White served two full terms, and Ann Nightingale served one full term and is the current Nominating Committee Chair (and will continue to serve on that committee).

Chair Davis explained that proxy ballots had been inserted in all copies of the November 2020 issue of *Birding* magazine for members who receive hard copies of the publication. Members who receive the publication electronically were emailed a copy of the proxy ballots in November 2020. Chair Davis said that the Notice and Proxy had also been posted on the Association's website and that ballots for the election of directors were available at the meeting.

Carl Bendorf, serving as attorney and agent for the members represented by proxy, reported that 128 valid proxies had been received at ABA headquarters and were available for review. By a show of

hands, it was determined that among those present at this meeting there were 3 ABA members who had not sent in their proxies for the election of Directors to be held later and none who had returned their proxies. Therefore, 131 members were present either in person or by proxy. The Chair declared that the annual meeting was valid for conducting business since more than the required 100 members eligible to vote were present or represented at the meeting.

### **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting held in Harlingen, TX, on November 9, 2019.**

Chair Davis explained that Board Secretary Smith had copies of the 2019 Membership Meeting Minutes for review. On a motion from the floor (made by Carl Bendorf and seconded by Neil Hayward), the members present approved unanimously to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approved unanimously to accept the minutes as presented.

### **Election of Directors**

The Chair announced that in accordance with the ABA's bylaws, the Nominating Committee had presented a slate of individuals to be nominated to be Directors of the ABA Board. At its Board Meeting on October 22, 2020, the Board had voted to present the recommended slate to the membership for consideration at this meeting.

The following people were nominated for a first full three-year term: Sara Beesley (San Antonio, TX), Amanda Mangan (Ottawa, ON), David McQuade (Fort Myers, FL), Jordan Roderick (Kirkland, WA), Karyl Gabriel (High Point, NC), Willie Hendrickson (Woodbury, MN)

The following Directors were nominated for a second full three-year term: Neil Hayward (Cambridge, MA)

Biographies of all candidates had been provided to members with the proxy material mailed to them.

A motion was made by John Lowry and seconded by Carl Bendorf to accept the slate of directors as presented to the members. Members present at the meeting were then asked to vote on the slate as a whole rather separately for each nominee. The 3 members present and voting approved.

The number of votes for each candidate were as follows:

Neil Hayward 130 (127 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

Sara Beesley 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

Amanda Mangan 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

David McQuade 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

Jordan Roderick 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

Karyl Gabriel 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

Willie Hendrickson 131 (128 returned ballots plus 3 at this meeting)

The Chair said that as a result on which each candidate received greater than 50% of votes for, that all seven candidates had been elected to the Board of Directors for their respective terms. Details of the voting are available at the ABA Headquarters.

**Closing Remarks- President Jeff Gordon**

Thank you very much to Ann Nightingale for spearheading the search for a very diverse and knowledgeable group of new directors. President Gordon also gave a special thank you to Carl Bendorf for all his help over the past few years.

**Closing Remarks- Chair Julie Davis**

Chair Davis is thankful to the new Board Directors and noted that most of them had already joined committees (including a couple of new ones that were formed specifically due to the pandemic). They have brought a lot of excitement and energy to the Board already.

General discussion with the meeting guests followed.

There being no further discussion or questions from the floor, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.