

Minutes of the
American Birding Association General Membership Meeting
Saturday, September 22, 2018
Greater Philadelphia Expo Center
100 Station Ave, Oaks, PA 19456

The annual general meeting of the American Birding Association (ABA) was held on Saturday, September 22, at Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave, Oaks, PA 19456. 31 people were in attendance, both members and non-members. Of the total in attendance, 20 were identified as ABA members, 17 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 – Scott Fraser (Chair), Julie Davis

In attendance from the ABA Staff: Jeffrey Gordon (President), Kelly Smith (Board Secretary), Bill Stewart, John Lowry, and Liz Gordon.

Board Chair Fraser called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m.

Chair Fraser explained the Notice of meeting and proxy ballots in accordance with bylaws were included in August 2018 *Birding*, were emailed to members who receive the publication electronically, and were posted on the website with instructions on how to vote by email. Kelly Smith had a copy for review as needed. Ballots for the election of the Directors were also available at the meeting. Julie Davis and Kelly Smith, as attorneys and agents for the members represented by proxy, reported that 91 valid proxies had been received and were available for review.

Chair Fraser introduced ABA staff in attendance as well as special guest Lou Morrell as former chair of the Board, George Armistead as Chief Networking Officer at Rockjumper and former Events Coordinator for ABA, Wendy Clark with Rockjumper, and Dr. David La Puma as Director of Cape May Bird Observatory.

Approval of Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting

Chair Fraser explained Kelly Smith had copies of the 2017 Membership Meeting Minutes for review. On a motion from the floor the members voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes, and on a subsequent motion the members present approved unanimously to accept the minutes as presented.

President' Report

President Jeff Gordon noted it had been a successful year for the American Birding Association and birding in general. There have been some challenges, but the overall state of things has been very good. The ABA's 50th anniversary is next year, and birding is as much about the people as it is about the birds. In the next 50 years we want to look for more ways and opportunities to convert non-birders into birders and create more interest in birds and nature. The ABA wants to form a community around birding to make it bigger, stronger, and more focused.

Election of Directors

The Chair announced that in accordance with the ABA's bylaws, the Committee had presented a slate of individuals to be nominated to be Directors of the ABA and that the ABA Board. At its Board Meeting of July 26, 2018, had voted to present the recommended slate to the membership for consideration at this meeting. J. Drew Lanham had just completed his first term and is not standing for re-election as he believes he will be more help as an advocate than as someone looking at balance sheets. The following Director was nominated for a second full three-year term: Paul Riss. The Following Director was nominated for a third full three-year term: Matthew Fraker. Biographies of all candidates had been provided to members with the proxy material mailed to them. A motion was made and seconded 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 than separately for each nominee. The 20 members present and voting approved.

The attorneys and agents were asked to report on the number of votes cast for, against and abstain for each nominee. The members present were then asked to vote. The number of votes for each candidate was as follows:

- Paul Riss 108 (91 returned ballots plus 17 at this meeting)
- Matthew Fraker 108 (91 returned ballots plus 17 at this meeting)

The Chair said that as a result on which each candidate received greater than 91% of votes for, that all two candidates had been elected to the Board of Directors for their respective terms. Details of the voting are available at the ABA Headquarters.

Chair Remarks

Chair Fraser mentioned the Board is looking for people with specific skill sets- development, finance, nonprofit governance- to join. The auditor is almost finished reviewing the finances and the Form 990 and financial audits will be up on the website soon. In 2017 the key financial issues are related to a reduction in membership and donation monies, strong advertising, reduced monies spent due to staffing changes, and an unexpected building rental expense that came through that significantly increased spending. There were two very successful events to Tanzania and Florida. The membership donations have not hit goals, but the ABA just had a very successful nesting appeal over the summer. For the second half of this year the focus will on having an increase in membership and a successful donation campaign, as well as reductions in expenses by streamlining processes.

Committee Reports

Julie Davis gave a brief overview of the committee's recent actions. They received seven nominations for awards, three of which were tabled pending more information. The others were encouraged to submit again in 2019.

Jeff Gordon gave a brief update regarding the revision of the ABA Code of Ethics. It is being revised to be more in sync with changes in today's birding.

There being no further discussion or questions from the floor, the meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.