

MINUTES OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

26 August 2019 Conference Call

3:00pm-4:00pm (Pacific – UTC-7)

Amended and approved 27 September

Present:

David Craig (Chair), Olivia Bailey (Secretary), Rob Suryan (Chair-Elect), Peter Hodum (Vice Chair for Conservation), Kirsten Bixler (Treasurer), Kirsten Lindquist (Northern California Regional Representative), Corey Clatterbuck (Student Representative), Adrian Gall (Past Chair) Luke Einoder (Asia/Oceania Regional Representative) [9].

Absent: Rachael Orben (Washington/Oregon Regional Representative), Cristián Suazo (S. California, Latin America, Hawaii Regional Representative), Ross Wanless (Europe/Africa Regional Representative), Kerry Woo (Canada Regional Representative), Marc Romano (Alaska/Russia Regional Representative), Mary Cody (Non-Pacific U.S. States Regional Representative) [6].

1. APPROVE 26 AUGUST 2019 AGENDA

[Motion to discuss the 26 August 2019 agenda moved by Olivia, Rob seconds](#)

Comment: I have a quick question for folks, I don't know if it needs to be included on the agenda, but I'm looking for feedback on whether we as an organization think it's appropriate to write a letter in response to the proposed changes to the ESA that the Trump Administration announced last week. Should that be an agenda item or an informal discussion?

Comment: I think that's an action that the Vice Chair for Conservation is empowered to pursue.

Question: Okay, then a quick, informal question to those on the call, do you think that's worthwhile? From an organizational standpoint, it may be worth having taken a position on it.

Ans: I'm certainly okay with it. I'd say yes.

Comment: Yes, I don't see a problem expressing concern as an organization that is dedicated to seabird conservation, with the effect that this rule change is going to have on our mission – on the focus of our mission.

Comment: Exactly. That would be the perspective, as experts of seabird conservation, that the rule changes would have measurable effects on threatened and endangered seabirds for the following reasons and articulate those briefly.

[Motion to approve the 26 August 2019 agenda moved by Adrian, Peter seconds](#)

[Abstentions: 0, Nays: 0, Yays: 9, motion passed unanimously](#)

2. APPROVE 9 AUGUST 2019 MEETING MINUTES

[Motion to discuss the 9 August 2019 meeting minutes moved by Olivia, Peter seconds](#)

[Motion to approve the 9 August 2019 meeting minutes moved by Adrian, Olivia seconds](#)

Abstentions: 0, Nays: 0, Yays: 9, motion passed unanimously

3. APPROVE PSG 2020 LIFETIME AND SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Motion to discuss PSG 2020 Lifetime and Special Achievement Award nominations moved by Rob, Olivia seconds

Hopefully everyone had a chance to review the report and saw that we had wonderful nominees for Lifetime and Special Achievement Awards this year. This is my third year being part of the awards committee, it has never been easy, and this year was especially challenging. We had wonderful nominees; we worked really hard to be as objective as we could be in light of the folks that have been nominated. There was a really strong push to nominate two candidates last year, and we opted to give the awards to folks that were Hawai'i locals for a bunch of reasons. That same crew, with additional people, came back to nominate these same candidates this year, and we did accept that nomination and chose to recommend them for that award.

One LAA potential was not nominated last year, but she was nominated this year from a pretty big team. That's not to say that you have to have a big team in order to win a nomination, but her work stands on its own for the relevance for where we're having the meeting and the theme of the meeting. She's highly accomplished in all that she's done, and there is the additional urgency with health concerns, so we wanted to take into account all of that.

Those were the big factors we took into account in our two Lifetime Achievement Award recommendations.

As I explained in the report, we only have so much money to go around when we offer awards; they come with a full ride to the meeting. Some international nominees we have to decline because we just don't have the budget to get them to this meeting, as worthy as we felt these nominations were. I hope to see many of the folks that were not awarded to be nominated again in the future, as I said in the report, they were all certainly worthy of it.

Given that this is the recommendation of the Awards Committee, these nominations need to be approved by ExCo with a vote. I'd like to open the floor for any discussion and questions, or counterpoints and counter arguments for a different selection.

We typically offer the awards, and it is up to the awardees to either accept or decline. To my knowledge, no one has ever declined, but it's certainly possible. We proceed in a confidential manner until we've received confirmation from the awardees that they've accepted the award.

Comment: I have notes that I will send to you about our meeting and decision making process. It's an opportunity to communicate what we did and give context for the people that follow us.

Motion to approve to offer two Lifetime Achievement Awards to be presented at PSG 2020 in Portland by Adrian, Peter seconds

Abstentions: 0, Nays: 0, Yays: 9, motion passed unanimously

Adrian will write to the nominators and the nominated, informing them that they have been selected to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award and ask that they confirm receipt of that award.

Adrian will write to the nominators whose nominees were not accepted.

4. APPROVE PSG BANK CHANGE AND TREASURER'S UPDATES

Motion to discuss PSG Bank Change and Treasurer's Updates moved by Kirsten L., Rob seconds

The current account balances, as of today, are in the report. Please note that the total in the Former Chairs fund is low, it's \$244, even lower than it was a couple weeks ago because I transferred money to the checking account in order to pay for the Student Research Grants that were approved earlier in the year.

Moving on to the change in banks, I recommend that we close our accounts at First Hawaiian Bank and open comparable accounts at Axos Bank. If anyone has any questions or concerns, I am happy to answer them to the best of my ability. I did include the update on all of this in the report, but I will not review that again in the interest of time.

Question: Are we ready for a vote on this? Ans: Yes.

I know we want to get registration open on 1 September, so I will try to make these changes in the next week.

Comment: That'd be great, since we need to coordinate with CVENT. We are a ways out from opening registration on CVENT, but we do need to have it in place before we can do that.

Question: Do you have an idea of timing of registration opening? Ans: No, I need to check in with the Communications Committee and see what's happening with the website revamp. That needs to happen before we open it up.

Next is the draft budget for FY2020. I know you haven't had much time to look at it. Do you want to go through this line-by-line and have me explain it and ask questions during this meeting, or would you prefer to do that when we vote, hopefully next month?

Comment: I have not have a chance to look at it.

Comment: I'd like a little more time.

Comment: Okay, so we'll go through this line by line in September. I'm hoping that we can vote on this in our September meeting. I would like to point out a few things to you. One, the take home is that the budget is in the black, barely. For unrestricted funds, the expenses equal the income. It works, but that is only possible by cutting it close. For example, for the expenses, I didn't give us much room. In many cases, the expenses equals exactly what we've spent this year instead of giving us a safety net. We have an \$1800 total surplus. That's coming from

restricted funds and that is entirely coming from Lifetime Memberships. There was a discussion last meeting about having Lifetime Memberships not go to the restricted funds but rather go to the general fund. That's something I would like to discuss. If we make that change, that gives us more breathing room on how we spend money – our unrestricted funds. In order to balance the budget, I had to zero out the Chair's Discretionary Fund and all of our contributions to Student Travel, Foreign Scientist Travel, and Early Career Scientist Travel that is coming from the general fund. We did that last year as well, we did extra fundraising in order to compensate for that, and I propose that we do that again this year.

It does not allow for things like cost of living increase to the funds for the Ornithological Council. I don't know if we should have two meetings in September, in order to get this passed before the end of the month. I do believe we need to have a fair amount of discussion about it. I may not be able to answer questions immediately. If we have a meeting earlier in September and can get this thing passed, then we are golden, but if we can't, then we have time to schedule another meeting.

Comment: That sounds like a great idea.

Comment: I think that's fine, if there aren't major changes then we can pass it with revisions. And if there are major changes then we can punt it to a second meeting. But there's also nothing that's keeping people from going through this line-by-line and asking questions on their own.

Comment: My heartburn is that I've missed something, so I really appreciate questions.

PSG ExCo will go through the draft FY2020 budget and direct questions to Kirsten B.

Comment: I agree, a couple meetings in September could be helpful. I'm not going to be back within cell service until 15 September, so I will likely miss an early call.

Olivia will schedule a meeting for early September.

Question: What is the main source to make up for the limited funds that we do have, as far as balancing the budget. I know the annual meeting is helpful, but why are we so close to being in the red? It is because previous lower incomes with annual meetings?

Ans: Yes, the meetings were generally not making much money or just about breaking even. Most of our money is coming from donations and memberships. Last year, we made quite a bit of money on memberships, for a couple of reasons. One, we increased the cost of membership, and we offered more options for two-year membership. So we pretty much doubled our membership. This year, we are expecting maybe half of the money from memberships, since the people that got two-year memberships won't be providing money this year.

Comment: Another factor that's not included here are sponsorships, which in some years can generate upwards of \$10,000, which definitely adds to the bottom line of a conference.

Comment: Right, so last year, the LOCO did an amazing job and raised nearly \$20,000. I think that's highly unusual. This year, the LOCO has in their budget \$15,000 as their target, and that is in this budget on line 7.

Comment: Sorry, I haven't had a chance to look at this carefully so missed that it was already factored in.

Comment: For the meeting income, it is based on the 300 registrants, so I used that lower amount to be conservative. I think that the LOCO projects that there will be more income with 330 registrants, but I wanted to be conservative.

Comment: The other longer-term forecast that is coming up is the expectation of a relatively expensive annual meeting after Portland.

Comment: I think we're going to have to put more effort into fundraising for that meeting.

Question: So how much discussion has there been in terms of raising the registration costs? PSG meetings are pretty cheap, relative to other meetings. And we want to keep in that way, but still be sustainable.

Ans: That's a good question. Maybe that's worth discussing. I think the LOCO was anticipating somewhere around a \$2,000 loss with only 300 registrants. I looked at their budget pretty carefully, and I was able to get that very nearly in the black by removing \$2,000 that they had allocated for Student Travel, with the expectation that that usually isn't in the LOCO budget. That usually comes from the money we have available from 2019, which is nearly \$6,000, and from the money we will raise from fundraising and sponsorships specifically for Student Travel. I think that perhaps raising registration rates would allow us to have a bit of a surplus, which would certainly help.

Comment: We don't have the rates published anywhere yet. Ideally, that's what you want to do, is to set registration rates so that they cover our costs and that we don't slip into the red. If our budget says we're going to be \$2,000 in the red, even on conservative estimates, then we need to tack on an extra \$10 per registration rate to make sure that isn't going to happen.

Comment: I think it would be a good idea. In the budget, for example, they list a minimum estimate for the food, and I think it would be pretty easy to get further into the red. I don't know if we should also consider adding a registration transaction fee to help cover the CVENT costs, which are pretty hefty. I don't know if that's possible with CVENT, we did that with RegOnline.

Comment: It is. The way we've had that set up so far is to not make the fee explicit, but we can make it explicit.

Comment: So maybe we should add a CVENT fee, raise registration rates, or both, to make it a bit safer for us.

Comment: I would be in support of that. In most situations, whether you pay an extra \$20 or even \$25, \$30 for registration is not going to make or break you going, given all the other expenses for going.

Comment: I think that 300 is perhaps an overly cautious estimate. We had over 300 people in La Paz, and Portland is more accessible to way more people than La Paz was. I think we had 330 in Kaua'i. I think we will easily hit 350 at this meeting, and possibly more than that. From that perspective, I'm not terribly concerned; I think 300 is low balling it. Nonetheless, I think that in principle, we want this to pencil out, even at our lowest estimate.

Comment: Yeah, and if there is a surplus, that could help us for next year.

Comment: When we were choosing next year's site, there was concern about how expensive it would be for lower income people to even find lodging in the area, so if we could build a little margin, that would be great.

Comment: One other thing to note is that we did have a surplus last year of a little over \$12,600. That doesn't factor into our budget for FY2020, for whatever that's worth. I'm not saying that we should have a budget that puts us in the red; I'm just throwing that out there.

Comment: Okay, thanks, that's important to consider, too.

Question: So, Kirsten, is the next step to ask the LOCO if they'd be willing to increase the cost of registration?

Ans: Yes, I think that's something that should happen before we talk about this again. And the timing is good because we need to get registration open sometime soon. Next time we can go through this line by line and I can answer any questions and address any issues. And hopefully, if we do decide to raise registration rates, then we will be a little bit more in the black for 2020.

Comment: I need to contact the LOCO; I can add that to my list of things to address.

Rob will contact LOCO about raising registration fees for PSG 2020.

Comment: Also, the LOCO requested that I open a Venmo account for the pre-sale of merchandise. I haven't heard back from them about it. I need to set up an online store for Square anyway, in order for our online donations to go through Square instead of PayPal. I can set up an online store that includes all of our merchandise, and it would make it easier for us to

track things like, what size t-shirts we're selling. I think they specifically requested Venmo because there would be lower fees, but I looked into that and for businesses, the fees are the same for Square and Venmo. It's free for individuals through Venmo. Does anyone have any concerns with me setting up an online store for PSG? It would include merchandise and donations options.

Kirsten B. will set up an online store on Square.

Comment: No, I think that's great.

Comment: Venmo has been in the news recently in terms of bad transactions. You have to be very sure about who you're sending money to because you can't ask for it back. Once it is in someone's account, you can't change that. So that's something to be aware of, when you're using Venmo.

Comment: Thank you!

Question: Do we need a motion to set up Square, or is that in the Treasurer's power to do that?

Ans: I don't think we have to vote on it, since it doesn't cost us anything.

Comment: Great.

Comment: I have one more point of discussion that hopefully won't take too long. I just wanted to give a quick update on the session proposals for the upcoming meeting. It's been very low. World Seabird Conference people went crazy proposing symposia, but not so much here. I've only received two full ones, and I'm going to try to chase some others down. So there's two potentially coming. One of them, Adrian, it is one that you suggested and Kathy followed up on. Is there anyone who is leading that one? Who should I contact to formalize that proposal?

Comment: If Kathy doesn't jump on that, let me know, and I can work on getting that on the books with some documentation. My only concern is that with the student judging, I won't be focused on it. For the rest of you, it's the Hot Topics session that I moderated a couple years ago. I've always enjoyed doing it, but I'm not convinced that I'm the best person to do it. With all of the seabird die-offs going on and on and on for so many years, it's been really interesting to get folks together and talk about what they're seeing in their particular patch of the ocean. It's more of a free-flowing discussion, one where a few years ago we had an oceanographer involved, and I think there's a really good potential to have that happen again this year. Jen was one of the big promoters of this, but hasn't been able to attend the past couple meetings, so she's one of the people I may ask about it this year. Hopefully she can make the meeting this year. I'd like to see it keep happening, I just worry that I'll be busy at this meeting to focus on it and spend the time on it to do it justice. Robb is another likely suspect to serve as moderator, and maybe we can drag an oceanographer in, if we can find one.

Comment: That sounds good. I can follow up with Kathy and keep you in the loop.

Comment: It's also an invitation to anyone else on ExCo, if this piques your interest and it sounds like something you'd like to get in on, or know someone who would be interested in moderating the session. All it is is inviting people into the room and making sure the conversation flows well. We had a note-taker last time, which was great. If any of you know someone who would be interested in moderating the Hot Topics section, contact me or Rob, and we can get this pulled together and on the schedule.

Comment: It can be a different format, too, if someone has other ideas about facilitating the discussion. The other question I had was that I got an interesting proposal for a plenary of a discussion of human-induced global climate change on seabirds, and what we should do as old, intermediate, and young scientists to provide direction for seabird researchers, biologists, and managers. Has this been proposed in the past?

Comment: We didn't have anything last year.

Comment: We didn't have one the year before. I've heard it talked about, but the idea did not go anywhere.

Comment: At the AOS meeting, I liked how they had senior and junior plenaries together.

Comment: I think there's a way that it could be put together in a productive way.

Motion to approve closing PSG accounts at First Hawaiian Bank and opening accounts at Axos Bank moved by Kirsten B., Adrian seconds

Abstentions: 0, Nays: 0, Yays: 9, motion passed unanimously

Kirsten B. will close PSG bank accounts at First Hawaiian Bank and open comparable accounts at Axos Bank.

5. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn moved by Rob, Olivia seconds

Abstentions: 0, Nays: 0, Yays: 9, motions passes

26 AUGUST 2019 AGENDA

(*Indicates need for a vote)

1. Roll call & approve agenda*
2. Approve minutes 9 August 2019*
3. Approve PSG 2020 Lifetime and Special Achievement Awards*
4. Approve PSG bank change* and Treasurer's update
5. Action items and adjourn