

MINUTES OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

12 September 2022 Zoom Conference Call
12:00pm-14:00pm (Pacific Standard Time – UTC-8)
Amended and approved on 28 September 2022

Present: Rachel Sprague (Chair), Sadie Wright (Secretary), Dick Veit (Chair-Elect), Jenny Howard McKee (Treasurer), Sarah Ann Thompson (Northern California Regional Representative), Kerry Woo (Canada Regional Representative), Karen Lau Alarcon (Student Representative), Laura Koehn (Washington/Oregon Regional Representative) [8].

Absent: Roberta Swift (Past Chair), Tegan Carpenter-Kling (Europe/Africa Regional Representative), Peter Hodum (Vice Chair for Conservation), Alexis Will (Alaska/Russia Regional Representative), José Ramirez-Garofalo (Non-Pacific U.S. States Regional Representative), JB Thiebot (Asia/Oceania Regional Representative), Cristián Suazo (S. California, Latin America, Hawaii Regional Representative) [7].

Others present: Nacho Vilchis (Local Committee Coordinator), Derek Harvey (EID Committee Co-Coordinator), Anna Vallery (Communications Committee Co-Coordinator) [3].

Review of participants/roll call.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, & REVIEW AGENDA

Motion to approve the Agenda: moved by Dick, seconded by Kerry.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

1. APPROVE 4 AUGUST 2022 MINUTES

Comment: Does anyone here have any proposed amendments to the minutes from our last meeting? If not, I'll entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from last meeting: moved by Dick, seconded by Kerry.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

REVIEW 4 AUGUST ACTION ITEMS

1. Peter will share with ExCo a draft listserv post requesting team input from PSG regarding development of new swag. **Keep this.**
2. Rachel/Sadie will touch base regarding several potential future agenda items: a) listserv moderators, b) making 2022 annual meeting content available after the meeting, and c) workshops between meetings. **Keep this. Rachel/Sadie will attempt to meet before the next meet to discuss these items.**
3. Rachel and Roberta will gather more information from Brad Keitt including contact info for the coordinator of the Bird Conservation Alliance, and solicit a PSG rep to the Bird Conservation Alliance. **Keep this. They need to reach out to Brad again.**
4. Rachel will meet with the EID Committee to determine schedule/path to address these topics:

- a. Develop language for monthly reminder to be sent out to members from EXCO email.
 - b. Develop protocol and language for written statement responses to potential Code of Conduct violations and/or incidents.
 - c. Develop language for guidelines for appropriate listserv content to be distributed monthly to listserv users.
 - d. Develop plan for listserv moderation including identifying a group of moderators.
- Keep this. Rachel will reach out to the EID Committee again. Anyone else is welcome to join Rachel or connect with the EID Committee independently.**
- 5. All: anyone with a recommendation for a new PSG Endowment Fund trustee should send Jenny their suggestions. Jenny will also ask current endowment fund trustees for ideas. **Keep this. Note to everyone to send Jenny their suggestions. Jenny will ask Doug Forsell for his ideas.**
 - 6. Rob and Wieteke will coordinate about how to create an email group or other group format for “PSG institutional knowledge” including former chairs and others. **Done. New item: Rob and Wieteke provide an update at an upcoming ExCo meeting about this new group.**
 - 7. ExCo members should enter their volunteer hours at this shared spreadsheet: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1G39LiYCPvMzAi4P_v2r_JtFke3LudFH4/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106904498621362809324&rtpof=true&sd=true **Keep this.**
 - 8. Jenny will check with accountants to determine if we should keep track of Committee Lead (and other PSG roles) hours. **Keep this.**
 - 9. ALL: send contacts of potential Annual Meeting donors to Nacho. If you know someone on the potential sponsor/donor list, please coordinate with LoCo to reach out to those contacts to request sponsorships. **Done.**
 - 10. Roberta, Rachel, Dick, Nacho, and Justine will meet to discuss the Annual Meeting budget. **Done.**
 - 11. Rachel will send a Doodle poll to schedule a meeting with Roberta, Dick, LoCo, Communications, and Membership Committees to begin the transition to Wild Apricot. **Done.**
 - 12. Jenny will determine if we need two meetings in September and Sadie will poll and schedule accordingly. **Done.**

2. LOCAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING BUDGET UPDATE

Overview: Discussion about which version of the budget to look at on the Google Drive. The main thing we need to agree on and discuss today is the registration cost. We want to cover most of the conference cost as possible, but we are not going to be able to cover it all. Most LoCo members want to increase the proposed rates. The higher cost would increase the rate \$50/person; for example, the rate for a non-member early rate is \$500/person. This rate, for 350 attendees, would come in at a projected loss of ~\$20k. The old, lower rate would come in at a projected loss of ~\$45k. The main thing for us to look at is the projected registration tab and look at the difference in the two colors. The difference is \$50/person. But compared to many other conferences, \$500 is far less than the cost of other conferences. A \$500 rate would result in a lower deficit.

Comment: The short version everyone should understand is that the meeting is going to run a deficit regardless of this increase. We were sort of expecting that for San Diego. The question that I see is, based on the two projected rates, how much deficit do we want to see, and how much do we think PSG members are going to be willing to spend.

Question: What are you all thinking about PSG’s loss relative to the per person cost? Does the increased rate seem reasonable, or do we need to offset that more?

Comment: I'd go for the \$500 (increased rate) option to defray the overall loss to PSG. It sounds expensive, but I've been to 2 or 3 meetings in the last two years, and it's in line with other meetings are charging.

Comment: One side note is that I asked FWS, the Migratory Bird Program, and they were inclined to donate up to \$8k to make it for students or underrepresented people. So that's something to keep in mind to reduce costs for students.

Comment: Last year, we had one or two early sponsorships that we decided to use to lower student rates by \$20.

Comment: Yes, to students or specifically students from Baja. They are so close, we want them to be able to come. I think the Migratory Bird program will come up with this donation.

Comment: On the topic of registration rates, I like the idea of PSG subsidizing the meeting closer to \$20k than to \$45k, so I agree that we need the higher registration rates.

Question: We also defray students costs through student travel awards through the auction right?

Comment: Yes, we do help student travel which is separate from registration. We also have the HELPS program which supports people who want additional help. Last year I think we helped 35 people. As a recent student, the \$250 rate seems reasonable to me. My school had grants to help with that. We could also encourage people to reach out to our PSG resources, and also their school. There are lots of options and program to help students.

Question: Nacho, could you point out some of the bigger items in the budget to justify the higher cost, such as the food, which I know you want to provide some because there are not a lot of within walking distance?

Comment: The food cost estimates in this budget are in the higher end of things. We expect the actual costs to be a little less for most items.

Comment: On a side note, I've been working with Roberta to figure out how to cover travel of plenary speakers and awardees, and we may have an additional plenary speakers, so that cost may go up.

Comment: Back to the expenses. And that is similar to most years. But the venue cost is similar to most years. The expensive item is catering for two reasons. One is inflation, and the second is that we want to provide a couple of lunches so people don't need to walk down the beach every day to find food. It would be nice to keep everyone together. We want to provide two of the three days of the lunches.

Comment: And some breakfast food. Bagels.

Comment: That's why it's a bit more expensive than past meetings.

Question: Is the poster session catering \$80/person for food and drinks? That's the same price as the banquet?

Comment: It's the same venue. I don't have a good answer, but I think the cost will likely be lower for the poster night. Platter food on poster night and people can pay for their own drinks. Is that a deal breaker?

Comment: No, I don't think it's a deal breaker. I just wondered if it was a typo or if the price was actually less. It struck me as a lot relative to the banquet.

Comment: These estimates are high. We expect the costs to be less. It also might be that the venue is up in the air—we may switch the locations for those two events—which would change the price. The poster session price should be less, but the venue may cost more.

Question: Do people feel like they have the information they need to vote now, or would we rather vote in a couple of weeks? It would be great to vote now so the LoCo can move forward setting things up right away. But we don't want to rush a vote. Justine could come to the next meeting. If you think we are in good shape, we could vote on it now, knowing that the rate will likely be better because some of these are overestimates.

Question: Because there is a such a large deficit, would it be helpful to review the PSG Budget before voting? I incorporated the higher rates in the PSG Annual Operating Budget, so we could look at that first, if folks wanted? We do have a good amount in the general fund.

Comment: I could entertain a motion to move this vote down the agenda if we want to see the PSG Annual Operating Budget first. Or a motion to vote on the PSG Annual Meeting Budget.

Motion to defer the vote on the PSG Annual Meeting budget ~10 minutes until after we review the PSG Annual Operation Budget and Treasurer's Report: moved by Dick, seconded by Sarah Ann.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

Question: Any discussion? No. Thanks for that idea Jenny. The next thing on the Agenda is the Treasurer's Report.

3. TREASURER'S UPDATE

Overview: Our general fund balance as of Sept 9 has \$134k. That's a nice safe number. We usually like to keep 3 years of operating costs in that account, so that's good. Our fiscal year ends Sept 30th, that's also the end of the 3rd quarter, so in October I'll give you all the 3rd quarter fiscal update. As of our August 4th meeting, we voted to give Marine Ornithology \$8500 annually contingent on Endowment Board approval. I contacted them and they approved it. I let Louise and MO know that good news. I registered PSG with TechSoup, a website that supports non-profits with discounted software. I use Quick Books regularly and we've been paying \$80/month and on TechSoup we can get it for \$75/year, so a little savings. Keep that in mind if you think of other software that we may need to use in the future. Then, we paid for the Wild Apricot two year subscription so we can move forward for that. In addition, I wanted to make everyone aware of wire transfer fees. We use wire transfers for costs outside of the US, or we use a check within the US. Let's coordinate on wire transfers because the fees can add up quickly. Fees can be \$50 or more per transfer. Please add your ExCo volunteer hours for tax purposes. This is also helpful for when a new person is considering filling your role in the future to understand the time commitment. The past few meetings I mentioned that we should consider having an audit. We haven't had one for a decade and I think it would be a good thing to do. With our current accountant, we could pay them \$15-25k to complete. It would be time intensive for them, and for us. Given that we are going to have craziness coming up with the Annual meeting, I am going to table this until after the 2023 PSG Annual Meeting.

Debit card. There is a card that goes with our PSG account. I have one, and was thinking it would be good to have a second PSG member be an authorized signer. Historically it has been the past-chair, but

because that is a one year position and it is a hassle to change the signer, I think we should consider giving that role to someone with a two or three year term. One idea is that it could be the incoming chair position. That could be two or three years.

Comment: That sounds good, but I'm in NY, so would that be awkward?

Comment: That wouldn't be awkward. It's an online account. That would be fine. The card would be sent to your home address.

Comment: You could do it where it would be every other chair. Two year term. If they started as their incoming chair year, that would be another task in their big first year, but it would be a three year term.

Comment: There are not a ton of duties. It would help at the in-person meeting.

Comment: It doesn't seem like each chair needs to experience this role. It could skip one or two.

Comment: I agree. Every year is too much for the transition. We could add that into the PSG Handbook as an every two or three year duty.

Comment: I don't think we need a vote. It's just an operations and process item. Any other questions? If not, between you and the chairs, we can figure it out.

Comment: Next up, we have the annual budget. But we need to talk about how to proceed with the accounting firm that we use. I learned that our current company prepares our annual taxes and our quarterly bookkeeping review and statements. I had missed that they did bookkeeping review, so we haven't use those services for the past 6 months. But they did help us with the tax return. Talking with our accountant, it sounds like having another set of eyes on our books is important for non-profits. That said, their rate seems expensive. I wanted you to keep that in mind, and let's look at the annual budget.

4. PROPOSED ANNUAL PSG OPERATING BUDGET DISCUSSION

Overview: This is the draft of the annual operating budget. I calculated something a little bit differently from previously years. I excluded one year because it appeared to be an outlier. So I didn't include it in averages. We also need to include costs of an in-person meeting which will be a big uptick. We have in column B the proposed 2023 budget. Those numbers are taken from what we've done historically. You can compare it to past years in the other columns. You can also see what we've spent and received in past years. Column A includes all of our line items, either expenses or income. Let's look at revenues/income. D6 was really high—this was an unusual year. Row 10 is the total number from membership.

HELPS fund started in just the past two years, so I wanted to point out the big donation in 2021. We didn't have as much donated last year. I averaged those two numbers, which is around \$2k. The annual meeting budget, I got this number \$167k from the high registration rate projection. Endowment fund will increase distribution to MO of \$8500 annually. Student travel is an estimate over the past couple of years because we've had some really generous sponsors. That would be great to get some students to the meeting. Page 2—Here you can see the total revenue. Next is expenditures. Our big expense is for the annual meeting. \$197k for the total estimated cost. We incur square fees for donations and other transactions made by credit card. Is anyone still using Survey Monkey? We are paying \$600/year.

Comment: Communication Committee used it in the past but now we are using Google forms, so we don't need it anymore.

Comment: Maybe just check with the Elections folks, but if they are doing that through a different route, then I think we don't need it.

Jenny will check with Elections Committee folks to see if they need Survey Monkey. If they don't need it, Jenny will cancel it.

Comment: Okay, that helps. Next is our insurance, that helps protect ExCo members and covers our liability for the meeting, so that's very important. \$6500 to the accountant if we decide to fund them for quarterly review, statement, and tax services. In the past we've had depreciation expenses for big items. Their value decreases over time. That's been for the WSG database. But that has fully depreciated, so don't have that expense anymore. This telephone cost is actually for Zoom. \$115/year. Very important. Conservation grants is voted on. I just estimated. \$5k to OC this year. This assuming we'll donate something similar next year. Total expenditures is \$245k so relative to revenue we have a net loss of nearly \$20k.

Comment: I want to point out that the annual meeting budget is a loss of \$30k. Which means that we are operating at a \$10k surplus, but the annual meeting is pulling it down.

Comment: There are a lot of details here. Any questions? It was hard for me to make some of these projections. It could depend a lot on our donations and economy.

Comment: This is not a current voting item. Any questions at this point? We can gather more information or consider alternatives. We want to be ready to vote on Sept. 28th.

Question: The bookkeeping cost seems reasonable to me because past PSG ExCo deliberations have led to that, and it helps you out Jenny.

Comment: It doesn't help me out. It's just a second set of eyes that makes sure it matches what the bank is showing. I still go through it line by line. It keeps the treasurer accountable and makes sure I'm not making mistakes. If someone else from ExCo wants to go through QuickBooks and be the second set of eyes, that's another option.

Comment: Nice, and because I don't want to volunteer to be that second set of eyes, I would support keeping the professional bookkeeper in the role.

Comment: That makes sense. The other thing we could do is use those funds to pay an actual bookkeeper for PSG is doing some of the day to the day entry and management, and I would be in an oversight role. That would reduce Treasurer duties. I'm learning, and not very fast. I am spending 15 hours per month on just the bare minimum. This requires more expertise than I have. It could be worth us hiring someone to help me with bookkeeping.

Comment: I would be supportive of getting you that help, particularly if it didn't cost beyond what you currently have budgeted.

Comment: Yes, we could decide to hire someone and keep it within this budget. It would be nice to continue to have the second set of eyes as well to double check my work.

Comment: That sounds like a reasonable idea to me.

Comment: Would you suggest leaving the budget item as it is right now and if your research supports having a more active bookkeeper, you would come back to ExCo and run through that option?

Comment: Yes, I think that makes sense.

Comment: Any other questions for this budget? If not, we don't have a voting item, so I was going to ask if folks think they have enough information to revisit the Annual Meeting proposed budget? I would entertain a motion. Then we could get into discussion.

Comment: We'll know our final Annual Meeting budget on Oct 1, but the total costs should be lower than this. We need to know if we can approve the higher rates.

Comment: My understanding is if we vote to approve this budget, and find out before registration that the meeting will cost less, we could decide to lower registration costs for students for example.

Motion to approve the Proposed Annual Meeting Budget with the higher registration rates: moved by Dick, seconded by Jenny.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

Comment: I'm in favor of the higher rates. The SMM marine mammal rates are way higher than this. I figure it's time to go higher. I'm concerned what Seattle rates are going to be, so I would rather have a lower deficit now going into planning for Seattle.

Comment: I agree with that. It looks like the budget has \$20k in expected sponsorships built in, so if we get more than that, we would further reduce the deficit?

Comment: Yes.

Comment: Great.

Comment: Thank you Nacho and Dick for all the work you put into this. You have an approved budget.

5. PROPOSED LAA AND SAA AWARDS

Overview: This report is related to awards and needs to be kept confidential in large part. We have two items and looking for ExCo validation. We want to increase the number of LAA to 3 total to accommodate a third person. The first person has accepted, we are trying to get in touch with the second person, and want to move forward with the third. In addition, we wanted to award a three person team for the SAA award, but only have funding to pay for travel costs for one person. OSU has offered to pay for the other two people. Are we okay with accepting that offer? It will be a donation to the meeting budget.

Comment: What happens if OSU doesn't come through with the funds?

Comment: It sounds very certain. And we'll wait for the official 'Yes' from OSU to make the offer for travel support.

Comment: It seems to me like we wanted to give this award to the whole team, but could only afford to fund travel costs for one. So accepting a donation to cover the costs for the other two sounds legit and good.

Comment: Yep. Okay. That sounds good. We'll tell Roberta that's good to go. As far as the third LAA award, are folks okay with awarding this third person?

General discussion about the third person having a lifetime of publications and contributions to the field of seabird research. They are deserving. It would add a plenary spot. Is that okay?

Comment: I think it's okay to add a third plenary spot and can make that happen.

Comment: I think if this person is deserving and Dick thinks we can fit a third slot, plenary talk, that's good.

Comment: I don't know if the third person will be up for giving a plenary talk, but we can get answers on that. I think they are deserving and you could argue he should've received an award a long time ago.

Comment: It's the 50th meeting. Two LAAs have been awarded at past meetings. Maybe 3 is okay for this big year. We could wait for the third until next year.

Comment: I don't like that idea. We don't know if these awardees will be alive next year.

General consensus and support of the awards committee decision to award 3 LAAs and 1 SAA (for 3 people). So there is some symmetry. And they are all deserving.

Sadie rattles through the Action Items (identified in red above).

Comment: I just remembered that I wanted to let this group know about a roundtable that has been proposed for the 2023 Annual Meeting to discuss the historical perspective and why PSG was formed. A panel discussion.

Question: Do you want an action item for that Dick?

Comment: I don't think so. It would only need to be an action item to help you remember it.

Comment: I won't forget it.

Comment: Ok, any other action items?

Comment: If anything changes with the operating budget, I'll send out a new report.

Motion to adjourn the meeting; moved by Dick, Sadie seconds.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously