Minutes of RTLIA Annual Meeting – September 18, 2021

Meeting called to order by President Reid McFarlane, (PRM).

***Minutes of June 2021 meeting.*** PRM noted that the minutes from the general meeting in August were not available for review. (Note that the minutes were transcribed, however, the meeting was not taped in its’ entirety and were and will not be available.) Those minutes transcribed will be available at the next general meeting. Motion to waive a reading of the minutes was made by Roger Breault and seconded by Scott Hansen. Motion carried.

***Treasurer’s Report*** submitted by Scott Hansen (TSH). See attached Treasurer’s report. TSH reviewed the written report at length. He reported status of current grants. Anne Tuttle made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report; seconded by Jesse Rees. Motion carried.

***Financial Review (Audit) by Gary Johnson. Read by Rick Painter.*** See submitted Financial Review Letter. Summary is that books are in good order and organization is sound. Motion to accept report of Gary Johnson was made by Steve Brotzler and seconded by Scott Hansen. Before vote on motion question was asked about the number of volunteer hours would be needed to match our grants. TSH indicates that things look good but does not have an absolute answer at this time. Motion carried.

***President’s report.*** Outgoing PRM reported that he was elected in 2018. Current bylaws indicate that this would be the end of his second term. He wanted to make clear that this is a fairly demanding job (quarter time to half time). We have improved lakes association but getting grants but now we need to move beyond grants. We have to realize that we are an advocacy group for the environment, specifically our lakes and rivers. As the CAFO fight indicated this is not necessarily a given. So one of the problems, looking ahead, is expanding and working with local farmers who are part of our community and part of the problem is that it is kind of like the town and gown tension…the people on the lakes have a different focus and interests than the people in the towns and part of the problem is we may have a potential for 350 members we get memberships from 45% of the lake owners and a lot of the 350 are people whose homes are elsewhere. And this is a difficult group to mobilize not only because of the tension between lakers and townies but just because our participant base is really diverse and doesn’t have a focus here. If this were a neighborhood where we were living her 11 months out of the year it might be different. I think that we have improved things. We now have a 4 page newsletter that Mr. Painter got advertisers for so it now pays for itself. We now are paying to have colored pictures and can have it printed. We are financially solvent. We are meeting our required matches for the grants and I believe that we are beginning to explore new territory. For many years, Roger and Vicki Breault worked the stream coming into LTL and of course they identified a substantial point source of pollution. And, I pushed on it and found and talked to the agricultural person at Polk County who goes to these farmers and tries to say “Gee, would you change your practice? Can you plow a little differently? Can you set up a pond to catch your runoff…etc. etc.? What we found out is that Polk County will pay 75% of that farmer’s cost. The farmer was reluctant to do it. In conversations with Dave Blumer, he was persuaded that as a lake association we could perhaps identify other funding sources so that the cost to the farmer would be zero. The farmer still declined to make any changes. We are in a position where we can’t force farmer to do something but we do need to open up avenues of communication with the rest of our community to preserve and protect the lakes. Thank you for the pulpit to talk.

***OLD BUSINESS:***

***CAFO Update:*** Rick Painter reported on CAFO. Meeting at Trade Lake landing and Trade Lake Town hall were well attended. Purpose was whether or not there should be consortium of towns to get together and pool resources to build an operations ordinance that is multiple township wide. We now have Bone Lake, Eureka, Laketown, and Trade Lake. There are a few more still out there hanging but we are hoping that we can get them to join in as well. Jeb wrote a letter to the St. Croix Chippewa of Wisconsin requesting their support. They responded by passing a resolution opposing the CAFO which is on the cover of both local newspapers this week. So that was a huge step forward but something we need to capitalize on by simply being more focused on these little town meetings. There is a meeting at Burnet County on Tuesday 9:30 on whether to put in sacrifice zones. If you can make it up there to the meeting that would be great. Question by Richard Tober about the “sacrifice zones” as to whether this is a good thing because when the CAFO reapplied they would have to comply with the new requirements which would include a lot of new restrictions. Rick Painter responded that potentially this could be good. Some of the language they took from the Bayfield ordinance but the real concern he states is enforcement of the ordinance. No matter the restrictions it doesn’t matter if the enforcement is not there to prevent runoff. Claim is that with the sacrifice zones it will limit CAFO runoff but it also does not address smell, etc. Self-regulation is not generally effective.

***New Bylaws:*** PRM stated that proposed new bylaws were mailed to all members. There are under discussion three amendments to the proposed bylaws: one deals with area from Rick Painter, a second is on non-partisan and third he is proposing an elder counsel be added to the bylaws. Discussion turned over to Anne Tuttle. Process used to prepare bylaws as outlined in letter sent to membership was summarized. A couple of clarifications were made in regard to the proposed bylaws that were mailed to members. 1) The newsletter indicated that the new bylaws would allow only one vote per household membership. This is not accurate. The number would be two. 2) Error in Art. VI, Sect. 5…should read, in part: The new Board of Directors shall meet within forty (40) days after the Annual Meeting of the Association…” She also added that one of the major issues raised at every meeting is about participation by membership. We were really limited by the fact that people had to be present at meetings. Bylaws were updated to provide for significantly more electronic means of communication and participation, email, text, zoom, etc. Hoping that with these changes we can increase participation by allowing for these new forms of participation. Also highlighted changes to dates of election of directors and officers. Data privacy of members contact information was also added to the bylaws.

Question was raised Rick Thill about how amendments would be handled. Steve Brotzler made a motion that discussion in regard to the bylaws be limited to 3 minutes per person. Motion was seconded by Colleen Heimkes. Motion carried. Amy Klous agreed to be a timekeeper.

Anne Tuttle made a motion to adopt the proposed bylaws with the clarification made on Art. VI, Sect. 5. Seconded by Scott Hansen. PRM proposed to add an Elders Counsel to the Bylaws made up of past presidents of the association as an advisory board to the current board of directors for the purpose of providing counsel to them in regard to what happened in the past and what worked; it would be a recognition of past leadership. When asked for a motion to support this idea, no one was willing to make one so the idea died.

The issue of language in Art. II “The Association shall not participate in partisan political activity.” PRM stated that Rick Painter and he agreed that this needed to be included with some modification in order to advocate for our lakes. He stated that advocacy is not precluded by IRS clauses in regard to non-profit organizations. PRM made a motion that the sentence be modified to read as follows: “The Association shall not participate in partisan political activity but may advocate for or against issues specific to its mission or purpose.”

Discussion was held for and against the proposed amendment. Discussion held for and against adoption of the Bylaws as mailed to members with one clarification in regard to Art. VI, Sec. 5. Question called. Request was made for hand count. Vote was held by hand count: 18 for; 7 opposed. Motion carried to adopt new bylaws and they are in effect immediately.

***New Business:***

Grant approval. PRM raised issue of payment of services due to Dave Blumer for work on grant proposals. Two grants are in process. PRM was looking for authorization to proceed with an application for a comprehensive lake management grant. We have previously authorized payment for current work (or $300). PRM asked for a motion to proceed to seek a grant for a lakes management plan for Round and Long Trade Lake. Motion made. Failed for lack of second.

A second GAP for Lake Protection planning implementation grant for Long Trade Lake was discussed which includes cover crop issue. Currently in application stage. PRM sought motion to proceed with this process for this grant. Roger Breault made the motion and Steve Wilburn seconded. Motion carried.

Payment of Anne Tuttle. Motion made by Rick Painter to pay Anne Tuttle $750 for preparation of bylaws. Seconded by Roger Breault. Discussion held. Motion carried.

Election of officers.

*President*: Nominations: Roger Breault (initially declined); Rick Painter (declined); Scott Hansen (declined); Rick Thill (declined). After consideration Roger Breault accepted nomination. Unanimous acclimation.

Vice President: Nominations: Toni Wilburn. No other nominations: 1 year term; unanimous acclimation.

Secretary: Nominations: Nicole Roberts; unanimous acclimation

Treasurer: Nominations: Scott Hansen; unanimous acclimation

Long Trade Lake Rep: Nominations: Vicki Breault; 1 year term; unanimous acclimation

Big Trade Lake Rep: Nominations: Richard Tober; 2 year term; unanimous acclimation

Little Trade Lake Rep: Nominations: Jesse (Megan) Rees; 2 year term; unanimous acclimation

Round Trade Lake Rep: Nominations: Pam Jones; 1 year term; unanimous acclimation

Motion made by Jason Klous that the results of the election are accepted as recorded by the Secretary. Seconded by Steve Brotzler. Motion carried.

Reid McFarlane brought a motion to recognize the following for their service to RTLIA:

Newsletter Editor April Freeman

Website Mary Jo Gentry

Buoy Tenders

Water Tester

CBCW

Tribal opposition to CAFO - letter to be written by new president to tribe.

Motion to adjourn by Anne Tuttle; seconded by Steve Brotzler.