

**Deer Lake Watershed Association**  
Board Meeting – Monday December 14, 2020  
Virtual Meeting via Facebook™ Messenger

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by President Bill Cromell. This is a virtual meeting held via connections where all members can hear each other and had visuals of members present. Prior to this meeting, an agenda of topics to be discussed had been sent via email to all DLWA members who had a listed email address on file.

ATTENDEES: Board members participating: Bill Cromell, Gail Blackmer, Mark Smith, Val Cromell, Chris Fischer, Bruce Steege, and alternate board members Vaughn Duitsman and Travis Mangan. Alternate member Jeff Dunlap was not available.

AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Following review of agenda, Gail **moved** to approve agenda as presented. **Seconded** by Mark.

TREASURER REPORT: Val Cromell provided Treasurer's report, listing fund balances as follows: General Fund - \$7,260.49; Continuous Flow Fund - \$1,841.29; Water Protection Fund - \$1,306.52; the designated reserve for website maintenance has \$438.85, and the CCC Camp historical preservation savings account is at \$565.42. It was noted that \$285 was paid to RMB Environmental Labs for the water quality testing done on Pickerel Lake this past summer. Val discussed the timing of past transfers of the designated portion of membership dues that go into the Continuous Flow Fund. Since we have established that DLWA's fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of every year, she proposed that an addition to the written financial procedures for the Treasurer's duties be adopted in order to keep transactions the same year to year. The following statement was approved on a **motion** by Bill, **seconded** by Gail:

**The DLWA Treasurer will count the total number of current DLWA memberships for the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> through July 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, multiply the number times \$8.00 per membership and transfer that amount from the DLWA General Fund to the DLWA Continuous Flow Fund in July of the same year to ensure it is correctly included in the Treasurer's Annual Report to the Membership at the Annual Meeting in August.**

Following adoption of this motion, Val stated that this year she will use the number of paid memberships from 8/1/19 through 6/30/20 which was 90 memberships, resulting in \$720 to be deposited in the CFF. The next transaction for 2020-21 will include the whole fiscal year. Further discussion on that fund included thoughts that the desired balance of the Continuous Flow Fund should be adequate to cover beaver control and other measures to keep creeks flowing, but not excessive which ties up funding for other needs. This will be monitored so as to determine what a typical year of beaver control costs, which may take another year of data.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Gail Blackmer provided Secretary's report, noting that the minutes from the October 21, 2020 meeting had been distributed via email to board members. Minutes of

that meeting were approved on a **motion** by Val, **seconded** by Vaughn. The October minutes may now be posted on the website and will be sent by the secretary to the full membership for whom emails are on file.

Chris brought up the organization's status as a 317A organization and as such, requires an annual meeting. DLWA board sent out business information including vote by mail options to all DLWA members in August 2020 in lieu of an in-person meeting, due to Covid-19 restrictions. Documentation of the process and results will be available in written form in the organization's archived minutes.

#### COMMITTEE UPDATES:

##### A. Continuous Outflow Committee

1. Outflow creek condition – Bill went through Deer Creek in September and found it to be open and flowing. Vegetation is a major issue for navigation. We don't want to have volunteers running a risk of burning out motors while doing the work of clearing the creek of debris and dams. Mark spoke in favor of pursuing a capital campaign to finance a surface drive, or "mud motor" that DLWA could designate for using on the creek runs. We will need significant volunteer help and organizing for a capital campaign. Chris referred again to the organization's tax status as a 317A organization and that since donations to DLWA are not tax deductible, we should get additional advice on limits of fund raising without triggering a change of tax status. Vaughn made a **motion** to seek advice from a tax advisor or accountant in preparation for a capital campaign for purchase of a surface motor. Motion **seconded** by Bill, motion carried. Vaughn offered to look into this and try to get an opinion.

Bill mentioned that the gauge positioned under the bridge on #533 is getting battered and he is looking into getting a new one. Currently the water level reading there is at 4.8, which is within a range that seems the most effective for avoiding erosion.

B. Membership Committee – Val Cromell, committee chair, provided a report on membership activities. Currently, DLWA has 134 paid household memberships. Seventeen membership renewals have come in during the last couple months, along with a total of \$165 in additional donations. Reminder notices were sent to nine expired households. Val noted that members see a checkbox labeled "apply my donation wherever it is needed most" on the annual renewal form, which seems to appeal to those who donate additional funds beyond their membership dues. At this time it is suggested that the Water Protection Fund could use those donations, seeing as how the water quality testing price is increasing, and we do wish to test more watershed lakes in the coming seasons. Val also reported on a new Lifetime Membership coming in from a long time cabin owner on Mirror Lake.

C. Events – Due to Covid-19 restrictions on large group gatherings still being in effect as 2020 comes to a close, it is impossible to predict if events can be planned for next spring/summer. We agree there is a need for fund-raising, particularly if a capital campaign is launched, and there is a desire for some special events to promote socializing for common interests among our members and neighbors. A Special Events/Fundraising Committee should be formed, and

as such, we are asking who among our membership has the ideas and skills to act as Chair or Co-Chair of this committee. Ideally, someone with “out of the box” thinking and experiences could put together activities and fund raising ideas that can be done remotely, or with social distancing. A few creative folks we know within our membership roles were mentioned, and we hope to use a newsletter appeal to ask for volunteers. First, board members will check on any fund raising limits for our organizational structure, and define the goal of a capital campaign.

## OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Winter 2020-21 Newsletter

A number of board members have submitted text for inclusion in the next DLWA Newsletter. Topics had been distributed through email discussion. A suggested timeline and duties including proofreading, send to Sheila for compiling, pick up from printer, emailing and paper mailing was discussed.

2. Water Quality Testing – Results of the testing done this past summer are pending. The RMB website or the MN DNR website may be of use to check test results of our local lakes. We believe that a staff person from the SWCD agency conducted testing on Mirror, and are hoping that Battle Lake may be tested next spring. Also next spring, we would like to have volunteers test Five Island and Deer Lakes. Bruce Steege volunteered to do the testing procedure on Deer, and Bill thought he could do Five Island, or recruit some volunteers who have property on that lake.

3. Website Update – Chris reported on the website, noting that it remains a slow news time due to the pandemic restrictions on activity.

## NEW BUSINESS

A. 317 A Requirements – Chris reviewed information which may affect board members length of service.

B. Debit card – Chris also discussed that the website fees need to be paid electronically, therefore he suggested that the DLWA obtain a debit card. As Treasurer, Val will look into getting a debit card through the bank in Bigfork.

C. Annual Summary of DLWA Activities/Accomplishments – Bill and Val have been compiling such a list to be included as part of the newsletter, both the electronic version and paper copy.

D. DLWA Sign on Co Rd #533 – The sign itself is stored currently with DLWA volunteer Art Lind who plans to refurbish as needed. Discussed checking the condition of the posts and protective roof shingles, and repair as needed in the spring. Bruce S. volunteered to help with this project.

E. Itasca County Environmental Services – An Itasca county permit request for a construction project for garage and cabin addition on Deer Lake was communicated to the board. This is informational.

F. Littering - Area residents have noticed littering, particularly at the site of the abandoned dump site on Rollercoaster Road. This area has been used by some for shooting sports, i.e. target practice and sighting in of guns. Spent shells are left on the ground, and other debris. Bill stated that a new sign is needed there as a reminder to pack out all trash. Apparently, if citizens participate in cleaning up litter on roadsides or public areas, it can be brought to the county dump site at no charge.

F. Other – Travis mentioned that he thought it would be beneficial to have a map of the watershed area available. Previously, a map indicating ownership of tracts had been printed by the DLWA. Val stated she had asked a SWDC staff person about the possibility of obtaining a new updated map of the Deer Lake Watershed that would include labeled roads within the watershed. Val will look into it further and report back to the board.

Discussion was held on backing up electronic information. Chris reminded everyone that an external hard drive is one way to guard against losing a lot of information if any of us had a computer crash.

G. Adjourn – Val made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Motion **supported** by Vaughn, meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting date set for February 8, 2021**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gail Blackmer, Secretary.