

## **Hubbard Brook Research Foundation**

### **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 1:00 pm**

#### **HBRF Administrative Offices, Woodstock, VT and via Zoom Videoconference**

**Trustees in Attendance:** Fred Hunt (FH), Peter Martin, *Chair* (PM), and Michael Shoob (MSh)

**Trustees Participating by Zoom:** Charley Driscoll (CD), Peter Groffman (PG), Steve Hamburg, *Vice Chair* (SH), Gene Likens (GL), Lindsey Rustad (LR), Mike Smith, *Treasurer* (MSm), John Smitka, *Secretary* (JS), Anant Sundaram (AS), Pam Templer (PT), and Harriet Van Vleck (HV)

**Others Participants:** Sarah Garlick (SG), Anthea Lavallee (AL), Brenda McCartney (BM), Zach Ralph (ZR), and David Thurlow (DT)

**Absent:** Nick Rodenhouse and Jane Sokolow

**Action items are highlighted in blue.**

**PM called the meeting to order at 1:02.**

**GL made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 11 meeting. MSh seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously at 1:03.**

#### **Remarks from the Chair**

PM explained that we would be making Zoom audio recordings of meetings in order to improve accuracy of the minutes. Staff will make an effort to keep the minutes concise, and the recordings will be available to trustees for additional detail and clarification. Typed minutes will be archived on the password-protected Trustees' page of the HBRF website.

#### **Executive Director's Report**

AL provided updates since submitting her ED report. AL attended the COS meeting along with fellow HBRF representatives, PM, MSh, Geoff Wilson, and SG. The meeting was a very enriching experience, and the presentations and conversations will inform AL's work and the present report. AL had a good discussion with Lynn Christenson about the possibility of Vassar joining the consortium. Lynn offered to help make a pitch once new leadership at the college has settled. AL also contacted Scott Ollinger about approaching UNH. Geoff Wilson has accepted a .8 FTE technician position through the LTER award and will transition to a scientific role at HB once funds become available this February/March. Geoff will continue to work at the Foundation (.2 FTE) as a resource for facility management and education programs and will provide lab oversight in the summer. LR and AL had a discussion about how to work together more closely through joint staff meetings, fundraising, and shared positions. **PM asked AL to create an updated Mirror Lake business plan that reflects current rental rates, income, expenses, and goals.**

AL reported that a major donor to the ML Capstone Campaign is considering contributing half of the remaining loan balance, approximately \$80,000, as a matching challenge. This would be at the expense of an annual unrestricted \$10,000 gift that usually arrives at this time. AL will be scheduling meetings with current and prospective major donors over the next couple of months.

#### **Report from the Finance Committee**

BM summarized the year-to-date financial statement as of 11.30.16. Notably beneficial and detrimental items on the P&L now include only those with variances (unrelated to the timing of normal business) greater than 10% or \$2,000. Since redistributing tasks across bookkeeping and administrative staff, the processes for billing and tracking receivables have improved. The LOC is now at \$20,000. The Mirror Lake loan balance is \$162,000. We plan to apply recent campaign contributions toward an extra principal payment in January. Current grant-funded program work includes public engagement related to the Ice Storm Experiment, a winter climate change synthesis, and WaterViz. Mirror Lake winter rental income is expected to be below target for the season. We have struggled to find seasonal tenants for 2 of the 5 available units. AL described HBRF's

response to low occupancy, including renting individual rooms, working with a local property management company, and AirBnB. PVF is rented for the season through a special agreement directly with Loon Mountain.

**FH made a motion to approve the Finance Report. MSh seconded the motion which passed unanimously at 1:35.**

PM explained that the Finance and Development Committee will now be split into two separate committees. Initial projects for the Development Committee include the HB consortium and corporate sponsors. PM stated that the Executive Committee will be meeting more regularly in order to actively support AL and to manage time-sensitive issues that arise between meetings of the full board. The Executive Committee recently met and plans to convene monthly. The Executive Committee will present progress at full board meetings, and typed minutes will be available on the password-protected Trustees' page of the HBRF website. SH added that, in the past, the Executive Committee tackled issues on an ad hoc basis.

**Report from the Development Committee**

The new Development Committee met recently and does not yet have a chair. AL has some new ideas for the consortium and is seeking guidance and advice from the committee. AL plans to customize approaches to potential consortium institutions and will align the fee structure according to the benefits of membership. HBRF is a distributed enterprise and, in the absence of a single institutional partner or site-use fees, we are asking all cooperating institutions with active research at HB to join the consortium (i.e., a Community-Supported Experimental Forest). AL welcomes advice related to a menu of services for consortium members and a compatible fee structure that would be fair and reasonable while also allowing smaller institutions to join. We are currently discussing new approaches to potential corporate sponsors. We are hoping to develop a systematic process for vetting corporations to make sure that the fit is appropriate, given our the mission and goals. SH suggested identifying a current corporate sponsor and working backwards through the decision-making process. [PM requested concrete examples of a system for vetting corporations.](#) [CD said he will review AL's written proposal and meeting notes from her recent consortium meeting at UVM.](#)

DT provided status reports on the annual fund and year-end appeal. Our overall strategy is to expand our mailing. We increased the mailing (i.e., 800 households), and we hope that it'll be 1,600 next year. Since November, we have received 103 gifts totaling \$35,000. In order to address the inefficiencies of our old donor database, DT has migrated all donor data into a new, online CRM, Little Green Light. There is tremendous potential for us to track all donors, partners, and contacts according to finely-segregated groups in LGL. Once final results from the year-end appeal are in, we will reach out to lapsed donors. We plan to have frequent meetings with major donors, with a goal of 36 meetings per year; half of our unrestricted funds come from major donors. In the spring DT will coordinate our annual early bird appeal. DT stated that our \$150,000 target for unrestricted gifts is not unrealistic. AL explained that DT has nudged her to thank donors by phone immediately after gifts are received. DT encourages a culture of development across the organization. We might also consider donor list-sharing. We need to grow our list. It is small, but our donors are active and engaged. We have a high response rate. We need to send more appeals to more people. AS asked for a description of our current donors. AL explained that they are people who have/had a personal connection to HBRF (e.g., former undergraduates and graduate students).

PM asked PG and PT about the possibility of emailing COS members with a request to participate in the Capstone Campaign for ML. The appeal could go out via the HB listserv. PG remarked that scientists have limited budgets for charitable giving but liked connecting the appeal to Gene and Phyllis Likens to make it personal. PM commented that we'd like to increase the donor base and also the commitment to the organization. PG stated that the Cary Institute asks for support/participation from 100% of their scientists; we could do something similar. The content of the email appeal should be approved by PT and/or John Battles (co-chairs of the SCC). SH suggested that the message go out personally as opposed to a listserv, and the letter should come from the COS members of the HBRF BOT.

PM explained that, thanks to BOT contributions, we nearly retired all of the RECs. We decided not to sell the remainder (approximate value = \$300).

### **Committee Reports**

PM reported that JS will be leaving the Nominating Committee in order to participate on the Development Committee. MSh has agreed to chair the Nominating Committee.

### **Presentation of the Ice Storm Experiment and Recent ISE Stakeholder Roundtable**

LR and SG delivered a dynamic slide and video presentation.

### **Trustee Policies**

MS described next-steps flowing from the recent revision of the bylaws. With intention, the bylaws were written broadly and are not overly prescriptive. Detailed descriptions of Trustee and committee responsibilities will be outlined in charters which can be more easily modified as needed. [MSh will draft and circulate charters for the Executive, Development, and Nominating Committees. These will be presented at the next meeting.](#) Charters for the Finance and Program Committees have been reviewed and approved at the committee level. The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending new trustees in order to cultivate a strong, cohesive, well-rounded board. Trustees should contribute a range of pertinent expertise. The focus of the Finance Committee is fiscal oversight; members review financial statements and the organization's overall fiscal health. They will participate actively in the annual audit or financial review. The Program Committee oversees the development and delivery of public outreach activities, including fee-based programs. The organization would benefit from enhanced program evaluation tools and methods.

**FH made a motion to approve the Finance and Program Committee Charters. MSh seconded the motion. The charters were unanimously approved as written at 2:34.**

[PM noted that we will need to update the bylaws to reflect the separation of the finance and development committees.](#)

### **Old Business**

LR indicated that advocating for increased Forest Service funding in Washington will be a priority, although the appointments of the FS Chief and Secretary of Ag. will affect our strategy. LR and GL recently discussed the importance of sharing our work with Tony Ferguson, the new Director of the Northern Research Station. They sent him a copy of the Holmes/Likens HB book. FS hiring restrictions are in effect. Hiring for the HBEF hydrologist position has been approved, but the information manager position is on hold and remains vacant. According to Cynthia West, FS Director of Sustainability and Climate Change, stakeholder groups are in the best position to appeal to FS decision-makers on behalf of EFRs. They can make the strongest case for the value of our work. [PM asked LR to think about how we can develop this idea with GL and members of the Development Committee.](#)

### **New Business**

PM reminded the group that that we have one vacancy on the board. [Please send your suggestions to MSh.](#) PM encouraged participants to take advantage of the Zoom video function during BOT meetings in order to fully appreciate presentations like the ISE portion of today's meeting. Our spring BOT meeting will be on April 17<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 6:00 pm.

**At 2:48 the trustees went into executive session. The meeting adjourned at 3:00.**