



SWAMC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2020

- I. **Call to Order** -----9:04 am by Vice President Gronholdt
 - A. **Roll Call** ----- Marquardt
 - _____ Mary Swain, yes Paul Gronholdt, yes Rebecca Skinner, yes Myra Olsen, yes Alice Ruby, yes Glen Gardner, yes Terry Haines, yes Laura Delgado, _____ Dennis Robinson, yes Joe Sullivan, _____ Darren Muller
- II. **Approval of Agenda** ----- Gronholdt
 - Ruby moves to approve, Delgado seconds, no objections, agenda approved.
- III. **Consent Agenda** ----- Gronholdt
 - A. BOD Meeting Minutes, July 2020
 - Gardner moves to approve, Ruby seconds, no objections, minutes approved.
- IV. **Governance & Policy** ----- Gronholdt
 - A. June 2020 Financial Statement – Marquardt confirmed that SWAMC is staying on track with our budget. It does not yet reflect the recently awarded supplemental funding from EDA. Olsen moves to approve, Delgado seconds, roll call vote taken, all in favor, no objections, FS approved.
- V. **Management & Program Issues** ----- Marquardt
 - A. EDA Supplemental Award update – SWAMC was awarded \$400,000 to be spent over a two-year period. The focus of SWAMC’s grant will be on developing a resiliency plan for the region, broadband planning so that communities are ready to plug into the undersea broadband cable when landed, and expanding mariculture business development in the SW region. Staff recently visited southeast Alaska and were impressed by their accomplishments in mariculture. There are linkages to be found between shipping, processing equipment, training, and types of seaweeds that can be grown in southwest waters. Staff has 60 days from award acceptance to further develop scope of work. Staff expects to have scope ready for Board review by September Board meeting.
 - B. FY21 Membership Drive – Now that CARES funding outreach has slowed down, staff can focus on the FY21 membership drive. Staff is still working on developing the letter to send to renewing and prospective members. Would like ideas from Board on how to entice new members. Staff is also working on updating the contact list. The membership drive will be a major focus in September through November. Skinner asked whether SWAMC could consider updating the economic geography report, which has been discussed in the past few years. Many members may not realize but this report is of high value for grants and proposals as it takes a holistic view of the economic impacts of southwest Alaska and ties the whole region together. SWAMC is uniquely positioned to provide this kind of planning data. Could do more to communicate this data and the value of it to communities. Ruby mentioned that she was happy to see the economic geography update listed in the Communications Plan. Gronholdt asked whether SWAMC could play a role in coordination and scheduling of vaccine delivery once a COVID vaccine is developed. Marquardt responded that SWAMC’s role will most likely be in advocating for equitable distribution of vaccine in rural communities, so that they are not forgotten.
 - C. FORWARD/AK CARES Grant – Staff is glad they hired contractor Keri from Compass North to assist with answering calls from businesses in the region seeking information about the AK CARES program. Once commercial fishermen became eligible, she received over 50 calls. Most business owners are interested in AK CARES because it is a grant, not a loan, but FORWARD shows them other programs available. Staff has received positive feedback from partner organizations about the program. The Fairbanks North Star Borough is now utilizing FORWARD as well.
 - D. Communications Plan – The Plan provides staff with a pathway for outreach, especially to help people who are less familiar with SWAMC understand what we do. Ruby commented that a focus on promoting currently existing efforts in the region, like STEM, is better than trying to push efforts from outside.



SWAMC getting behind locally grown regional projects is where its strength lies. SWAMC also plays a role in elevating the message of needed infrastructure maintenance like runway and air service infrastructure. Marquardt notified Board that about a month ago she successfully connected DOT Commissioner McKinnon and Deputy Commissioner Binder with fisheries, Aleutian communities, and airline stakeholders to discuss how to move processing workers out of Unalaska following B season and back in January for A season. This conversation was critical to the region's planning. Staff participates in these types of calls as much as possible.

VI. Staff Report----- Marquardt

Staff is continuing the same work as in previous months, focusing on COVID relief for businesses, mariculture business development, broadband and transportation solutions, and organizational initiatives like the communications plan and membership drive. Shirley and Laura work well together, their different strengths play off each other well.

VI. Board Comments / Other Business

Ruby thanked staff for keeping things moving forward. Olsen mentioned that GCI phone service has been so bad in Egegik this summer that she has not been able to connect by phone for 2 months. Gronholdt mentioned that Ravn will begin landing in Sand Point and Cold Bay 4x/week beginning September 18.

VIII. Adjourn Time: Gardner moves to adjourn meeting, Gronholdt seconds, meeting adjourned at 9:47 am by **Vice President Gronholdt**