



**SWAMC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**September 24, 2020**

- I. Call to Order ----- 9:14 am by Vice President Gronholdt**
  - A. Roll Call ----- Marquardt**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mary Swain, yes Paul Gronholdt, yes Rebecca Skinner, \_\_\_\_\_ Myra Olsen, yes Alice Ruby, yes Glen Gardner, \_\_\_\_\_ Terry Haines, \_\_\_\_\_ Laura Delgado, yes Dennis Robinson, yes Joe Sullivan, yes Darren Muller
- II. Approval of Agenda ----- Swain**

Agenda amended to add item E. Dates for Annual Conference, and F. Rename SWAMC Newsletter. Skinner moves to approve, Gardner seconds, no objections, agenda approved as amended.
- III. Consent Agenda ----- Swain**
  - A. BOD Meeting Minutes, August 2020**

Sullivan moves to approve, Gardner seconds, no objections, minutes approved.
- IV. Governance & Policy ----- Swain**
  - A. July 2020 Financial Statement – Marquardt explained that this financial statement does not yet reflect the recently awarded EDA Supplemental funding. It does show \$381 due to SWAMC from Marquardt as a result of accidentally mixing up business and personal Alaska Airlines cards. The Denali Commission grant is on track to be expended by the end of December, along with the DCCED grant. Staff plans to do quarterly draw downs in October from the EDA grants and the Denali Commission. Sullivan moves to approve, Gardner seconds, roll call vote taken, all in favor, July 2020 FS approved.**
- V. Management & Program Issues ----- Marquardt**
  - A. Update on EDA Supplemental grant progress – Marquardt and Vaught completed a required Waste & Fraud Training and submitted proof to EDA. Staff is now working on a 3-page Administration Plan to provide EDA with more detail on tasks and timelines for the 2-year project. This is close to completion and will be sent to the Board for review.**
  - B. Update on SWAMC membership drive and next steps – Staff sent the general membership renewal letter out 2 days ago via MailChimp. Staff is now working on another letter to send to Anchorage-based businesses that do a lot of work in the SWAMC region or are frequented by Southwest Alaskans while in Anchorage, like hospitality, engineering, and banking firms. Staff will also send out hard copy letters in the mail to those who have not yet renewed in a few months as a reminder. Marquardt requested that Board members email her businesses they suggest staff send letters to. Robinson said he would get contact information to staff for the Ounalashka Corp./Chena Power partnership for a membership request.**
  - C. Discussion on annual November board retreat in Anchorage. In person or online? – Marquardt expressed interest in holding the Board Retreat face-to-face if possible. What are the Board’s thoughts? Ruby stated she won’t be able to travel, as there has been an uptick in cases in the region that are travel related. BBEDC is still strictly prohibiting employee travel. Skinner stated that KIB staff are limited to travel only when absolutely necessary, and elected officials are following the same protocol. Based on this, she does not support an in-person Retreat. Robinson echoed this, saying there has been an uptick in cases nationwide and meeting in person would not be prudent. Muller stated that the organizations he’s a part of also have travel restrictions so he cannot do an in-person meeting, only Zoom or teleconference. Gronholdt directed staff to look into using Microsoft Teams or Zoom to hold Board Retreat. It worked for him recently out in Sand Point, so internet service may be good enough. Ruby suggested that the Alaska Communications Center on 36<sup>th</sup> Ave in Anchorage could potentially be used to support a Zoom meeting with the Board. SWAMC used it for an in-person Board Retreat a few years ago and they may have staff and tech support to help us host the Retreat this year. Olsen may be the only Board member who cannot access Zoom, but she may be able to at the City Office. Skinner mentioned that Olsen phoning into the Zoom call is an option as well, though Ruby mentioned it is a toll call. Staff will aim to make the Retreat agenda shorter than**



typical and break it up into multiple 2-3 hour sections so that no one is sitting on the computer for too long. Staff may do a Doodle Poll to determine dates in November for the Retreat, avoiding conflicts with AML which spans 2 weeks. Skinner requested that Robinson provide an update for the Board at the October Board meeting on important AML issues to look out for at their conference.

- D. VISTA position extension and amended scope of work discussion – The current AmeriCorps VISTA, Brooks Duncan, is in place for one-year spanning November 2019-November 2020. Duncan is working with Alaska Safety Alliance on updating the Maritime Workforce Development Plan. COVID greatly impacted his work, limiting his ability to travel. If the Board wants to keep the VISTA for another year. Staff recommends adding mariculture to his portfolio, helping regional entrepreneurs develop business plans and assess funding options and providing one-on-one help with permitting. The VISTA placement fee is \$8,000 for the year. Staff will confirm whether the EDA Supplemental grant can be used to cover this fee and a decision can be made at the October Board meeting. By then, staff will have the EDA Supplemental administrative plan finished, so will have the mariculture tasks fully scoped out.
- E. Dates for Annual Conference – The 2021 SWAMC Conference meeting dates are currently March 3-4 which is a Wednesday-Thursday. SWAMC staff and Board wanted to switch these dates to Thursday-Friday if possible so that the Conference doesn't take up attendees' whole week. The Captain Cook does have T-F open but it is the following week, March 11-12. The contract as currently written states that SWAMC can cancel the event 91 days out with no fee. So the Board can make a final decision at the November Retreat, as staff just needs to cancel by early December to meet the 91 day deadline. Staff plans to walk through the Cook in October with Kolby Hickel to discuss how the conference could be held safely with appropriate social distancing measures in place. Skinner asked about whether meals would still be served at the Conference and whether there would be an upcharge in meal prices due to additional COVID safety requirements. Staff has not seen any price increases but will verify with Cook staff. Meals would be plated and not buffet style due to transmission risks. Staff will also meet with the Marriott to see their options and pricing. Skinner stated she is very concerned about SWAMC planning an in-person conference and encouraging people to travel and congregate in Anchorage, then go home to their communities, potentially bringing the virus with them. She was frustrated that AML took so long to cancel their in-person Fall meeting and change it to Zoom. The date change is fine, given that we may not be gathering at all. It is an ethical question as well as logistical whether we should gather in person – there is value to meeting face-to-face but COVID is a huge factor that needs to be taken into account. Southwest Alaska has a lot of small vulnerable communities. That being said, March is a long way away. Robinson stated that it would be helpful to think of an alternative to in-person early on with an eye towards an innovative approach to provide value to our membership without undue risk. Could encourage people to pay into pot to support SWAMC in lieu of in-person meeting this year. He is concerned about significant time and resources cutting into staff's ability to change direction from in-person to virtual. Sullivan concurred. Board and staff will reflect and discuss more at the October and November board meetings. The coming flu season is an additional challenge. Gronholdt stated that the odds of SWAMC being able to hold a successful in-person meeting are higher the later we push the dates back. Sullivan agreed that Thursday-Friday dates would be best. Sullivan makes motion to move dates, Gardner seconds, roll call vote taken, all in favor, motion passes, Conference dates moved from March 3-4, 2021 to March 11-12, 2021. Marquardt then notified Board that she just received an email from Kolby Hickel stating that March 4-5, 2021 (Thursday-Friday) is indeed available if SWAMC wanted to shift dates and stay in the same week preceding the Iditarod. Assuming Iditarod happens this year, it is important to retain that connection. It also maintains this week for the SWAMC Conference as a priority for the Cook, which is strategically important long-term. SWAMC has historically chosen these dates because Iditarod attracts more people to Anchorage and therefore our Conference; SWAMC would not want to lose that linkage. The Board discussed the proper procedure: Motion to Reconsider. Sullivan makes motion to reconsider the previous vote made to change conference dates from March 3-4 to March 11-12, Robinson seconds, all in favor, no objections, motion to reconsider passes. Therefore, previous motion made is no longer applicable. Skinner makes motion to change



Conference dates from March 3-4 to March 4-5, Robinson seconds, roll call made, all in favor, motion passes.

- F. Rename SWAMC Newsletter – SWAMC staff has been working with Information Insights who are professionals at messaging, and they have suggested updates to the SWAMC monthly newsletter. The current name “SWAMC Newsletter” is impersonal and could be updated to something catchier. Skinner asked if there was any rush on updating the newsletter and if not, suggested that it be discussed at the annual Conference which could provide more fanfare and focus on the newsletter from attendees. However, the Conference is 5 months out and Marquardt expressed desire to change the newsletter name sooner than this, in line with other updates being made with SWAMC’s Communications Plan. Marquardt listed off proposed names. Could be discussed further at the October and November board meetings. Item tabled until October Board meeting.

**VI. Staff Report-----Marquardt**

Staff has been focused on several region-centric issues, such as Broadband. No word yet on ReConnect grant winners. SWAMC will support whatever company is successful in getting USDA ReConnect grant funding. Another issue staff has focused on is mariculture: there has been a lot of research conducted in SE Alaska but less in SW. Staff is looking at what SWAMC can do with EDA Supplemental funding: potentially business planning and assessing funding options, permitting, site visits, one-on-one trainings for interested farmers. Another staff focus is assistance to small businesses in the region with COVID relief. Phone calls are still coming through to Keri on the help line. Lately calls have been focused on the USDA Seafood Trade Relief Program. Another upcoming program is the \$50 million for fishing relief for Alaska through CARES Act funds – ADF&G has not yet finalized the application process. Gronholdt asked whether there would be enough funds in the USDA STRP program given that all fishermen in the US are eligible. The amount of money allocated is based on landings, and enough was allocated to cover everyone so yes, everyone impacted should be able to access relief. The program is not first come, first served.

**VII. Board Comments / Other Business**

Next Board meeting will be held October 15 at 9 am.

**VIII. Adjourn Time:** Muller moves to adjourn meeting, Sullivan seconds, meeting adjourned at 10:33 am by **Vice President Gronholdt**