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**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**December 15, 2016**  
*DRAFT for REVIEW*

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*In Attendance: A. Desbonnet (acting secretary), T. Ferrio, J. MacAndrew, J. MacKenzie, D. Walsh, C. Fox (Exec. Dir.)*

**1. Call to Order**

A. Desbonnet called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

**2. Approval of November 15, 2016 Minutes**

D. Walsh made correction to the minutes in d) Fund Development Committee Report that “Lactour’s” and “Foutes” names were incorrectly spelled and should be corrected to “Lacouture’s” and “Fontes”. J. MacAndrew moved to accept the minutes of the November 15, 2016 meeting as amended, T. Ferrio seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

**3. Business Meeting**

a) Review of 2017 WPWA Draft Budget

A brief review was conducted to familiarize everyone with the concepts behind viewing various budget categories as “restricted vs. unrestricted” income and “adjustable vs. fixed” costs. The budget was then reviewed line by line with the following changes made in Expense categories as shown in budget Pages 3 & 4:

**Page 3, Item 7090 Dues/Fees was reduced to \$0 (\$400 savings);** it was agreed that dues in several organizations, such as the RI Natural History Survey, could be disregarded for the coming year without penalty or negative impact.

**Page 3, Item 7110 Equipment was reduced to \$0 (\$2,000 savings);** these funds were for a new laptop should that used by the Exec Dir fail. C. Fox noted there are several other laptops available for use if that happens, though they are not as powerful and capable. It was agreed this cost could be removed with little to no negative impact.

**Page 3, Item 7235 Professional Service was reduced to \$7,000 (\$8,000 savings);** this action is accompanied by a companion reduction described later but related to Page 4, Item 7999 Water Quality. The paired reduction results in a decreased need for water quality analysis, reporting, and data management from a consultant (Elise). It was agreed that data analysis and reporting could be delayed by a year without significant negative impact.

**Page 3, Item 7600 Lattner Foundation Grant Expenses was reduced to \$0 (\$10,000 savings);** Lattner is funding WPWA for \$25,000 NOT the requested \$75,000. Since full funding is not to be received, the expenses associated with full funding will not be expended and are therefore removed from the budget. It was agreed no negative impact results from this reduction. [note: we have not yet received the official letter of funding approval from Lattner, and it is possible that

some expense may be realized, and if so this will be reconciled in the budget as appropriate at that time].

**Page 4, Item 7825 Program Coordinator was reduced to \$30,140 (\$8,000 savings);** C. Fox noted that Denise was interested in a X-hour per week reduction of work hours, and it was agreed that this reduction therefore had no significant negative impact, though it may increase workload of the Exec Dir by a small amount.

**Page 4, Item 7840 Membership Coordinator was reduced to \$0 (\$14,560 savings);** it was agreed that this was an expendable cost but that it would increase the workload of the Exec Dir who would have to pick up those duties to ensure that member processing, etc. did not become problematic. There was some discussion about the potential to have volunteers engage in some of these duties.

**Page 4, Item 7855 Welcome Center Staff was reduced to \$0 (\$2,875 savings);** it was agreed this was an expendable cost, but with the understanding that some action would need to be taken to develop plans for the Exec Dir and/or volunteers to man the Welcome Center at key times. This discussion should be undertaken before the return of warm weather.

**Page 4, Item 7860 Payroll Taxes, Item 7880 Benefit Allowance, Item 7890 Workers Comp** will all be reduced to some degree based on the reduction to staff as defined above for Item 7825 and Item 7840. Actual savings will be calculated and factored into a next version of the budget. It is likely the savings will be on the order of only a few thousands of dollars, at best; **\$2,000 savings** is used here as a best guess estimate.

**Page 4, Item 7920 River and Trail Maintenance was reduced to \$0 (savings of \$2,000);** removal of tree blow downs into the river is generally funded through a \$3,000 provision from the RI Trail Advisory Committee (Page 1, Item 4610) with WPWA contributing further funds, if needed, to clear all river segments. It was agreed that for 2017 tree removal work will cease when the funds allocation of \$3,000 is expended.

**Page 4, Item 7999 Water Quality was reduced to \$10,000 (\$10,000 savings)** [see Page 3, Item 7235 for related cost reduction]; this action would eliminate sampling of Tier 2 water quality stations, and of **Tier 1B sites**. The idea of complete elimination of the water quality program for 2017 was considered, but carried too many negative impacts, including possible loss of volunteers, lost faith in the sampling program and in the association and its overall mission. The reduction of effort in water quality sampling, while conducted on behalf of prudent and necessary budget management, was not viewed by anyone as an ideal solution. It was agreed that this issue should be discussed at the January 7<sup>th</sup> workshop and that action should be taken in an immediate and directed fashion to raise the funds necessary to reverse this budget cut.

**The above resulted in cost reduction of approximately \$60,000.** C. Fox will rework the budget, which will incorporate more refined estimates of costs related to Page 4, Items 7860, 7880 and 7890. *The above actions do not however result in a balanced budget.* It was agreed that the only costs left that could readily be cut were salary of the Exec Dir (Page 4, Item 7810) and/or Water Quality (Page 4,

Item 7999). It was agreed that any further cuts to those items were not tenable as they would have too many potential negative impacts.

Discussion of the budget ended as:

1. C. Fox will revise the budget according to the cost reductions as noted above.
2. C. Fox will balance the budget by allocating funds from WPWA investment accounts.
3. It was agreed that while balancing the budget on the investment accounts was necessary, it was not an ideal solution. It was agreed that the January 7<sup>th</sup> workshop would likely shed light on some creative ways to increase unrestricted income, and it was agreed that a priority for action would be to implement such ideas to increase income and remove the need for expenditure of investment funds in 2017. Budget Page 1 and Page 2 would be revised accordingly.
4. It was agreed that while necessary to create a balanced budget, reduction of the water quality program cuts to the heart of the WPWA mission, and all efforts should be made to restore funds to this program. It was agreed that the January 7<sup>th</sup> workshop would likely result in ideas for sustaining water quality monitoring efforts at WPWA, and that this should be a priority area of action for 2017. One definite area of action should be to meet with local pond and lake associations and seek their engagement in funding those monitoring stations that directly benefit the association.

b) End-of-Year Budget Update — tabled; an email will be issued in early 2017

c) January Workshop Update — tabled; Mark Amaral will issue an email with agenda and other pertinent materials soon.

#### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, T. Ferrio made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by J. Mackenzie and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.