



Saint Paul Bird Alliance  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2024  
Amherst H. Wilder Center, St. Paul, MN

### **Call to Order**

The Saint Paul Bird Alliance Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, November 4, 2024. President Greg Burnes call the meeting to order at 5:01 pm. Those attending were Vice-President Kiki Sonnen, Treasurer Neil Carlson, Secretary Amanda Rice, VP of Communications Martha Douglas, Monica Bryand (Zoom), Debbie Brown, Fran Kennedy (Zoom) and Craig Cox.

### **Updates – Announcements**

- Introductions with Fran.
- Board members shared recent bird sightings and related activities in which they participated.

### **Current Business**

#### **Approve September 2024 Minutes**

Martha moved to approve of the minutes. Neil seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **Treasurers Report**

- Neil provided the following update on our current assets:
  - US Bank Checking: \$19,560.05
  - US Bank Savings: \$3,010.18
  - US Bank Certificate: \$26,093.72
  - TruStone Certificate:\$33,950.88
- The US Bank CD comes due December 10. Neil will update with US Bank in December. Look to keep some available as cash for upcoming expenses.
  - Put \$16,093.72 to a new CD
  - Move \$10,000 to checking
- [2023/24 Final Financial Statement](#) and [24/25 Budget](#) (Both on the website)

### **Chapter Name Change**

Greg emailed an update on logistics and communications

Responses – Discussion – Next Steps

- Discussed leaving the name change news on the main page of the website. Consider leaving it on through the rest of this year, but also referencing the previous name as people get used to the change.
- Look at art contest for new stickers.

## Grants

Craig provided a summary of the nine grant requests last month and handed out summary for voting today.

- Greg made a motion to approve all projects except the Urban Bird Collective, Neil seconded it and the board voted to approve all of them.
- Craig will notify the groups of the approvals and will get addresses and names for the grant checks. They will be mailed after December 15.

- **University of Belize Environment Research Institute** – 8 voted yes, 1 voted no

- **Project:** [Advancing Capacity Building in Bird Research](#)
- **Request:** \$2,000
- **Summary:** The project aims to advance capacity building and student research initiatives for further student development. Activities include (1) conducting Data and Protocol Review Training; (2) producing a manuscript analyzing bird community composition using the bird banding dataset; (3) supporting a student interested in pursuing a thesis project with the bird banding dataset; and (4) provide introductory bird banding training for partners and interested students.
- **Recommendation:** Continue our support at \$2,000.

Commented [AR1]: Should this level of detail be included in the minutes? How many voted?

- **Frogtown Green** – board voted yes

- **Project:** [General Support](#)
- **Request:** \$5,000
- **Summary:** Annual programming will include: (1) pollinator-friendly prairie garden planting for bird habitat; (2) tree planting; (2) tree planting; (3) creating and maintaining bird-watching stations at two community garden sites; (4) offering at least two urban bird walks; (5) repair and repaint the Chimney Swift tower; and (5) include bird-related exhibits and activities during the Frogtown Green sustainability festival.
- **Recommendation:** Continue support at \$2,500.

Commented [AR2]: Should all of these project details be included in the minutes? Or just reference the grant document somehow?

- **Maplewood Nature Center** – board voted yes

- **Project:** [Maplewood Nature Center Bird and Pollinator Viewing Area Phase II](#)
- **Request:** \$1,614
- **Summary:** For Phase II of this project, we propose additional plantings in Viewing Area 1, north of the visitor center building, which we began converting to native plants for birds and pollinators. This would increase the density of native plants to fill in the area with floral sources quicker and

reduce colonization of weedy plants and maintenance. The northeast corner of Area 1 remains largely unplanted after Phase I.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to fund this grant at \$1,614 to finish the work we supported last year.
  
- **St. Paul Creative Zone Enterprise** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [100 Trees Initiative](#)
  - **Request:** \$2,000
  - **Summary:** The Initiative is a grassroots effort to grow and plant 100 new street trees in the Zone each year to expand the urban tree canopy, improve air and water quality, increase habitat for wildlife, and reduce the high heat index in our growing mixed-use district in Saint Paul. Activities include (1) tree species research and site planning (Jan-May); (2) tree pruning and maintenance; (3) tree procurement and gravel bed prep; (4) spring site and gravel bed planting; (5) tree Watering; (6) education, donor, fundraising & volunteer recruitment; (7) tree planting plan approval, tree order, and utility checks; (8) Fall Community Planting Day ; (9) ongoing tree care, watering & maintenance (2+ years for each new tree) (year-round).
  - **Recommendation:** support at \$2,000.
  
- **My Bird Club** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [FREE Youth & Family Inclusive Bird Walks](#)
  - **Request:** \$3,500
  - **Summary:**
    - Project #1 – Youth Birdwatching Offering 18 indoor and outdoor adventures Jan-Dec 2025. SPA funds will support 9 of these outings— MyBirdClub guides and outfits for youth and adult outdoor birdwatching adventures. Youths earn milestone rewards (charms) added to their MyBirdClub Lanyard when they 4 attend their 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5th adventures. After that, charms are earned for every five adventures they attend.
    - Project #2 – Froglab birdwatching program with Frogtown Green. Provide afterschool programming focused on birds, birdwatching, and bird conservation for Froglab. MyBirdClub will present four indoor and outdoor programs to introduce kids to birdwatching and show them how to get involved. They will each receive a laminated field guide to keep and to inspire them.
  - **Recommendation:** Continue support at \$3,000.
  
- **Hamline Midway Coalition** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [Bee Line Wildlife Data Project](#)
  - **Request:** \$2,000

- **Summary:** The Bee Line is a project involving Frogtown and Hamline Midway neighborhood residents to enhance native plant plantings along Pierce Butler Route in Saint Paul. The proposed project will set up an online ID module and game cameras to make it easier for citizen naturalists to record wildlife observations from the Bee Line. Activities include (1) building the [iNaturalist](#) ID module to allow community members to contribute wildlife observations, (2) purchasing and setting up three trail cameras, and (3) designing communications to generate awareness of urban wildlife.
- **Recommendation:** Support at \$2,000.
  
- **[Sustainable Stillwater MN Bird City Group](#)** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [William Street Bird Park](#)
  - **Request:** \$2,000
  - **Summary:** The William Street Bird Park is envisioned as a 5,000-square-foot lot donated to Sustainable Stillwater MN's (501c3) Bird City Stillwater group for educational purposes and ecosystem restoration. The site's uses will include educational programs and small group-engaging activities for all ages, rain gardening, citizen science projects, such as bird counts and school/youth projects, the setup of various feeding stations for different species, and the setup of birdcall listening devices and cameras from Cornell University with data collecting/citizen science projects.
  - **Recommendation:** support at \$2,000.
  
- **[Eleanor Graham Community Gardens](#)** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [Eleanor Graham Community Prairie](#)
  - **Request:** \$2,000
  - **Summary:** The Eleanor Graham Community Garden occupies a triangular parcel of land nearly three acres in size that is bounded by Ayd Mill Road, Hamline Avenue, and Ashland Avenue in Saint Paul. Activities include: (1) support interested gardeners in germinating pollinator- and song bird-friendly prairie seed mixes in their homes for spring transplanting into the prairie site; (2) purchase and plant in spaces adjacent to the prairie site a bur oak and other insect- and song-bird friendly trees to help compensate for the loss of an enormous legacy bur oak tree in the community garden in June 2023; (3) contract with Great River Greening to provide staff to advise gardeners on prairie management during the garden's May and September 2025 monthly Saturday community work days.
  - **Recommendation:** support at \$1,000.
  
- Greg made a motion to approve \$3,000 for UBC partnership, Debbie seconded it and the board voted to approve it. Monica abstained.
- **[Urban Bird Collective](#)** – board voted yes
  - **Project:** [Multiple Projects and Events](#)

- **Request:** \$3,000
  - **Summary:** The primary goal of this project is to increase BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people's participation in birding and to build authentic relationships with program participants. The secondary goal is to engage with the environmental community. Activities include: (1) recruiting new and diverse volunteers for the MN Winter Bird count, infusing the counts with new people and new energy; (2) identifying, mapping, and monitoring Chimney Swift nests and roosts in the Twin Cities metro area and host Swift Night Out events to engage urban communities and reach new birders; (3) support conservation work at Pig's Eye Regional Park; (4) offer opportunities to UBC leaders to enhance and gain new skills and deepen relationships with each other.
  - **Recommendation:** Continue our support for this ongoing partnership at \$3,000.
- Craig reviewed options for the grant program going forward, including partnering for outreach. Greg shared this as a way to focus applications:
    - Engage – we spark people's passion for birds and habitats by sharing our joy, knowledge and resources
    - Conservation – create and support programs, projects and partners that protect birds and critical habitats
    - Advocacy – be a “voice at the table” for birds and habitats
  - Discussed how a partner differs from a grant applicant. Partners can share event tables, host joint trips, how we advance each other's missions.
  - Kiki – Frogtown
  - Martha – My Bird Club
  - Greg – Urban Bird Collective

### **Upcoming Events**

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (MOU) refreshments December 7 in St. Paul – still need at least one volunteer

Christmas Bird Count – Greg and Kiki are in process of confirming leaders

### **Fall Membership Drive**

Proposal to follow the mailer used in 2023 with updates on name change, dates

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

### **Field Trip Coordinator/Chair**

### **Program Coordinators / Ideas**

**Committee Updates**

**Adjourn – Next BoD Meeting Dec. 2 (Monday) - 5 PM – Location TBD**

The Board adjourned the monthly business meeting at 6:59 pm.

