December 6, 2023

The executive board of the Virginia Mosquito Control Association held a meeting on December 6, 2023 through GoToMeeting.

Those present were President Carla Caulkins, President Elect Karen Akaratovic, Vice President Lauren Lochstampfor, First Vice President Addie Weddle, Secretary/Treasurer Jay Kiser, Local Arrangements Committee Chair Charles Abadam, and Hospitality Committee Chair Carol LaLiberte.

The executive board meeting was called to order at 9:01am.

Lauren Lochstampfor made a motion, seconded by Karen Akaratovic, to approve the October 18, 2023 board meeting minutes and October 25, 2023 email minutes as presented to the board by Jay Kiser. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Lauren Lochstampfor made a motion, seconded by Karen Akaratovic, to approve the December 6, 2023 financial report as presented to the board by Jay Kiser. Jay mentioned that there was an additional accidental $1,000 deposit charge by Hilton Virginia Beach. Once they realized this was a mistake, they refunded the charge that same day. Jay said he never received a receipt or paperwork for these charges and asked Charles who he needs to talk with. Charles recommended emailing Brenda (Jay has her email address). There was no more discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Board member and committee reports

(Board members and committees not mentioned had nothing to report)

MAMCA Representative, Carla spoke for Tim DuBois, 2025 MAMCA/VMCA conference hotel is almost set up. A contract with Marriott at Newport New City Center is being worked on, but it is not finalized yet.

Historical Committee, Carla spoke for Tim DuBois (chair), Historical Committee would like to have two tables during the 2024 conference. Charles said that seems doable and will let the hotel know. Charles asked if the SCC would like 3 tables for the silent auction, and Jay said yes.

Local Arrangements Committee Chair Charles Abadam, went with Carol to the hotel last weekend and asked several questions. VMCA has the ability to use the corner room with windows for the Ice Breaker (IB) and/or Hospitality room (HR) and the inside room for the other event (IB or HR) or as overflow. The food and/or drinks for these events can be purchased by VMCA or provided by the hotel. Charles suggested that the IB be set apart from the HR, especially if one or both are sponsored by a vendor. Separating the events will make the IB seem more special.

Charles reminded the board that we usually receive $2500 a year in conference sponsorships, including Central Life Sciences (CLS) paying $2000 for the IB. We have only raised $750 this year: $250 from 3 vendors and potentially little to no sponsorship from CLS. There is concern that VMCA may have to pay more if the sponsorships don’t come in. The board asked if Charles contacted the vendors like he said he would during the last board meeting. Charles has not called them, but said that he will. He reiterated that this is a lot of work and the vendor planning committee should be established next year to do this: a committee without the industry rep as the chair would be preferable.

Charles explained to the board that the Local Arrangements Committee makes a lot of decisions on its own about the conference set up, but the board should really be more involved. Decisions like whether or not to have breakfasts, what to offer during breaks, and the food types and amounts offered at events. Decisions like these can affect how much money is spent, especially if sponsorships from vendors change. Board members agree, but the committee is looked at for its expertise in these details. Jay said that the board agreed/voted on a minimum F&B for the conference when they determined what registration costs they wanted. Jay likes the idea of the committee suggesting the best course of action to stay close to that amount, and then the board could vote yay or nay to those suggestions. The board agreed that they would like to do what was done last year for food during the conference. Registrations were raised $5 a person, in hopes to counter the raise in food costs. Lauren and Karen both like the idea of providing the IB and breakfasts. Karen asked Charles when the latest these decisions would need to be made. Charles said the latest would be two weeks before the conference. Carla asked Jay if sponsorships were low this year, would VMCA be able to pay for the IB without hurting ourselves financially. Jay said we should be able to pay extra in 2024 without a problem. If we did end up paying extra, Jay might suggest tightening our belts in 2025 and/or 2026.

Hospitality Room Committee Chair Carol LaLiberte, would also like to separate the HR and IB (Charles recommendation from above). Everyone likes the corner room the best but no one wants the IB in the internal room. The cost of the rooms will be the same (we will actually get both for one cost). In order to have the HR in the corner room, it was asked if the IB could take place in the bar downstairs or in the vendor room. Charles said he would ask the hotel.

Carol is working to get the board a budget for food and beverages (adult and regular). She would like to know what Ann spent on the HR in the past. Carla asked Jay if he could send these numbers to Carol. Jay said he can do that. Carol is also interested in what food to bring since the hotel said no hot foods can be served. Jay and Carla thought that was weird because crockpots were allowed and used last year. Charles will ask the hotel about crockpots. Carol said she would like to use 3 of them. If crockpots are not allowed, Jay said getting pizza and/or wings delivered could be an option.

Information Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, call for Winter Skeeter articles went out last week. Articles will be due by the end of the year.

Website Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, is updating the website as things come in.

Agenda Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, agenda rough draft has been completed and submitted to the board. Several of the suggested changes from the board have been implemented. Lots of presenters have already confirmed their info. VDACS approved the recertification for registered tech and Category 8. Jay suggested talking with Charles about the need for virtual presentations to take place after breaks. Charles apologized to Karen that he didn’t respond to her email, but he would like virtual presentations to be set up this way. Karen said she will talk with him after the board meeting.

Karen sent the board a request for speaker gifts and a lightning round gift card. In her request, she gave the board information on 2 children’s books about mosquitoes (drawn and written by people working in the mosquito control field) and macarons created by a local small business in VA beach. She would like to give one book and 2 macarons to each of the 32 in-person presenters. She would like to spend up to $600 for these gifts including a $50 gift card for the lightning round winner. Lauren Lochstampfor made a motion, seconded by Addie Weddle, to allow the agenda committee to spend up to $600 on the proposed speaker gifts and lighting round gift card. During discussion, Jay said he thinks $600 is too much. VMCA normally spends $400 or less on speaker gifts (does not remember ever spending over $400). Carla asked if we should think about spending more, since the cost of things are going up. Jay asked if we need to buy speaker gifts or door prizes at all. Karen thinks the membership appreciates both and feels we should keep them. Lauren and Addie both retracted their motions. Lauren Lochstampfor made a motion, seconded by Addie Weddle, to allow the agenda committee to spend up to $400 on a lesser amount/cheaper combination of proposed speaker gifts and a lighting round gift card. There was more discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Membership Committee Chair Jay Kiser, we currently have about 35 members signed up for 2024 and 4 sustaining members. Only a few have paid, but that shouldn’t be an issue. This number of registrations is way better than this time last year or any year Jay has been S/T.

Student Competition Committee Chair Jay Kiser, Central Life Sciences was able to send in their sponsorship to the 2023 Tour de Skeeter. This allowed SCC to make over $550 for the event (after expenses).

The poster deadline for the 2023/2024 competition was last week. Surprisingly only 4 posters were submitted, but they did come from a diversity of schools/states: 1 from VA. 1 from MD, 1 from DC, and 1 from NC. Posters have been submitted to the judges and we are awaiting the results.

During the 2024 conference, we plan to have the silent auction and 50:50 raffle.

Nominations Committee, Carla has not heard any details from Wes (committee chair) about the nominations he has set up. Jay said that he is concerned with not hearing anything. The board knows there are 2 maybe 3 S/T nominations, but December is pretty late to not have 1st Vice or Industry Rep. nominations. Jay said that January 11 is the deadline for the ballots to be sent out, which is right around the corner. Carla and Karen said they will contact him soon to see what he has done.

Elections Committee Chair Carla Caulkins, sent out an email to the board with links to some equipment that the committee would like to buy and implement during the 2024 conference: “I voted” stickers, partition for a voting booth, and a suggestion box. The stickers can be given out to those that voted (at packet pickup or throughout the conference). The booth can give a space to vote, QR code inside to scan and vote on your phone (bringing attention to the voting process) or place to fill out paper ballots. Suggestion box can be used for paper ballots or suggestions in the future years. Carla will double check with Penny how the box will be used. Jay said he can print the QR codes for the voting website and digital packet paperwork on the back of each name tag. He can also print the voting ID number on the name tag as well. In order to encourage voting, there was discussion about voters getting their names put into a drawing for a $50 gift card. Penny would be the one to compile the names. Board members like these ideas. Jay Kiser made a motion, seconded by Karen Akaratovic, to allow the elections committee to spend up to $120 on the equipment proposed by the Elections Committee. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried. Jay told Carla to send him the final decisions and he will purchase them on Amazon and ship them to Penny’s office if possible. Carla will talk with her committee and share the details.

New Business

* The next board meeting will be January 3 (Wednesday) at 9am.
* Conference packets: Jay would like to continue what we have been doing the last couple years with conference packets: printing name tags and agendas, but offering only digital options for other items. There was discussion if the survey and committee sign up sheets should be offered in printable versions like requested last year. Jay advocated for digital only, not understanding why paper versions are still needed in 2023. Karen said she will create the committee signup sheet and it will only be offered digitally. Addie said she will work on the survey. In order to encourage participation with the committee signup, the board would like to offer a $50 gift card drawing for those that fill that form out. Karen will create the list of names for this drawing.
* Door Prizes: Jay assumes that door prizes will be purchased for the 2024 conference. In the past few years, VMCA has spent up to $400 on door prizes for each conference. Jay suggests this same amount, but having the two $50 gift card drawings be included. Karen Akaratovic made a motion, seconded by Lauren Lochstampfor, to allow Jay to spend up to $400 on 2024 conference door prizes, including 2 $50 gift cards that will be given out by drawings: 1 for those that vote and 1 for those that fill out their committee signup sheets. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.
* Conference slideshow: get your slides together and send them to Carla/Katherine.
* Conference posters: Jay brought up the list of posters that may be created and printed for the 2024 conference.
  + Student research posters - Jay will have these printed
  + Silent auction and 50:50 raffle poster - Jay will create this
  + Merchandise poster - assuming Penny will create this
  + Hospitality room and ice breaker poster - Charles said he will create this
  + Voting and bylaws changes poster - Jay will create and give to Carla, Karen, and Penny to check.
  + Committee signup gift card drawings - Karen will create
  + Vendor sponsorships - Jay will create
  + Tick poster- Dr. Gaines is creating and bringing his own stand
* Emails to membership: Jay discussed two emails that should be drafted and sent to membership: 1. Carla going on maternity leave with Karen stepping in as acting president 2. Jay suggested that an email go out saying Zachary Cohen is no longer interim Industry Rep and the position will be empty until after the elections.
  + Carla said she will write something up for her leaving and send it to Jay.
  + Lauren asked if Zach has been communicated with and asked what is going on. Carla said she has not talked with him and hasn’t heard from anyone that has. Carla said she will email him and ask what he is planning. Jay suggested that Carla encourage Zach to resign. It is not fair that he has the title of VMCA Industry Rep, with the ability to vote, when he doesn’t have the decency to participate or even communicate with us. The board hopes that he will be able to join the next board meeting.

Jay Kiser made a motion, seconded by Lauren Lochstampfor, to adjourn the meeting at 10:56am, all in favor, none opposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay Kiser

Secretary/Treasurer VMCA