**Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge**

**Annual Meeting**

January 15, 2019

Sherburne History Center

The meeting was called to order by President Myrna Krueger at 7:00 pm. Introductions were made around the room with 21 people present, which includes three service staff in attendance as Friends members (not furloughed employees) and 8 Friends board members in attendance.

**2018 Refuge Report: Steve Karel**

* New permanent and seasonal staff (CDIP, YCC); CPR, fire Crew and other training
* Congressman Tom Emmer visit; first recorded Whooping Crane visit; notable monarch butterfly fallout
* Water management, infrastructure repair, cattail spraying; 3100 acres of controlled burns including Blue Hill;
* Support for the Friends of Sherburne, school visits, public events like the Wildlife Festival, Photo Club and other Friends’ projects
* Expected budget (probably less than 2018) and priorities of current shutdown for staff were described. Two new positions will be added in 2019: Law Enforcement Officer (shared with Sherburne Complex and Litchfield Wetland Management District) plus a Wildlife Refuge Specialist (DFP Student Nikki Ellingson) for Crane Meadows, both stationed at Sherburne
* 2019 objectives include new Refuge signs and kiosks, Wildlife Drive Welcome Station, 2 new cooperators for grazing (including goats for Buckthorn control), pool water structure replacements, CR16 road project, paved parking lot for Oak Savanna Learning Center, continued support for the Friends of Sherburne projects (new Photo and Viewing Blinds), and continued support for the Fish and Wildlife Service mission including new hunting and fishing opportunities

The **minutes** of the January 16, 2018 annual meeting were presented.

*A motion was made by Carol VanHeel and seconded by Lee Johnson to accept the minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting as presented. Motion passed.*

**President's Report: Myrna Krueger**

*Friends Accomplishments 2018:*

* We revamped the Friends’ Communications infrastructure using a grant from the Fish and Wildlife Service Foundation. New brochures, new email, flyer, PowerPoint and newsletter templates and new website were implemented
* We updated the “Board Handbook” (Policies and Procedures manual) together with minor amendments to the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
* Together with refuge staff we supported the 2018 Wildlife Festival with significant financial support for tents, speakers, wagon rides, refreshments and golf carts
* We threw our 25 Year Birthday bash in August at the OSLC with special guest Charlie Blair, Midwest Regional Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System
* We introduced a book club (“Friends Read”) which will be continued
* With the Initiative Foundation, we hosted a “Planned Giving” seminar
* We co-hosted the “Grapes and Grains” fundraiser with the Sherburne History Center
* Our membership grows, we now total 438 members (about 5% up from last year)
* Our year-end online and mail campaign was kicked off with the November “Give to the Max” day

*Friends Plans/Goals for 2019*

* We want to take “Be Wild” to the next level by investing in sustaining the nature education program to best use the OSLC facility. Our proposal is for the Friends to fund a part-time Naturalist Contractor to work under the direction of Refuge Visitor Services staff. This person would coordinate and deliver the Partner School program as well as support self-guided interpretive experiences for the general public
* We received a grant for a Wildlife Drive Welcome Center renovation project. This work at the Wildlife Drive rest stop will be funded jointly by the Friends and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
* We are funding a new Photo Blind near the Oak Savanna Learning Center (funded by “Be Wild” money plus a small grant)

*Lest we forget to say “Thanks”*

* Special thanks to Dean Kleinhans whose Board membership has expired, and other members (both on the Board and not) for work at community expos, on the communications revamp, events and Sharon Kolstad for managing the Eagle’s Nest Nature Store
* Thanks to Steve Karel, Alaina Larkin, Jessica Nelson and the staff for their work and enthusiasm
* And a final thanks as well to our donors and community sponsors this last year

**Treasurer's Report: Carol VanHeel**

2018 Actual vs Budget variances, Fund Balances and 2019 Budget were presented.

* **2018 Year End Fund Balances**
  + Beginning balance $54,371.74
  + Ending balance $75,606.77
* **2019 Budget**
  + Projected income $59,280.00
  + Projected expenses $59,880.00

*A motion was made by Steve Chesney and seconded by Susan Bialka to accept the 2019 budget. Motion passed.*

**Board Nominations: Matt Finn**

Nominees for 3-year terms, January 2018- December 2020

* Marilyn Danielson
* Bill Kolbinger
* Myrna Krueger (returning)
* Emy Minzel

*A motion was made by Carol VanHeel and seconded by Matt Finn to elect the nominated directors as stated to the board of the Friends of Sherburne. Motion passed.*

*A motion was made by Deb Sorenson and seconded by Lee Johnson to adjourn the annual meeting. Motion passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

In attendance: Myrna Krueger, Steve Chesney, Carol VanHeel, Steve Karel, Bill Kolbinger, Beth Thorson, Susan Bialka, Don Leaon, Mary Leaon, Mike Brubaker, Matt Finn, Emy Minzel, Marilyn Danielson, Margie Ellingson, Bruce Ellingson, Jessica Nelson, Alaina Larkin, Lee T. Johnson, Dorene Pohl, Patty Crockford, Deb Sorenson.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Chesney, Secretary