

**Friends of the Elephant Seal  
Meeting Board of Directors  
June 21, 2017  
POLLY TATTON'S HOME  
Minutes**

***Friends of the Elephant Seal is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about elephant seals and other marine life and to teaching stewardship of the central coast of California***

**Present:** Tim Bridwell, Lynette Harrison, Polly Tatton, Bill Goodger, Sue King (Board Member effective upon passage of third motion noted below), Stephen Beck, Mary Forbes, Kathy Dowding, Bob Grosse, Lisa Harper-Henderson Staff Member.

**Opening:** Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Lynette Harrison at 10:03

**Guests:** No guests present for introductions.

**Approval of May 17, 2017 BOD Minutes.**

**Motion** to approve the BOD minutes of 5/17/17: Polly 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary. Motion passed.

**Approval of May 27, 2017 BOD Minutes.**

**Motion** to approve the BOD minutes of 5/27/17: Tim , 2<sup>nd</sup> Bill. Motion passed.

**BOARD ACTIONS:**

**Motion Accept Sue King:** Tim made a motion to add Sue King to the BOD to fill Crystal's remaining term that is set to expire in Dec. 2019: Tim 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathy. Motion passed.

**Financial Review:** Tim's report. By-laws state that FES should now be having a financial review of our books and such review should occur every three years. Tim has made contact with a few accounting professionals. One in SLO said it would cost \$10,000.00 plus expenses to do our financial review. As an alternative, we could get a letter of consideration or letter of review from the firm which would cost FES \$5,000. For various reason our financial review has not been on the front burner. Tim reported further that he recently spoke with a person, Bret, who specializes in accounting for non-profit organizations. After a long telephone conversation, Bret advised Tim that in his opinion we really do not need an audit. Bill Goodger said that he as Treasurer monitors our bookkeeper and know about all checks that go out each month. Tim said that he was happy to know this and that he did not know of this at the time he spoke with Bret. Bill said that he just considered such oversight of our finances to be part of the Treasurer's job. Bret told Tim that he could visit the FES office and make recommendations to us on our procedures. We could then have a third party reconcile our bank account and our purchases. Bill said he has been performing both of these oversight functions for us. Kathy and Sue suggested that knowing of Bill's involvement, we may be more in compliance or better covered than we may have earlier thought. A discussion arose on whether we need to use purchase orders for items that are in our budget; Kathy suggested that it was not necessary due to our size and the consensus of the Board agreed that we do not.

**MOTION:** Tim made the following motion: Knowing of our treasurer's oversight, I make the motion, that because of our current financial circumstances, that we extend the time for our financial review for up to a 12 months. Tim 2<sup>nd</sup> Lynette. Motion passed.

Kathy suggested that we want to document what the Treasurer is doing to give financial oversight for FES. It was also suggested that perhaps we could also create a job description of treasurer's duties.

**COMMITTEE /STAFF REPORTS;**

- **Staff Report – Kathy Dowding**

Kathy provided an update on what has been happening in the office.

Kathy reported that job descriptions for our employees are now in draft form. We were advised that Wendy Sheridan is now working 5 days per week in the office and that Lisa is working 2 to 3 days per week. We now publish monthly calendars of who is in the office. There will be exceptions or gaps in having the office open seven days a week due to staff needing some days off from time to time. When staff needs time off, Kathy may go to the Board or our docents to staff the office. Polly asked about closing the office on holidays. Kathy said staff has expressed the desire to have time off on major holidays and she believed that we should honor their request.

Mary would like to see the office staffed on three-day weekends. Kathy said that to do this could mean using docents. Tim stated that he did not think we should demand employees to work major holidays.

We started to do clicker counts for visitors coming into the office. Next month Kathy will give us an update on clicker counts for visitors that come into the office.

We are doing cross training with Wendy and Lisa so they support each other. They are working well together. Kathy thinks we will be a smooth operation. We are having staff meetings 7 to 10 days before a Board Meeting. Kathy will let the Board know of staff meeting dates. All employees will get performance reviews.

Kathy is looking for alternative to Mail Chimp since it is not working as well as we would like for our docent newsletter.

Kathy requests that Board members will give staff adequate notice when they want reports and or support help. They are part-time employees and they should have their time off free from answering our needs - but they want to help us.

- **Docent Surveys – Lisa Harper-Henderson**

Lisa passed out handouts that reported both how docents responded to our recent survey questions. Overall the docents seem happy. Board members were given time to review the survey report. For the future, it would be interesting to note how long the responding docents have been with FES. In the last year we lost 14 docents for various reasons. Kathy, did some people not respond to all of the questions? Lisa, yes. Tim thanked both Kathy and Lisa for the good progress we are making.

- **Finance- Tim Bridwell**

Finance committee has not met since the last meeting.

- **Treasurer – Bill Goodger**

Bill passed out his financial reports. First we looked at the balance sheet. Our money market account is about the same. Cash on hand is not great but it is okay. Bill noted a few points on our table sales. Point one, if we look at the last six months of table sales, we see that the more days the tables are covered the more cash we will receive. Point two, if we look at our budget we are going to lose money if we keep going as have we have been over the recent months on our table coverage. Point three, we could add about \$34,000 of income if we could cover the table for the remainder of this year as we did last year. Take away, we need to cover the table every single day. Regarding the P&L, we need to figure out what really sells. Hopefully we can save on accounting fees. Bill suggested putting a hold on the history project but Lynette said there should be no cost to us on the history project. Bill suggested maybe not having a docent event in November. Lisa said there will be no speaker fee for the November event. Bill recommended that the finance committee should meet.

- **Table – Sue King**

Sue spoke of some ideas and her plans for bringing table sales up.

- **Publications – Mary Forbes**

Our publications are on schedule. Mary passed out an outline of what is being done for the summer edition of Among Friends.

Tim met with Donovan and was very impressed with how Donovan did his membership work.

- **Research – Bill Goodger**

Bill along with the interns just finished a paper on three years of male elephant seal surveys. There will be a question and answer session for our November 4<sup>th</sup> docent dinner meeting. Tim Bridwell will be moderator for the November event as the members of the research committee speak to the docents and answer docent questions. Keith has a paper he is working on.

### **School Groups – Stephen Beck**

Stephen reported that we just finished our 2016/2017 school year. About 31 schools and about 2,000 students came through our program. For our sponsored schools, Stephen learned from Marcella that we are still waiting for bills to come in from three schools. Based upon the size of the last three sponsored school groups and past billings from the schools, he expects our reimbursements will come to about \$3,500, or about \$500 over our budget of \$3,000. There was some discussion about how we would try to better control the transportation costs next year and the changes that we plan to make in the letters we send out to our sponsored schools.

Finally, Stephen reported that he had some uncertainty on how to record groups such as the recent church camp group from Redlands, CA. Based upon what he learned of the past practice established under Gwen, for the future he plans to include church camp groups and other similar groups with our school groups that go onto SignUp.

- **Training – Polly Tatton**

Polly reported having four people who are now signed up to be in the fall training (this includes Wendy). Noting that some of our recent docents have been leaving FES, she suggested that we should ask the leaving docents to return their jackets and their packs in return for their \$50 deposit. Making up the docent packs is a significant cost for us. Photos alone for docent books cost about \$40. Polly noted that we update our elephant seal population graphs for our training handbook and perhaps we should be printing 5 x 7 updates for all of the docent handbooks. There will be a cost, maybe \$50. Everyone seemed to think this was important for keeping our docents updated and it would be well worth the cost.

Training schedule is in place. There is a thought of inviting current docents to all sessions however we need to clarify the events they be welcome to attend. We need to get information out to our docents about new information such as the new no parking signs. We are picking out our speaker gifts. Training committee sends meeting minutes to the FES office, but Polly does not send committee notes to the Board since she gives reports to the Board. Tim noted that our by-laws say every committee must produce minutes. Sending them to Wendy seems to comply with by-laws. Kathy would like to know of all committees, who is on them and put them into a binder for the office. Polly asked if RSVP/SVP is of any importance to us. Sue said that they do list us as a place where people can volunteer but it is part of a long list. Polly suggests taking RSVP out of the handbook. No one expressed an objection (FES docents are no longer eligible for mileage reimbursement.).

- **Membership – Tim Bridwell**

Lynette and Tim are co-chairing the membership committee. They met with Donovan, Barbara and Wendy and learned very much from the meeting. Much needs to be done as we go forward. They will be setting priorities. Tim stated that he will be informing us of what they do in coming meetings. Jeff and Shirley Weir left the committee as they moved to Arizona.

**Lunch Break at 12:20**

**Reconvened at 1:15**

- **Docent Shifts – Mary Forbes**

Mary noted that with the summer months, we have more visitors arriving later in the afternoon than normal and suggested that we schedule a later shift, C Shift from 3 pm to 6 pm, during August. A discussion ensued over whether there would be sufficient interest or available docents. It was decided to make the shift available for docents in August and ask for volunteers for it. It was considered satisfactory to reduce the scheduled Shift B people to cover the Shift C if there is sufficient interest in the C Shift.

- **Docent Contacts – Lynette Harrison**

Lynette reminded the Board members that they are expected to call the docents on their assigned list to improve communications, let them know that the Board appreciates their efforts and encourage them to consider assisting FES by participating in one of the committees. Sue also suggested that we make a list of Board Members, committee contacts, and committee activities for distribution at the next FES dinner.

**Presidents' Report – Lynette Harrison and Tim Bridwell**

Lynette reported on the last ESAG meeting

- The Adopt-A-Highway sign at the bluffs was questioned. Are we still responsible for the highway or should the sign be removed; if responsible, what duties are entailed?
- State Parks is preparing signage on Drone Prohibitions in the area.
- State Parks is initiating the EIR draft for public toilets to be placed in the area. The project is apparently tied into the prospective new camping area near the old Motel and is subject to State funding limits.

Tim reported on the recent SSTA meeting.

- The Highway One closure has resulted in an estimated 35-40 % drop in visitors to the San Simeon area.
- Any grants we might solicit from SSTA must have the primary result of adding to tourist numbers—"Heads in Beds" – to be funded.

**New Business:**

**History Project-Kathy Dowding**

Kathy expressed concern that the History Project did not seem to be proceeding satisfactorily. She noted that there didn't seem to be a clear vision of what the results of the project should be and what end products of the project would be. She was concerned that the interviews planned did not seem to be taking place. A general discussion ensued over the History Project including progress and plans. General consensus was that answers to the questions on the History Project need to be resolved.

**Tripping Hazard at South End – Polly Tatton**

Polly reported that there was an accident at the South End where a visitor fell on uneven ground along the walking area leading to the boardwalk. Nearby, but not a cause of the accident is a piece of rebar which protrudes and is a risk for a fall. Bill Goodger offered to contact Blake Thorin at State Parks to correct the problem.

**Adjourn – 2:03.** Board meeting was adjourned to continue into the Retreat.

Submitted:

Bob Grosse (Notes taken opening to 12:20 by Stephen Beck and by Bob Grosse 1:15 to Adjournment)  
Secretary

**Next Meeting: 1:00 PM, Wednesday, July 19, 2017.**