

Final Final Final

**Desert Tortoise Council,
Minutes of Annual Business Meeting**

**21 February 2020
Excalibur Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV**

Michael Tuma called the Annual Business Meeting to order at 08:00 a.m. at the Excalibur Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV. **Motions made, seconded, and approved are shown in bold red font.**

Attendees: Michael Tuma, Kristin Berry, Larry LaPré, Maggie Fusari, Ken MacDonald, Becky Jones, Joe Probst, Mari Quillman, Bruce Palmer, Cristina Jones, Pete Woodman, Greer Dolby, and Ed LaRue. (Judy Hohman, who had planned to be here, was assigned jury duty at the last minute). **Guests:** There were approximately 25 Symposium attendees at the Annual Business Meeting, who participated in the votes described herein.

A. Introductions: Board members introduced themselves to those in attendance.

B. Review Agenda: A preview of today's agenda items was presented by Michael Tuma.

C. Officer and Committee Reports:

1. Chairperson's Annual Report: Michael Tuma summarized what will be a detailed Chairperson's report presented this morning at 09:30, which will summarize Board member activities during 2019.

2. Treasurer's Report, Annual Budget, Audit Committee Report: Joe Probst read his report, which included the Council's total income of \$171,211, expenses \$182,884 with net assets of \$180,852 as of today. Joe also summarized the 2019 budget, which is not reflected herein. There **Motion was made by Greer Dolby, seconded by Cristina Jones, and the membership in attendance unanimously approved to accept the Treasurer's Report.**

3. Corresponding Secretary's Report: Becky Jones indicated that most of the hard copy mail was relative to projects. There were also emails, with many unsolicited officers to work on our website, and miscellaneous correspondences about pet and wild tortoises.

4. Membership Committee Report: Mari Quillman reported 2,171 names in contact list, with 355 active members, which is higher than in the past. Committee was enlarged and completed the membership policy. Membership application has been retooled to be more efficient. There is a prorated membership cost for those joining mid-year. We will be working on getting an online store link on our website.

5. Nominations Committee Report: Michael Tuma reported that in 2019 Mark Peaden left the Board, we did not have any additions, so we now have 16 of 20 positions filled. Larry LaPré will be stepping down after the Symposium, when we will be at 15 Board members.

6. Ecosystems Advisory Committee Report: Ed LaRue provided a summary report for 2019 indicating that, from 1/13/2019 to 1/11/2020, the Council received 40 notices, commented on 36 (setting a new record in responding to 90% of available projects), authored 18 letters, coauthor 8 letters, cosigned 7 letters/petitions, declined to cosign 1 petition, attended 2 public meetings, participated in 1 documentary, attended 1 field trip, and sent letters to Bureau of Land Management in four states asking to be Affected Interest. Environmental actions included 16 in California, 5 in Nevada, 4 in Arizona, 7 in Utah, and 8 on national issues.

7. Agency Coordination Committee Report: Cristina Jones reported that the Council met with biologists of government agencies on two occasions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June and again October 2019. We talked about recovery actions, enhanced cooperation and communication among the four sites. In October talked about more training opportunities, additional meetings with state agencies, etc.

8. Training Program Committee Report: Cristina Jones reported that advanced trainings are intended to emphasize bio-security, care in handling tortoises, and provide latest techniques for biologists who already have more experience. The HAT class was given in April 2019 in Arizona and focuses on seven specific advanced techniques. Cristina has been working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to update their 2009 field manual. She will be working with state and federal agencies for future models. Maggie Fusari reported that there were 98 students at the 28th 2019 Introductory Course that was held at the Kerr-McGee Center in Ridgecrest, CA the first weekend in November. It will be scheduled for 7-8 November 2020. She is currently updating operations handbook.

9. Media Committee Report: Michael Tuma reported this committee is responsible for the website, social postings, and newsletter (next volume due out in next week). We are looking for way to encourage membership through the social media formats.

10. Outreach and Education Committee Report: Maggie Fusari shared there were several professional society meetings we attended, including The Wildlife Society meeting, Turtle Survival Alliance, and Green STEM event. She has been working with California Science Education Conference to engage teachers in our efforts. Events are attended by Board members, who provide swag, membership applications, and educational brochures. This ad hoc committee is intended to be elevated to a full standing committee as of today.

11. Grants Committee Report: Michael Tuma reported with an income shortfall in 2019, there were no grants this year, but two Morafka Awards were presented in 2019 and we funded a student through the Lockheed-Martin Diversity Grant.

12. Fundraising Committee Report: Greer Dolby is chair for this new committee, which was formulated in 2019 and became a full standing committee as of today. She and her committee of four are looking at new ways to raise funds through events, merchandise, and strengthening partnerships in 2020.

13. Awards Committee Report: The Awards Committee presented a full complement of awards in 2019. Several awards were presented at the 2019 Symposium, including one recognizing land acquisition and research in Mexico. There are five members on this committee, with input from other Board members and general membership. We are considering presenting certificates of appreciation. The Annual Award is being presented to Richard Spotts this morning.

14. Annual Symposium Program Committee and Local Host Committee Reports: The 44th Symposium was held in Tucson, Arizona with substantial participation by Mexican researchers. Inclement weather affected the field trip (to see Gila monsters) and vendors, with an unusual snow storm in Tucson. Kristin Berry extended her thanks to Tracy Bailey serving as Symposium host; Mari Quillman, Larry LaPré, and a few others for soliciting sponsorships, raffle, and auction items, with donations approaching \$12,000, which is a new record; and the host committee, particularly Tracy and Mike Bailey for their energetic commitment. The 46th Symposium in 2021 will be in St. George, Utah. Special thanks to Southern Nevada Environmental, Inc. (SNEI) who is providing the mixer this evening.

15. Mexico Tortoise Conservation Coordination Committee. Michael Vamstad indicated in 2019 the name of this committee was formalized, mission and vision statements were developed, a letter was written to coordinate research with Mexican officials, and he will be traveling to Sinaloa in April to make contacts.

D. New Business:

1. Proposed revisions to the Bylaws: As required by the Bylaws, the proposed changes were posted on the website 31 days ago and were posted through social media. The changes were substantial and addressed a few new committees and a few clarifications for officer and member responsibilities. **Joe Probst made the motion to adopt the Bylaws revisions as given above, which was seconded by Greer Dolby, and unanimously approved by those in attendance.**

2. Election of Officers: The two current nominations are Becky Jones for Corresponding Secretary and Joe Probst for Treasurer. **Given these nominations and no new nominations from the floor there were two motions that were seconded and approved for Becky Jones to serve as Corresponding Secretary and Joe Probst as Treasurer as per the terms of offices given in the Bylaws.**

E. Adjourn to Opening the Symposium: Michael Tuma adjourned the Annual Business Meeting at 08:45 a.m.

Draft minutes were recorded, later distributed and modified with Board member review and input, then approved in a formal vote on 4 April 2020, and now respectfully submitted as this final version by Ed LaRue, Recording Secretary.



Edward L. LaRue, Jr.
Desert Tortoise Council, Recording Secretary