

**RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalist
2025 February Board Meeting
Feb 4, 2025**

Attendance:

Officers

Robin Gelston – President
Rob Gardner- First Vice President
Chad Wilmoth – Second Vice President
Betsy Hosick – Treasurer
Evelyn Alpert – Secretary

Directors and Committees

Joni Gillis Membership
Marilyn Lorenz – Outreach Director
Amy Daley - Education
Barb Peterson – Education
Karen Weaver – 2025 Membership Director
Sam Solfest – New Class representative

At large

Joyce Baer Halpern - Winter Texan
Rolando Garcia – Brownsville region
Mary Grizzard – Coastal Region
Tira Wilmoth – Central Cameron County

Agenda

1. Call to order –The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Robin Gelston
2. Approval of Prior Board Meetings Minutes – Joni moved that the January minutes be approved, and Amy seconded. Minutes were approved.

3. Reports

Treasurer – Betsy noted balance at end of December was \$13,117.94 and savings was Approximately 23,000. Betsy noted that Rob should have everything he needs for the audit, which she thinks will be ok, and that she is available if he has questions. She also noted that Jody said they should have cash receipts to give out when they receive cash payments, and they now have them. She agreed this is important especially because she and Barb live in the same house.

Robin noted that the results of her survey regarding attendance at the State Annual Meeting indicated that 32 responses: 13 said the issue is cost, 13 said time, 2 lack of transportation, 3 don't desire to go, and 3 don't see why they should go. Betsy said it's probably good to start small with our fundraising, and we can advertise to let people understand the worth in going. She also believes that the chapter should underwrite the cost of the chapter president attending

(or other board member if the president cannot go). Betsy moved that we adopt this practice and Marilyn seconded it and the motion passed.

There was then discussion of raffling off the glasses and book probably at the Volunteer fair. Marilyn noted there will need to be some ground rules on any funds earned via raffle and Joni indicated she thinks there are some rules around our ability to hold raffles. Betsy agreed to look into the rules and regulations around raffles.

Membership – Joni advised there are 149 active members, with one member transferring to the South Texas Border Chapter, 4 TMN associates, 41 in training (the new class), 9 from the 2024 class not certified, 1 from the class of 2021 class not certified, and 2 advisor/associate members. Three people will be recognized at the next meeting, one for 100 hours and one for 250 hours, and one for hours. Amy brought up an issue about a member of the class wanting to spend logging hours that are spent volunteering with the Texas Ornithological Society, who is not listed as one of our partners. The board agreed the class member should get the AT time credited so a motion was made by Joni and seconded by Rob to approve allowing the entry. The motion passed.

Communication – No report was made other than Robin advising the work continues on the website. Robin noted that Robert Cepeda had requested approval of a project to work at Sunshine Haven as a volunteer opportunity, planting, weeding, etc. He has been doing it as part of his work with his church. The board agreed that it seemed like a worthwhile endeavor and in line with our mission. Sunshine Haven provides hospice services for patients and their families. Rob made the motion to approve and Marilyn seconded and the motion passed.

Robin noted that there were many volunteer projects involving gardening and she would try to make a list of them with their days and times of volunteering as well as the leader. She also noted that she'd see if any could be scheduled for weekends so that working members could also join in.

Betsy pointed out that the STEC talk for Thursday Feb 6 was not really eligible for AT as the subject matter was outside of the Texas territory.

Robin noted that there were some issues around getting our decals completed as there are only 2 chapters with their own logos, so the matter is with the lawyers at the State to resolve.

Outreach – Marilyn advised February includes the Resaca de la Palma sweet 16 celebration (Feb 1). Also in February is the Winter Wildlife Expo to be held at the Birding Center Feb 6-8, and we will need volunteers. She also advised about the speaker series at STEC on Thursdays at 5:30. March 11 is the Volunteer Fair and March 8 is Ocelot days at the zoo. April will have earth day events. And we will try to get more information on the plans for a Brownsville birding festival planned for September.

New Class Training – Amy advised there are 31 trainees. The feedback on the mentors has been really positive and the field trips and speakers have been great. She noted that she and Barb are getting better with their technical issues and that Alicia and Susan had been really supportive. She noted the only challenge has been getting everyone to enter their times on VMS, and that some trainees need help finding where to go to locate volunteer opportunities.

Advance Training – Teresa was not in the meeting, but she posts AT opportunities on Facebook. Opportunities at Mercedes (gardening on Wednesdays) and the Mar 11 Volunteer fair were noted.

Volunteer Service Project – David was not in the meeting, but a Coastal Clean up for April 26 was noted as well as some of the field trips being planned.

Old/Pending Business -Robin noted that anyone who had not completed a conflict of interest form should get one and return it, and also to submit their photos for the website if not already done.

New Business

Robin noted that Chad (TC) had drawn up a list of items that we might need to purchase to improve our use of technology including plug in speakers, surge protectors, wireless mouse, conference speakers, and a special camera. Total cost was approximately \$180-200 therefore no board approval was necessary to purchase.

Joni noted that we appear to be missing 2 folding tables, so she will proceed to purchase those as well. She also encouraged everyone to support Rolando Garza and encourage him to complete his 8 hours AT so he could certify and complete his training.

Betsy noted that she still needs to attend the VMS training class so she can assist in approving hours.

The board meeting ended at 6:56PM.

Respectfully submitted.

Evelyn Alpert