



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

The meeting was held at the home of Margie Gibson, Past President

Called to order at 2:00 pm.

Present: Donna Stevens, President; Naava Koenigsberg, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Margie Gibson, Past President; Marty Eberhardt, Elroy Limmer, David Philips

Absent: Cara Staab, Vice-President

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of January 14, 2025, were approved.

Board Reports:

President's Report: Donna Stevens reported that she had received a letter from Dinah Demers dated March 4, 2025, in which Dinah announced her formal resignation, effective immediately, from her positions as Board Member of the Gila Native Plant Society and as Gila Chapter Representative to the New Mexico Native Plant Society. She explained that the resignation was tendered due to personal reasons, and was not the result of any disagreement with the organization's objectives, operations, policies or procedures. She had appreciated the opportunity of serving on the Board and wished us the best in our efforts to further the mission of the New Mexico Native Plant Society and the Gila Chapter.

Donna reported that an email had been received just prior to the meeting from Stacy Sollisch announcing her resignation from the Board. She would follow up with an exit interview to understand what Stacy's reasons might be.

She said to use the gnpspresident@gmail.com for matters relating to GNPS.

Treasurer's Report: Naava Koenigsberg had been elected Treasurer to replace Cathleen Norman at the Board meeting on January 14, 2025, and this was her first report in that capacity.

Account Totals

At the meeting, she circulated a report giving a snapshot of the account totals as of March 10, 2025. Among other information, the report showed that at FFCU the GNPS Checking account had a balance of \$3,101.07, the savings account had a balance of \$70.01 and the money market

fund had a balance of \$500.58. GNPS had two mutual funds at Edward Jones, AEAXX with a balance of \$6,819.52 and AIVSX with a balance of \$65,467.94. Total funds in accounts under GNPS equaled \$76,467.94. At FFCU the SCBG checking account had a balance of \$14,622.16 and the money market fund had a balance of \$2,991.55. At Edward Jones, SCBG had a mutual fund TTOXX with a balance of \$30,000.06 and a \$50,000 CD due to mature on 3/26/2025. The total for all accounts was \$174,085.71. She explained that she planned to present quarterly Treasurer's reports beginning in April.

Financial Management

Naava reported that she had talked to both the First Financial Credit Union and to Edward Jones. At FFCU the small savings account existed to satisfy a bank requirement. The money market funds were not earning much interest. At Edward Jones, shares could be sold from the AEAXX mutual fund as needed. The markets were very volatile, but the larger AIVSX mutual fund was a long-term investment instrument, so we need not panic. Margie referred to the document she had circulated prior to the meeting giving the history of the fund, which we treated as an endowment, although legally it was not so restricted. Dave suggested that monies could be moved from the "endowment" account when it reached a certain level to the more liquid accounts. Marty pointed out that the biggest expenses, aside from the garden, would be in connection with the state conference the Gila Chapter was hosting in 2026. With respect to the garden expenses, we would need accessible funds in the near future. Naava suggested moving the proceeds of the CD to the money market fund. At the end of the grant cycle, we could then review how much we had in what accounts. Naava said that she would like a finance committee to be formed to come up with proposals.

Transition

Naava reported that she had had a productive meeting with Cathleen Norman, the former Treasurer. Cathleen had given her a thumb drive with a great many documents. Margie asked to have the information for the archives once Naava had identified the ones she needed. Some of the mistakes made in the past in allocating funds were being cleared up. She thought that they were due to the confusing set-up of accounts at the bank, since all five had the same last four digits. She would like authorization to make the SCBG accounts separate from the GNPS accounts. Margie offered to write the letter authorizing the change, which the board members would need to sign.

PayPal

She reported that there was \$300 in the PayPal account. She would have to figure out how to allocate it, since there were three places to click and send money: to GNPS in general, to the garden or for book sales. The PayPal people gave great support.

Other issues

She intended to set up two \$50 accounts with Copies on the Run, one for GNPS and one for SCBG. Any authorized person needing copies could just go in and tell them to put the charge on the GNPS account or the SCBG account.

She asked the Board for clarification on one point: if the Board had approved a budget for a project, was it the case that it did not need to approve separate contracts under that project that did not exceed the budget. In other words, the Treasurer could proceed to disburse the funds. Board members agreed.

Committee and other reports:

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report: Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated the following Steering Committee report for February 2025:

“Steve Morgan will begin work on the **front entrance** on Feb. 24.

The **tank** has finally been sealed! We are still waiting for a second **wall** bid. Diana Ingalls has secured \$15,000 for the **mural** project; GNPS still needs to contribute \$5,000, as specified in our grant and previously reported to the board. The education committee will be training the YCC mural crew about our three themes. Details about this still need to be worked out when Diana has the time. The YCC crew will work July 14-31.

The pollinator garden plans will be available this month.”

Marty reported that some problems that had worried her had been resolved: Steve Morgan would be making two new signs for the main entrance, since repainting the old pink one was not working well. (It would be more expensive, but the funds were there.) And Diana Ingalls Leyba had assured her that even in future years she could have tiles for all the donors made and placed on the wall. Margie suggested the possibility of metal plaques that could be changed, for instance, if there were changes in levels of donation or volunteering effort; she had seen a good example of that solution.

Since the person working on the graphics for the signage became terminally ill, she planned to meet with Laura Howell, about whom she had heard good things. We were waiting to hear from Judith Philips before going ahead with fundraising for the Front Yard Garden.

When the wall was completed, the main entrance and information signs were up and the Waterworks across the ditch was open, there would be more garden visitation than we had been used to, and there will need to be a planning meeting should be held to think about those issues and the human resources needed. There was a tentative date of April 8th at 4:30 pm. It would involve the Steering Committee, Donna and Margie, and perhaps Larry Root, a new hard-working volunteer, would be interested or a candidate for the garden management committee. Margie offered to invite him. [Note: Larry is recuperating from major surgery].

New Business

Gardening contract for Eric Brown

Marty asked the Board to consider increasing Eric Brown's contract for garden maintenance from 5 hours a week to up to an average of 6 hours a week for six months (31 weeks) on a flexible basis. Naava explained that the garden watering team had lost two members, so that Eric would have to spend more time watering and less time on other garden chores. Marty said that the annual cost would not exceed \$3,720.

Motion: The Board agreed to contract Eric Brown for garden maintenance services up to 6 hours a week on average for six months from April 1 to October 31, 2025, for an amount of \$3,720.

Give Grandly allocation percentage for SCBG

Marty reminded the Board that last year we had allocated a certain percentage of the donations given during Give Grandly to the garden project. She proposed that this year the percentage should be 60%, and the emphasis would be on implementing the Main Entrance design. To clarify, that would be 60% of general donations in addition to any donations specifically earmarked for the garden.

Motion: The Board agreed to allocate 60% of unearmarked donations received during Give Grandly 2025 to the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

A mention of our participation would be included in the 2nd quarter *GNPS Bulletin*, and efforts would be made in mid-April to sign up volunteers to be at the table on May 3rd.

PayPal or Square payments:

Naava said she had learned that we were eligible for three portal card-readers from PayPal, which would be useful for book sales and Give Grandly. A QR code would work for donations. The PayPal card readers would make it unnecessary to investigate the Square payment system.

Motion: The Board authorized the Treasurer to obtain the three free card-readers from PayPal.

Gila Chapter Representative to NPSNM

Margie explained what was expected of a chapter representative to the NPSNM board. The representative would attend two regular NPSNM Board meetings a year, one in January at the Sevilletta NWR Research Station and one on the afternoon prior to the state conference. At those meetings the representative would present highlights of chapter activities and would vote on the state organization's business, including the award of grants from the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund. In addition, some decisions might be taken by exchange of

email during the year, notably on letters the Conservation Committee proposed to send to government agencies. David Philips volunteered to serve.

Motion: The Board elected David Philips to be the Gila Chapter Representative to the Board of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico.

March 21st Program Facilitator

Donna reported that since neither she nor Cara could be present, Don Graves had volunteered to introduce the speaker. Board members suggested it would be well to ensure that Russ Kleinman would be attending, since he could help with the technical aspects. Naava was given information about how to pay WNMU for the room rented for the programs.

Other Business

Dave asked about the Watershed Keepers City Nature Challenge at the garden. Naava promised to forward what information she had.

He also said that the Bird Alliance of Southwestern New Mexico was interested in working more closely with GNPS. Donna said she, too, had been in contact with them.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Spence
Secretary, Gila Native Plant Society

APPENDIX: DECISIONS TAKEN BY EXCHANGE OF EMAIL SINCE JANUARY 14 , 2025

Motion passed by exchange of email on February 8-12, 2025

The Board authorizes the following expenditures for the setup, training and use of QuickBooks for our accounting needs:

A one-time flat fee to hire a bookkeeper for up to \$500, for the setup and training.

A recurring, monthly subscription cost (currently around \$65, but likely to increase at some point).

The motion passed unanimously.

Explanation:

At its meeting of January 14 2025, the Board approved the President's nomination of Naava Koenigsberg as Treasurer of the Gila Native Plant Society and agreed to fulfil her conditions:

- (1) She wished to have an experienced person set up QuickBooks for the organizations bookkeeping;
- (2) She wished to have someone proof her figures;
- (3) She would like to have access if needed to a financial professional if difficult questions arose.

Motion passed by exchange of email on February 19-22, 2025

The Board accepts A.R. Construction's bid of \$31,185 to build the wall around the historic tank in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

Explanation:

The SCBG Steering Committee sought three bids for the wall and received two. The bid from Alonso Romo of A.R. Construction was the lower of the two. GNPS has worked with Alonso before on garden projects. The necessary funds are in the SCBG accounts.

Motion passed by exchange of email on February 22-23, 2025

The Board decides that the Gila Native Plant Society shall participate in Give Grandly 2025, appoints Marty Eberhardt as GNPS representative, and authorizes the payment of the registration fee of \$100 to the Gila Community Foundation.

Explanation:

The Gila Community Foundation (www.gilacf.org), formerly the Grant County Community Foundation, has invited local nonprofits to sign up for the annual Give Grandly fundraiser and is calling for a meeting on February 26th. Marty Eberhardt has volunteered to be our representative this year. The in-person event, with booths by 50 to 60 local nonprofits, will be take place on Saturday, May 3rd, and the registration fee is \$100. In the past we have found it a good way not only to raise money but also to meet new people and acquaint them with GNPS aims and activities. The matching funds that GCF will round up usually far exceed the registration fee.