Wild Animal Initiative Board Meeting

03/11/20

In attendance:

Emily Hatch (President)
Flor Serna (Treasurer)
Josh You (Secretary)
Michelle Graham (Executive Director)

Absent:

None

Agenda:

I. Q&A with the Executive Director about a draft of Wild Animal Initiative (WAI)’s forthcoming strategic plan:
   A. Q: When deciding WAI’s research direction, how will WAI manage the trade-off between outreach potential and value for wild-animal welfare?
      A: Michelle Graham agrees that the trade-off exists. One check is being transparent about the reasoning for a particular research direction. Due to uncertainty over strategy, WAI wants to keep a mixed portfolio of projects, in terms of direct research and outreach, and reassess over time.
   B. Q: Grant application assistance program - where did this program arise and why is it a big piece of the strategy?
      A: The purpose of this project is to discover whether academic outreach is worthwhile. There are many unresolved questions in wild-animal welfare, and a small team of researchers is not sufficient to address them. WAI doesn’t have the resources to start a large research foundation right now, and doing grant writing for other researchers seems like part of WAI’s comparative advantage in terms of causing more research to happen.

II. On which issues should the Executive Director consult the board?
   A. Michelle Graham intends to bring up/note things which may impact our liability for the organization
   B. If an issue is something that takes a lot of time or effort, the Executive Director may bring it up as a question to see if board members have any further insight or suggestions. The board can feel free to say they don’t have a strong opinion or insight into the issue.
   C. Budgetary thresholds:
      1. Decisions so far have been responsible regarding spending
2. The board could decide on a threshold amount that triggers a need for board approval, and add it to the organization bylaws. $10,000 seems like a reasonable threshold.

II. Board unanimously approves dissolving WAI’s corporation status in Massachusetts.

III. Board unanimously agrees to defer to Michelle Graham’s decision on whether to dissolve WAI’s corporation status in Illinois.

IV. Board unanimously approves a $3.50/hour wage increase for the Executive Director to compensate for WAI switching to a new health plan that excludes part-time workers (thus excluding the ED).

V. Board unanimously approves a quote for Directors’ and Officers’ liability insurance.

VI. The board will reconvene for an interim meeting to approve WAI’s 2020 budget, at some point before the May board meeting.