

2018 BIA Annual Meeting 2017-18 Overview

Good afternoon. I'm Bob Anderson, currently president of the BIA and I'd like to welcome you to our annual meeting. I'd also like to thank Joe Moore who is broadcasting our meeting on his News on the 'Net service for those who couldn't attend in person. Upon entering the auditorium you viewed a presentation loop that showed the structure of BIA and the myriad of activities your membership supports. The organization, founded 28 years ago, focuses on environmental and economic sustainability. As a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization we had membership of 287 individuals at the time of our spring newsletter and are supported by annual dues of \$25 per family.

Our agenda today will be me reviewing an overview of this past year's activities and election of board directors; a financial report by Treasurer Alan Vicstein; update presentation on three ongoing initiatives of interest: and a Superintendent's Report by our school Superintendent Wil Cwikiel that I think you will find very interesting and informative.

For this past year's activities I'd like to use the structure that was reviewed and adopted at our annual meeting two years ago using some of the slides you viewed as you entered.

First, the overlapping administration & promotion area. Last year many of you expressed interest in electronic communication and our last two newsletters were delivered electronically for the first time to all but fifty of our member families at a significant cost savings in printing and postage. Treasurer Alan Vicstein has completed a year of dual manual/electronic financial records as we transition to electronic, and we are pursuing a Paypal account for event registration and dues payment for those who prefer that method. You'll hear more later about our finances and costs associated with some of our initiatives. The web sites for the BIA and BI Birding Trail are professional, current, and totally transparent...all of our newsletters and board and annual meeting minutes literally for years are available to anyone with an internet connection.

Moving on to the ecology and recreation subgroup. Many of our most recognizable successes as well as long term partnerships are in this sub group and pages have been written in our newsletters and island publications, but let me quickly cover last year's activities.

Trails. The BIBT continues with popular spring and fall events attracting internationally known birding guides and many visitors used the BIC Center here as the trailhead for their own self-guided tour of our trail. Warblers on the Water over Memorial Day weekend was a sellout and limited only by our ability to transport participants. The Waterways Trail is near reality, and you'll hear an update on that later this afternoon

On the environment front. Surveys and treatment of invasive species continued in partnership with the DNR, Nature Conservancy, and many private property owners. Invasive phragmites, the scourge of Saginaw Bay and virtually every interstate overpass borrow pond is now barely found on Beaver Island and we continue to serve as a model of how to work together to control it. Our annual beach cleanup was conducted in September. Emerald ash borer monitoring stations installed in partnership with the Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development had an alarming discovery last summer that you will hear about in Beth Leuck's update on invasive species.

Moving on to the Services and Infrastructure sub group. At our last annual meeting this sub group was dominated by our successful advocacy efforts to maintain Advanced Life Support (ALS) level of EMS on Beaver Island. Later in this meeting you will hear our Beaver Island Community School Principal/Superintendent describe the current state of the school and the importance of keeping it here on the island. Also in this category, we reported on the status of our new county building in the Spring newsletter. This initiative began in October 2012 with the announcement of a much needed building to replace the county Road Commission garage on Beaver Island. The present building can't allow service on a truck in the winter without removing the snowplow to fit in the building, and the grader that was finally moved to the island had no inside winter storage space. In January, 2013 the County Commissioners agreed "in principal" to approve \$1.5 million to provide a multi-use facility to properly house the three county-level functions of the sheriff's office, transit operation, and road commission vehicles and maintenance. After more than three years of study, in 2016 the County purchased the lumber yard building from Jeff Powers and began developing a plan for the modifications needed to meet their individual needs: appropriate office space; indoor parking and work space for transit vehicles; indoor parking for sheriff vehicles and equipment, and two temporary holding cells meeting Department-of-Corrections standards; and indoor parking and maintenance space for Road Commission vehicles and equipment. Unfortunately, the facility was ultimately determined to be unable to meet the original intended needs, and the county is now working on plans to convert the site to service the sheriff and transit activities and the Road Commission is pursuing separate property for its own facility. In discussion with Kevin Sheppard, County Administrator; Nancy Ferguson, County Commissioner; and Pat Harmon, Road Commissioner Manager, it now appears the lumber yard facility could be under contract later this summer for its conversion, and the Road Commission hopes to acquire property this year and is setting aside funds for eventual facility construction. A comparison of the facilities for the three county departments on our island compared to those on the mainland make it clear this is needed, but it is frustrating that after six years we are still

waiting and the original problem of suitable space for our Road Commission crew is nowhere in sight.

Moving to the third sub group, Economic Sustainability. A tremendous amount of work has taken place this past year, and some really exciting things are happening that can offer tangible short term and long term benefits to Beaver Island. First, you heard last year about plans for the first-ever summit of Great Lakes islands to be held here on Beaver Island last September. It was an incredible success as you will hear about from Patrick McGinnity. Participants have continued the relationships started at the event, and Madeline Island is hosting another island summit in October. Second, our continued partnership with the Maine-based Island Institute introduced us to their nationally-acclaimed Island Fellow program. At last year's meeting you heard about Beaver Island's participation with the first Island Fellow in the Great Lakes. After a great start on our Communications Project, our Fellow Stefanie Burchill had to unexpectantly cut her time short due to medical reasons. We are not pursuing a fellow for this year, but may consider it for 2019 because the needs have not gone away. Lastly, and perhaps most important, is the effort to obtain reliable high speed internet on the island. Much has happened in the past year with TDS continuing their limited improvements on the island, Great Lakes Energy pursuing plans to provide fiber service to their Charlevoix and Emmet electrical service areas, and the Northern Michigan University initiative presented at last year's meeting is still underway. Much information and misinformation exists, and you'll hear from Alan Vicstein and Kevin Boyle the facts of what is and what is not happening and how it lines up with our long term needs. The Association has requested that the two townships form an advisory committee on internet and wireless communication that can communicate with existing and potential providers on behalf of the island to get the best service possible. In addition to the internet, our wireless service is an increasing concern, as more tourists arrive and pursue birding, waterways, and interior trails activities with the expectation that their ever-present cell phones will work "like everywhere else." Our critical tower space needs to be prioritized by our need, not just provider desires. An advisory committee speaking with the voice of our local governments can provide interaction with our communication providers to assure our island needs are being considered in investments made by those providers.

Under our mission of economic sustainability, we see this as our most urgent priority. After you hear from Wil Cwikiel, you will clearly understand the need to continue a viable school on the island. This will require attracting and retaining families that want the unique island life-style we offer whose jobs could be performed from home with high speed internet rather than from traditional office or factory locations that our limited winter transportation does not support. Tens of thousands of these technology jobs exist, we just need the

reliable infrastructure to allow some of them to exist here and the marketing to attract them.

As you can see, your membership continues to support numerous activities that fall within our mission of environmental and economic sustainability. They are only possible because of partnerships forged with a wide array of government, tribal and non-governmental organizations at the local, regional, state, and national level. Compared to our modest budget of a few thousand dollars, literally tens of thousands of dollars have been brought to our initiatives by our partners. We would appreciate your feedback by email or to a board member in person regarding the activities we are undertaking on your behalf, and we should have time for open discussion at the end of our presentations today.

Now moving on to our Board of Directors. This slide shows our current board and their term status. Would those present please stand to be recognized? The board is evenly split between full-year and seasonal residents, and you'll recognize them as involved in many activities of the island beyond the numerous BIA initiatives. Our by-laws require between 9 and 15 directors with staggering 3-year terms with none serving more than three consecutive terms without a break. We currently have thirteen members, with two completing their first term and three term limiting off. Kevin Boyle and Patrick McGinnity, after one term, are willing to stand for re-election to a second term. Three of us are leaving after three consecutive terms; Jim Jones, Ken McDonald and myself, Bob Anderson, have collectively served twenty seven years. Jim has maintained the content on our BIA website and kept it current and complete, as well as patiently editing articles and formatting our bi-annual newsletter. Ken has served as Vice President and has lead our annual beach clean-up event, passing that on to Sheri Richards this year, and he also has left his mark with many of the signs you see across the island, including here at the BIC Center, the birding trail and waterways trail, and the fire safety signs. I've served as Treasurer and President, and as the public voice for the Association on many of our initiatives. Before moving on, let's have a round of applause for our outgoing directors.

In addition to Kevin and Patrick standing for reelection, we have four new candidates who have offered to serve, in alphabetical order:

* Levi Connor...Levi is probably our most familiar candidate. He grew up on the island and graduated from the Beaver Island Community School. He is a member of the Fire Department, and as a board member of the Wildlife Club has organized its very popular Lake G. Fishing Tournaments. He wears several hats, but I suspect every one of us has been helped with a smile when we needed something at the hardware store. Levi will bring the viewpoint of a different generation to the board that we are excited about.

* Wil Cwikiel . . . Wil is currently the superintendent-principal of Beaver Island Community School. Prior to serving in this capacity, he was the principal of Harbor Springs Middle School for 11 years. Before pursuing a career in education, he was a policy and program director for the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. He has served as an elected school board member, was a founder of Leadership Little Traverse, and has served other nonprofit boards, including the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation

* Dick Muhlvihill...Dick sailed to Beaver over 45 years ago and has been coming up here every year since. His daughter bought a cottage on the Island about 15 years ago and he has lived year round on the island the past two years. Dick spent 40 years in the technology industry, the last 17 years as founder and manager of a company backing up business data over the internet. Dick is an avid sailor , with 37 Chicago to Mackinac races and last year organized the Beaver Island Mac Party. Dick has been very involved with our high speed internet initiative as you'll hear about later. (ask Dick about the Frank Mays video he is working on)

* Nick Olson...Nick grew up on the island as the stepson of Mike Collins, and returned last year as one of our newest fulltime residents and hit the ground running with Olson Construction. He already has a reputation as a quality builder, and is interested in pursuing construction trades education for our students, and affordable housing for workers. And if the name looks familiar, yes, his wife is Nicole Olson, our Charlevoix County Deputy Sheriff!

Are there any further nominations from the floor? This gives us a total of fourteen directors, with the potential of one additional. I see some former board members in the audience that may be thinking about getting involved again...now's your chance! Hearing no more nominations, I make a motion to elect Kevin, Patrick, Levi, Wil, Dick and Nick as BIA directors. Second? Congratulation to our newest board members. Outgoing Secretary Taffy Raphael will call a meeting of the new board who, in accordance with our by-laws, will elect its officers for the coming year. Taffy has requested that you stay for a few moments after the meeting down here by the podium to schedule that meeting.

Alan Vicstein our Treasurer will now give us a financial report and tell what all that activity last year did to our bank account!