

OBRC Fall Policy Meeting (virtual) – 8th October 2020 7-9pm

Present: Amanda Guercio (ACG), Ken Burrell (KGDB), Mike Burrell (MVAB), Barbara Charlton (BNC), Reuven Martin (RDM), Mark Read (MDR), Adam Timpf (AT), Dan Riley (DJR).

NOTE: Accepted changes to the by-laws are highlighted in yellow below.

1. Call to Order: 19:03
2. New members Mark Read and Adam Timpf were welcomed to the committee. In order to allow them to fully participate in the meeting, item 5.b.iii (updates to bylaws) was addressed first:
 - MVAB proposed that under section 3.3.3.2, “New members will assume their duties upon receipt of the first circulation package of reports” be changed to, “New members will assume their duties immediately, under the direction of the incoming chair.” Seconded by ACG. Supported by all continuing members of the 2019 committee.

a. Secretarial Workload (assistance for 2020)

A great deal of discussion was had via email prior to this meeting (copied to Appendix 2). This stemmed from discussion at the 2020 AGM based upon an approved proposal by MVAB to reduce the workload of the secretary (Appendix 1). An OBRC annual timeline provided by MVAB is also presented in Appendix 3, as this was also used to aid discussion. It was noted by BNC that section 3.4.9 of the by-laws allow secretarial assistants to be appointed as required. MVAB stressed the point that as new duties arise for the committee, these tend to be ‘dumped’ on the secretary.

It was decided that to better address the duties of the secretary in 2020 and in the future, we would first continue with item 3 – the purpose of OBRC/what should be archived, before returning to 2b.

b. Secretarial duties.

- i. Chasing reports: birding community and assistant secretary. **This is an important role.**
- ii. Tracking records via eBird, Ontbirds, etc.: there is important overlap here with 2bi and 2bv – we currently have an OBRC account with alerts set up. BNC is ‘plugged in’ and currently responds to this, so 2bii and 2bi are covered. MVAB commented that BNC is very organised but raised a question about continuity in the future.
- iii. Votes and outcomes on cover sheets: MVAB/DJR provided an overview of the process which is currently an essential role of the secretary. It was suggested that this role could be shared out if necessary.
- iv. Email management: This is a role for the Secretary and Asst Secretary. BNC – 99% of emails are actual reports. This role does go hand-in-hand with chasing records. BNC currently has a blanket response outlining the role of the OBRC for correspondence that is not an actual report. **ACTION: These emails will now be forwarded to the chair.**
- v. eBird summary reports: will look for a volunteer.
- vi. Listserv summary reports: i.e. Ontbirds/NWO birds. Discussion echoed earlier comments re birding community taking care of this.

vii. eBird checklist sharing: this proposal was set up in 2016 but has not yet been initiated. KGDB was concerned that we would have way too many names for the annual report if we include everybody. MVAB – this is another job for someone. General consensus at this time is that this is a black hole of work and that we're in a very different place to where we were in 2016. DJR mentioned that we do get occasionally get eBird reports being submitted but that we continue to ask for formal reports.

MOTION: MVAB moved to repeal the eBird checklist sharing process as proposed in 2016. Seconded by DJR. Unanimously accepted.

viii. Compile list of names and emails of submitters: MVAB talked through the rationale of compiling names and emails since all submitters get a 'thank you'. However, the legwork is putting this information into a spreadsheet. This has value but can be handed out to volunteers.

Summary: leave it to the secretary to request assistance rather than allocate to members who are already donating their time.

3. Purpose of OBRC

a. What should be archived?

A general discussion was had about the current state of archival with MVAB noting that in 2012 the committee felt that not enough was being done. Section 2.2 of the by-laws states that one of the purposes of OBRC includes the archival of the original bird records alongside the committee's votes and comments (but doesn't expand on this). It was decided at this stage that the discussion would not address specific items but remain more general.

eBird – MVAB suggested we should download annually or perhaps bi-annually. A simple download would suffice but it would be better to filter down to species/record. Currently downloads strip users' names so these would need to be added back in. MDR and MVAB currently have access to this additional file, and a simple 'lookup' function could be applied. BNC asked if the eBird download could be optional, i.e. committee volunteers can sign up if they wish.

Other platforms: ACG – need to think about the major reporting forums and how much we want; i.e. email listservs, Discord, chat forums etc.

DJR – need to consider/avoid giving the birding community the idea that we do all the legwork.

BNC – we do occasionally get weird reports through weather network etc., but in general the birding community picks up on these and already follows up on rarities.

ACG – should aim for a complete record but not necessarily 100% exhaustive.

We then returned to 2b (above) before coming back to item 4.

4. General Timeline (see Appendix 3). There was a general feeling that this is very useful and the committee are very supportive and appreciative. The order of items is correct but it was agreed

that this should be presented as a guideline rather than be set in stone. BNC noted that the duties of the incoming chair for April (including the additional appendix) could be removed or modified. See 5xiv below.

5.
 - b. Updates to By-laws – please see attached agenda for details (MVAB proposals).
 - i. Motion by MVAB, seconded by DJR – unanimous acceptance.
 - ii. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance (note edits).
 - iii. Already passed (see above)
 - iv. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - v. Motion by MVAB, seconded by MDR – unanimous acceptance.
 - vi. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - vii. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance (note edits).
 - viii. Motion by MVAB, seconded by BNC – unanimous acceptance.
 - ix. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - x. Scrap for now.
 - xi. Motion by MVAB, seconded by BNC – unanimous acceptance.
 - xii. Motion by MVAB, seconded by MDR – unanimous acceptance.
 - xiii. Motion by MVAB, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - xiv. Postpone motion. **ACTION: MVAB will review timeline and present at spring AGM**
 - c. Updates to By-laws – see attached agenda for details (BNC proposals)
 - i. Motion by BNC, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - ii. Motion by BNC, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
 - iii. Motion by BNC, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance (note addition of section 3.6.2).
 - iv. Motion by BNC, seconded by ACG – unanimous acceptance.
6. MVAB proposal to create an OBRC alumni communication tool.

General discussion was held re the pros and cons of such a tool and it was decided it would be better to actively choose a group of birders from coast to coast to assist with identifications. MVAB has set up a google sheet to collect names of potential contributors. **ACTION: All to add names to spreadsheet (OBRC experts).**
7. AOB
 - a. BNC proposed that under section 3.4.4.9, the word assistant be pluralised as follows:

“Assistants. The Secretary may, at their discretion, appoint assistants to help complete any duties listed above in III D. 4) Duties, excluding record circulation and electoral voting. Assistants to the Secretary can be voting members, serve an unlimited number of terms and are to be appointed annually as required.”

Motion by BNC, seconded by MVAB – unanimous acceptance.
 - b. KGDB is concerned about the workload of the secretary and the number of records they have to deal with. He suggested revisiting the criteria for the review list which is currently 20

records over the latest 5 year period. **ACTION: KGDB will review the criteria for the spring AGM and provide a list of candidate species to be removed.**

8. Meeting adjourned at 21:23

OBRC Policy Meeting – October 8, 2020, 7-9 PM

Call-in Details:

Dial: 519-584-6083

Enter Conference ID: 274518

Agenda:

1. Call to Order

2. Secretarial workload

a. Assistance for 2020

b. Duties: what is already happening, what is new, etc.

i. Chasing reports

ii. Tracking reports via eBird, Ontbirds, etc.

iii. Votes and outcomes on cover sheets

iv. Email management

v. eBird summary reports

vi. Listserv summary reports

vii. eBird checklist sharing

viii. Compile list of names and emails of submitters

3. The purpose of the OBRC

a. What should be archived?

4. OBRC annual timeline (see attached)

5. Updates and/or changes to Bylaws

a. http://www.ofo.ca/ofodocs/OBRC_Bylaws_2019.pdf

b. Proposals by MVB:

i. Under section 3.1 change “Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Liaison, who may be either one of the 7 Voting Members or a non-voting member.” To “Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Liaison and an archivist, who may be either one of the 7 Voting Members or a non-voting member.”

ii. Under section 3.3.2 remove sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2 and replace with a new section 3.3.2.1: “3.3.2.1. Any OFO member in good standing may nominate one person, including self-nominations, for each position to be filled. Such nominations must be received in writing by the chair at least one week prior to the meeting where the election will happen so the full list of nominees can be shared with the committee prior to the meeting.”

iii. Under section 3.3.3.2, change “New members will assume their duties upon receipt of the first circulation package of reports.” to “New members will assume their duties immediately, under the direction of the incoming chair.”

iv. Under section 3.3.3.2, change “Chair” to “outgoing Chair”.

v. Under section 3.4.1., replace the entire statement with “Qualifications. The secretary must be an OFO member in good standing and must not at the same time be both Secretary and a Voting Member.”

- vi. Under section 3.4.3. replace with “Nominations. Any OFO member in good standing may nominate one person, including self-nominations. It is the responsibility of the nominator to obtain a statement of willingness to serve from the nominee.
 - vii. Under section 3.5.2.1 replace “present in person, not by proxy or ballot” to “present in person or via any other live method (teleconference, web conference), but not by proxy or ballot”
 - viii. Under section 4.1 and 4.2, change “Secretary” to “Chair”
 - ix. Under section 4.4 change “present in person, not by proxy,” to “present in person or via any other live method (teleconference, web conference),”
 - x. All proposals should be circulated to all members in writing at least one week prior to the meeting where they will be voted on.***
 - xi. Throughout section 5 change “guidelines” to “bylaws”
 - xii. Change section 6.7 to read “Database of records”
 - xiii. Under 6.8.1., change “authorship” to “lead authorship”
 - xiv. Review proposed timeline and “hard code” the duties (not the timing) into the bylaws.
- c. Proposals by BNC:
- i. Under Table of Contents – add missing Archivist section 3.7
“3.7 Archivist
3.7.1 Qualifications
3.7.2 Election and Term of Office
3.7.3 Duties”
 - ii. Under 3.4.4.3 add “Vote in all meetings on matters other than the acceptance of bird records.” as a final sentence.
 - iii. Under 3.7.2 [and 3.6.2] add “This is a non-voting position in all situations.” as a final sentence.
 - iv. Under 6.7.1 remove “all available” from the final sentence.

6. MVB: Proposal to create an OBRC Alumni communication tool

7. Any other business?

8. Adjourn

Appendix 1: Proposal to Reduce Secretary Workload

Problem:

The secretary's duties in the past were much simpler: receive incoming reports, collate, and send out for review, then receive incoming votes. However, the job has grown considerably: now required to manage email account and GATHER information from multiple sources. OBRC reports are now *10-40* times larger than they were only five or six years ago because they include things from Ontbirds, eBird, and much more documentation in general (e.g. photos).

Last year we split off some of these duties to the archivist position, but the secretary is still burdened with the bulk of the workload on the committee. This makes the secretary's work go slower. I am proposing a couple possible solutions which would allow the secretary to focus on their core duties; namely preparing records, receiving votes and writing the annual report.

Proposal:

Have specific tasks for each OBRC voting member. Each member is required to take on one role for the entire year. Keep in mind these are all duties that historically didn't exist and have just been dumped on the secretary.

1. Archivist
 - a. Duties already outlined in OBRC bylaws
2. Prepare eBird summaries
 - a. Prepare standard eBird summary document for each record.
3. Prepare email list serve postings (Ontbirds, hambirds, etc.),
 - a. Prepare standard email list serve postings document(s) for each record.
4. Monitors shared checklists (and follows up with reporters if necessary)
 - a. Each time a checklist is shared with the OBRC account, the member will check the shared checklist to ensure it meets the minimum OBRC standards and follow-up with the observer to correct any issues.
 - b. Follow-up with observer to get copies of any media.
5. Maintains spreadsheet of reports of OBRC birds from all sources
 - a. Member monitors all channels (email groups, Whatsapp, Discord, Facebook, etc.) and maintains a spreadsheet listing all reports of OBRC review list birds.
 - b. Would be required to make this document shared with other members who would need it to complete their duties
6. In charge of email account folders/filing/correspondence
 - a. Monitor OBRC email account for incoming messages and forward them to the appropriate person for responding.
 - b. Screen incoming documentation to ensure it has necessary information, and follow-up with reporter for any extra information (including getting copies of media).
 - c. Create folders for each submitted record so all documentation can be stored there until secretary creates record.
7. Chase reports

- a. Coordinate with task 5 to request documentation for records currently lacking.

We can try it out for this upcoming year to work out kinks and see if it works, then propose some exact text for the bylaws.

Appendix 2: email chain 29-30/09/20

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 4:19 PM Barbara Charlton <2barbara.charlton@gmail.com> wrote:

Greetings fellow OBRC members:

Since Mike Burrell circulated the email "OBRC agm follow-up: proposal to reduce secretary duties" and proposed having duties shared amongst the OBRC voting members, I have given the matter of the OBRC Secretary's duties a great deal of thought.

Although Mike's proposal has merit I felt the turnover of OBRC members each year would mean there would be constant member training required. I felt, instead, these secretarial tasks would benefit from the consistency and attention to detail that a group of Assistant Secretaries with longer term commitments to the position(s) could provide.

The proposal I would like to put forward for the OBRC Members is the following:

1) The OBRC have several Assistant Secretaries with the following three areas of responsibility:

- a)** One person to chase records and do most of the managing of the OBRC gmail account including acknowledging submitted reports and filing them.
- b)** One person to put together the OBRC voting packages and get them onto the OFO server for voting.
- c)** One or more persons to write the OBRC Annual Report for Ontario Birds.

2) The OBRC Secretary would then:

- a)** Manage and tally all Committee voting.
- b)** Do some work managing the OBRC Gmail account, coordinating this with the Assistant involved with that task.
- c)** Oversee all the Assistant Secretaries, making sure the tasks are taken care of properly and nothing falls through the cracks.
- d)** Ensure all other secretarial duties described in the OBRC guidelines are completed by an Assistant and/or by the Secretary.

To this end, I have enlisted the help of qualified and dedicated birders who are willing to serve as Assistant Secretaries in the three roles I have described above. They are Don Sutherland and Bill Crins (to write the OBRC Annual Report) Erika Hentsch (to put together the OBRC voting packages), and me to continue in my role chasing records and maintaining the OBRC Gmail account.

This entire crew is well aware this is only a proposal and the OBRC must approve it prior to any of them being involved in the duties they have agreed to take on.

I am hoping if the Committee agrees to enact my proposal, and we have this sustancial Secretarial support crew in place, our search for the appropriate Secretary will be made considerably easier.

Please reply to all with your opinions and/or comments. If we agree to this framework we can simply move forward with the plan and make changes to the Guidelines under Secretary (3.4), pertaining to "Assistant" (3.4.4.9), to provide for more than one Assistant Secretary, at the next AGM.

Thanks,

Barb

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 7:39 PM Mike V.A. Burrell <mike.burrell.on@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Barb,

I'm fine with that proposal, but it's really no different than our current situation. There's never been anything stopping the secretary from recruiting more assistant secretaries and the way the bylaws are written, the secretary has discretion to assign secretary duties as they see fit to the assistant(s). The only duties that assistant secretary is not permitted to do is record circulation and electoral voting.

To me, this would be a perfectly acceptable solution if we had a secretary willing to work things this way, but it's probably only a short-term solution while a) we have a secretary willing to divide the duties this way and b) Don, Bill, you, and Erika are willing to assist those particular duties.

As someone who has done all of the tasks of the secretary for five recent years, I still feel there's a significant long-term benefit to splitting some of the duties among voting members. If voting members aren't willing to do a small extra task, then we should find other voting members who are.

Now, and Dan can back me up on this, if Erika is willing to prepare the packages then she's basically willing to do about 90% of the secretary's workload. I would suggest if she's willing to do that, then she should just sign up to be the secretary and we can take care of the rest of the duties as a committee. The offer from Don and Bill to complete the annual report is generous, but honestly that's something that probably only takes a few hours to do the way we have set up the spreadsheet to track records through the year. Heck, I'd happily write up the annual report each year and I think it would be a bit odd to have someone write it who wasn't involved in the entire process of preparing or reviewing the records. If Erika is willing to do the main part of secretary (package preparation) then here's what's left:

1. Archivist (me)
2. Prepare eBird summaries (voting member 1) - technically part of package preparation currently
3. Prepare email list serve postings (voting member 2) - technically part of package preparation currently
4. Monitor shared eBird checklists.(voting member 3) - doesn't happen yet
5. Maintain spreadsheet of reports of OBRC birds from all sources (voting member 4)

6. Email management (voting member 5)

7. Chase reports (Barb)

2-6 are all quite small duties and would probably require 30-60 minutes per week at most in busy times of the year. They are also quite simple and I don't think would be unreasonable to expect from a voting member.

So we'd just basically be left with a gap of tabulating votes and putting the record details into a spreadsheet for tracking. Both of those again are pretty minor compared with preparing the packages. If Erika weren't willing to do those things then I'd suggest we discuss among the committee about how best to split up those duties. Voting tabulation really shouldn't be done by a voting member, but the spreadsheet maintenance isn't a big job and could be done by a voting member.

I have again attached the proposal (updated with suggested annual timelines) which was accepted at the agm since some of our new members may not have seen it - it's up to the chair to assign these duties.

Mike

On Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 8:16 AM Daniel Riley <rileydj317@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi All,

I think Barb's proposal sounds like a good solution overall and agree with Ken that it would help to entice someone to take over the position of secretary. The simplest solution would be to find someone who would be willing and able to take on the full responsibility of the position, but I think this proposal would allow for a larger pool of candidates. It would also allow the secretary to coordinate and supervise the completion of duties with a smaller team who don't also have a role as voting members. If done well it would also mean that these positions wouldn't need to have new members trained for them each year.

The preparation of packages is a huge portion of the job, although I would probably put it at closer to 70% of the workload. I think it's important for the secretary to be able to share part of this effort with someone else so that they aren't still doing the lion's share of the work. I think it would be best if both Erika and the secretary were to prepare the packages, this would allow for the workload to be reduced while ensuring the packages are still prepared with consistency. I would be happy to speak with Erika about preparing the packages and the effort involved, and if she is interested, get her assistance putting some of them together this year.

Timewise, I found the OBRC annual report to take more than a few hours to prepare, but this may just have been a result of my inexperience with the process; I would estimate it took me between 30 and 40 hours to get the report written and finalized.

In terms of the duties, I'm not entirely clear on the necessity of preparing summaries of the eBird alert emails and list serve postings. The eBird alert emails generally provide little information that is of use to

the voting members in assessing the validity of a record, and this information is easily available on eBird once the records are accepted by reviewers. The list serve postings are also typically inconsequential to the voting process and with Discord and What's App becoming the preferred sources for disseminating information this job could quickly become a lot more work, this information is also available online if desired. As assistant secretary Barb has already been completing the majority of the email management as well as chasing reports.

I definitely agree that the secretary should be responsible for the tabulation and tracking of votes. Coupled with preparing half of the packages, occasional email management and coordinating the secretarial team I think the secretary will still be able to ensure the consistent preparation of materials but with a more reasonable workload.

Dan

On Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 9:51 AM Barbara Charlton <2barbara.charlton@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Everyone,

Ken, and Mike have excellent points about the enormity and time consuming nature of preparing voting packages. Having almost no experience with the package preparation I underestimated the amount of time it takes and that was an oversight on my part. Dan's idea that we could and should split that task between Erika and the Secretary is an excellent one.

I will attempt to address Mike's 1-7 "what's left", although I thought item 2)d in my proposal "Ensure all other secretarial duties described in the OBRC guidelines are completed by an Assistant and/or by the Secretary." had clearly already covered what was left.

The item numbers 2, 3, and 5 in Mike's proposed jobs for OBRC members listed as "technically part of package preparation currently" were not part of the package preparation process prior to Mike's term as OBRC Secretary and they were not, to my knowledge, maintained in 2019. I agree with Dan with regard to being confused about the necessity of preparing spreadsheet summaries of all OBRC species observations from eBird (#2), list-serve postings (#3), and all other sources (#5). The eBird information is on eBird, Ontbirds maintains an archive, and it is literally an impossible task to find and maintain a spreadsheet and/or summarize Ontario's rare birds posted or mentioned in "all other sources" (many sites on Facebook, Discord, What's App to name just a few). I know Mike did a wonderful job and a great deal of extra work in his years as OBRC Secretary and kudos to him for putting all these summaries together. I do, however, question if maintaining these summaries continues to be useful and I am extremely concerned it is not the best use of the limited and valuable volunteer hours the OBRC members donate to the Committee.

Mike, as he mentioned, is already the Archivist - #1 in his itemized list of tasks for members, a big job in itself. Currently, I not only chase records (#7) but I also do the majority of the email management in the OBRC gmail account (#6) and I'm fine to continue that. Mike noted that the job listed as "Monitor shared eBird checklists" (#4) "doesn't happen yet". I believe the Committee must get the Secretarial issues completely straightened out before we decide to go adding to the workload. Perhaps we can table #4, for the future.

As I said in my initial email I welcome comments, suggestions and opinions from all other OBRC members. If we can find mutually acceptable solutions to the growing secretarial workload it will make for a much stronger, productive Committee.

Thanks,

Barb

On Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 12:45 PM Mike V.A. Burrell <mike.burrell.on@gmail.com> wrote:

Barb,

You and Dan have raised the question about what the OBRC does. My belief is we act as an archive of information related to rare birds that show up in the province. This includes compiling as much/all information as possible. I consider this role the fundamental job of the committee and the only reason it wasn't being done before was it was an oversight. There is frequently important contextual information in those eBird and list-serve reports that is missing from submitted reports. We cannot rely on eBird or list-serve archives to exist in the future and compiling all of that information in one place is, I believe a fundamental role of the OBRC.

There is only one place you can currently go to get a full picture of a given OBRC record - the OBRC files. If you think it is hard to assemble all of that information right now, imagine trying to do so in a few years or decades - it would be impossible! If we decide that is not necessary then I don't believe the OBRC would continue to serve a necessary role.

Mike

On Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 3:01 PM Amanda G <aguercio@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi everyone,

Thank you all for your thoughts so far. It appears that Ken, Mike, and Dan are all supportive of Barb's proposal, as am I, and I hope to hear from the rest of you as well.

For some additional background for the new members who were not present at the last AGM and have not read the minutes, Mike's original proposal was presented with the intention of lightening the load for the Secretary, due to the overwhelming amount of work and time required on Dan's part, which is due in part to the way that bird reporting (and in turn Secretary duties) have changed and increased in recent years. Mike had already been completing item 1 as part of Archivist duties and Barb was already competing 6 and 7. As I understand, items 2-5 were not actually completed in 2019 and it was still unmanageable, so assigning these tasks to voting members would not alleviate any of the existing workload. When Mike first circulated the list of tasks, there was not much interest in volunteering for particular tasks and admittedly I was hesitant to assign tasks without a full understanding of what would be required and how it would be executed, especially the collection of reports from social media and apps when not all members of the committee were necessarily using them.

I expect we need to have a deeper discussion at the AGM about the function of the OBRC as an archive and exactly how much information we need to collect, because I feel like this and the Secretary workload are two different challenges. The by-laws are not explicit about this. Some of the things that we may decide are necessary for the full archive of a record may not be available or necessarily practical to assemble as part of the package at the time of voting, especially if they are not directly required for the purposes of voting on a given record. An Ontbirds report or eBird checklist outlining the detailed behaviour or daily pattern of a rarity, or the weather conditions preceding its discovery, for example, are very valuable details to archive, but do not necessarily contribute to the voting outcome of a record if there are already many photos/reports and the identification and provenance are not in question. All of the eBird reports of a particular rarity may not be submitted in time for voting, and as Dan has pointed out, until they are provisionally accepted by the reviewer, they are not easily searchable or accessible. For records that are not widely seen, the information collection process should be straightforward, but for long-staying or widely seen birds, where do we draw the line? Should we be responsible for collecting every email and app text, or only those that provide new information not available elsewhere?

Given that we are now nearly into October, I don't think we can realistically resolve these tasks in time for this voting period, and I think that moving forward with Barb's proposal would be an efficient short-term solution to relieving the Secretary workload provided that Erika is willing to assist with the package preparation and understands the amount of work involved. Should we go ahead with this there wouldn't be any action required on the committee's part. The Secretary has received assistance from others for preparation of the packages in previous years, and as Mike has indicated this is already permitted in the guidelines. With the bulk of the workload shared with an assistant, I agree with Dan that it may make the position more attractive, which will help us prepare a list of candidates for the spring. The way I see it, with a support team in place to help with the original concern about the workload, we can then work to refine what else the OBRC needs to do that it may or may not already be doing once we can ensure our regular requirements are being met.

Hopefully we can all work together and find mutually acceptable solutions to these challenges, as I think we can all benefit from each other's input and suggestions here.

Cheers,

Amanda

On Wed., Sep. 30, 2020, 4:56 p.m. Mike V.A. Burrell, <mike.burrell.on@gmail.com> wrote:

I'm confused. Amanda, you're talking as though this is something that would happen right now, but I think Barb is talking about changes for next year and a support team for the 2021 secretary.

I am not supportive of this plan as it is presented:

1. I think it would be inappropriate to have someone write the report who was not involved in the review/assembly of records. As a voting member I would be happy to write this (it was my favourite part

of being secretary) report if the secretary wished. But it's very possible that the secretary might want to write it themselves.

2. I don't think this is really a long-term solution. It's essentially the same system we have right now except we'd be telling prospective secretaries that we already have a team of assistants in place. That may indeed help with recruitment, but it could have the opposite effect as it's forcing a secretary to work with people they might not want to (but, seriously who wouldn't want to work with Barb :).

3. I don't think it is unreasonable at all to expect voting members to chip in through the year. It would have the benefit of sharing the workload a bit which is obviously a good thing because it takes pressure off of the secretary team but it also helps voting members understand the process better. If we had good instructions for each task, it would not be a big deal to have "turnover" from year to year in the roles (and members might keep the same role for their entire three year term) because honestly we're talking about a single task with written instructions. I'm quite confident a monkey could be trained for those tasks. They're not complex, just repetitive.

4. No, that is incorrect, items 2,3,5 have been completed since at least 2015 and prior to that it was a constant complaint of voting members that the records were incomplete. Item 2 and 3 are simple to do. Item 5 is critical to being able to flag which records need to be "chased" down. Again, if it's one person's role, it's no big deal.

So, I still am strongly in favour of sharing the workload among the committee members and I absolutely don't think it's too late to give it a try for 2020 - I'm sure Dan would appreciate the help! After all THIS IS WHAT WAS AGREED TO AT THE AGM IN APRIL - by everyone present! The secretary will still very likely want an assistant or two and so a "hybrid" approach with Barb's suggestion may be the most likely future scenario.

Now we've gotten side-tracked a bit with the question about the role of the OBRC and I will reiterate again that I think our most important job has become an archiving function. We basically rubber-stamp 80-90% of records in terms of whether to accept or not. We should be striving for as complete a record as possible for each OBRC-"worthy" bird and should not be relying on external tools to act as our archive. Taking a copy of list-serve postings is pretty darn easy, especially if that is one person's "task". Likewise with eBird, we could even be doing it as data requests at the end of each season which would simplify that process. Obviously we have to draw the line somewhere. But like I said, if we aren't going to do the archive role then we'll really be letting down future generations who will have to sort through a variety of online archives, probably to never find all the material related to a record.

Mike

Appendix 3: MVAB – OBRC Annual Timeline

OBRC annual timeline

Duties are highlighted as follows:

All / Chair / Secretary / Archivist / ROM Liaison

Note that many duties are year-round so are not mentioned specifically here.

January

- All: voting
- Chair: poll members on possible AGM dates

February

- All: voting
- Chair: pick an AGM date. Confirm date with ROM Liaison. Confirm date with all members.
- Secretary: remaining second-round records posted by mid month.

March

- All: voting
- Chair: post call for membership nominations to Birdnews at least one month prior to AGM
- Chair: draft agenda for AGM circulated to all members at least two weeks prior to AGM.
- Chair: notify ROM Liaison of any species which the committee would like to compare skins for at least two weeks prior to AGM.
- Secretary: third-round records posted at least one week prior to AGM
- Chair: Circulate list of nominees at least one week prior to AGM. At the same time, ask all members to submit any additional names.

April

- ROM Liaison: prepare for AGM: room, prepare any trays of skins requested.
- All members: attend AGM
- Secretary: circulate draft minutes of AGM for review to all members within one week of the AGM.
- Secretary: submit final version of minutes from AGM within two weeks of AGM to Archivist.
- Archivist: By the end of the month, prepare and submit changes to OFO for website updates: new version of bylaws (if applicable), updates to review lists, AGM minutes, listing of members, and membership history document.
- Outgoing chair: By the end of the month (after Archivist has updated website), prepare an update for Birdnews to summarize changes to review list, updates to membership and any other important notes.
- Incoming chair: assign duties to all members (see list of duties, appendix A) by end of the month.

May

- Secretary: by the end of the month, prepare first draft of annual report and circulate for review.
- All members: review annual report (may be several rounds of review).

- **Incoming chair**: discuss duties and procedures over phone/email with new members.

June

- **Secretary**: by the end of the month, prepare final version of annual report and submit to Ontario Birds editors.

July

- **Secretary**: update all reports (including coversheets with final voting outcomes) from the previous year; ensure everything is uploaded to OBRC server. Once the server contains the finished files, notify archivist.
- **Archivist**: download copies of the final files and incorporate into OBRC archive.

August

- **Secretary**: finalize annual listing of records to match what was published in the annual report. Email finished copy to archivist.
- **Archivist**: incorporate previous year's records into OBRC database; update taxonomy and re-tabulate number of records for each review region and subspecies.
- **Secretary**: beginning posting packages of this year's records for member review
- **Archivist**: upon publication of annual report, obtain a digital copy from Ontario Birds layout person (currently Judie Shore) and have posted to website.
- **Secretary**: provide list of email addresses of everyone who submitted documentation in the previous year to chair.
- **Chair**: After report is available on website, use email list from secretary to send thank you email with link to report.

September

- **All**: voting

October

- **All**: voting

November

- **Secretary**: begin posting second-round records for review

December

- **All**: voting

