

Martz-Kohl Observatory General Meeting

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

The President Corey Swanson called the General Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read by the secretary, Walter Pickut. After discussion, a motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report: presented by Treasurer John Anderson. After discussion, a motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous consent.

Committee reports:

- **Finance Committee**

- Laurie Livingston reported that we did receive funding from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation for the library telescope project in the amount of \$2,917. Eight telescopes will be purchased and appropriately modified. Discussions are underway with the involved libraries in Frewsburg, Falconer, Kennedy, and Randolph. A start date for the program in June is proposed so students could make use of the telescopes during summer vacation by checking them out like a book.
- A grant application was submitted to the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation under the Community Impact Grant for the Space Stem Camp to be held in July. The amount was \$5,816. Mary Plumb and Laurie will meet with CRCF on May 4 to answer any questions relative to the application. A reply is expected in mid-May.
- The MCO board of directors approved At the meeting directly before this meeting submission of \$4,000 to purchase 10,000 solar eclipse glasses and \$100 for shipping in preparation for the April, 2024 total solar eclipse. Notification is due in mid-May.
- Concerning General finances, the finance committee is looking into CDs for nine, 13, and possibly 18-month maturities for discussion at the April board of directors meeting.
- Development of financial policies is now underway for future consideration by the board.
- Financial goals are underway for updating Strategic Planning. The last three-year strategic plan was completed in 2022.

- **Facilities Committee**

- Facilities has begun working on the store room modifications to accommodate the Radio Astronomy Room. Floor plan revisions are now under consideration.
- The roll-off roof stairway will be equipped with new lighting to prevent tripping. The old ultraviolet lights and new rope lights donated by Tom Traub will be considered for this.
- The concrete telescope pad will be completed when weather permits.
- Blackout curtains are being installed for the classroom.

- A possible new mount and installation for the 16" telescope may cost as much as \$40,000.
- 24" dome rewiring and battery recharger are in progress.
- Maintenance work continues and roof repairs are slated for this summer.
- **Nominating Committee**
 - Gary Nelson reported that six Board members will be eligible to serve for two more years in September, then will be ineligible to serve for the next two years. Walt Pickut, Corey Swanson, and Tom Traub's terms will be ending in September 2024.
 - Some others have expressed an interest in Board service. Contact Laurie, Phil, or Gary to be nominated.
- **Strategic Planning**
 - Committee will meet at the end of April/beginning of May to assemble the plan for Board approval in August for presentation (if approved) to the General Membership at the Annual Meeting.
- **Program Committee**
 - Next meeting scheduled for April 28
 - Speaker schedule remains as previously announced
- **Solar Eclipse Committee**
 - Tom Traub reported we're down to 382 days and counting to totality! Preps underway include Eclipse glasses, NASA Eclipse Team collaboration, talking to Seneca Nation to understand indigenous celestial point of view, planning with local governments and business about the influx of people for the event.
- **Educational Outreach Committee**
 - Reported STEM Wars at JCC was a success including student contact for a summer internship,
 - STEM Camp being developed,
 - Intern Lindsey Arthur proceeded well.
- **Technology Committee**
 - Tom reports that work continues to update the Focus Max software
 - APC systems may require solid state drive updating for 24".
 - Meeting with tech group slated soon for telescope operations updating.
 - Larger, multi-terabyte computer storage is needed.
 - The systems are securely firewalled against hacking.
- **Bylaws Committee**
 - Nothing to report at this time
- **Public Relations Committee**
 - Andy Felong reported that when the STEM Camp PR was posted on FaceBook there were 275 unique visits, 60 proceeded to the application form. We had more interest than expected more quickly than expected. App deadline is April 1.
 - Newspaper PR may not not be needed.
 - More help will be needed from outside MKO
 - A member has donated 100 Galileo telescopes for use.

- Our events are now regularly posted in the Buffalo News.
- The Jamestown Gazette will also carry a monthly promo for speakers.
- **Scholarship Committee**
 - Gary Nelson reports that CRCF holds a Mary Martz Fund, an Endowment Fund, and a Scholarship Fund. Market volatility continues to affect fund balances available for scholarship disbursements.

Unfinished Business

- None reported

New Business

- Exoplanet Watch Group collaboration and general membership meeting with MKO requested for future consideration to “talk astronomy.”

Correspondence

- Corey was contacted by Kennedy Free Public Library asking for an MKO member to take part in their Summer Reading Program at 10-11 a.m., Thursday, July 13, with a presentation about MKO in conjunction with a library reading and craft time. Age 5-7, elementary school level. Let Corey know if you are interested.
- New astronomy group headed by Steve Conrad in the Wellsboro-State College area is forming. They want to take a field trip to MKO. Will report more as it develops.

For the Good of the Association

- John Anderson suggested MKO donate some of our excess books to libraries with few circulating.
- Corey suggested meeting minutes, newsletter, financials, QR codes, committee chair phones/emails, notices, etc. to be posted on the “Members Only” portal.

Upcoming Events

- April 28, 9:15 - 11:15 Randolph Elementary 56 students and 8 adults, lunch here.
- May 5, 9:30 to noon, Ashville BOCES special ed. 18 students and 4 adults
- Wednesday, June 14, Mayville-Chautauqua Lions Club 8 members to visit in the evening, 7:30 - 8:00

Next BOD and General Meeting April 26, 2024.

There being no further business, President Corey Swanson adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter W. Pickut

Secretary