

TAAA Board of Directors Open Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2025

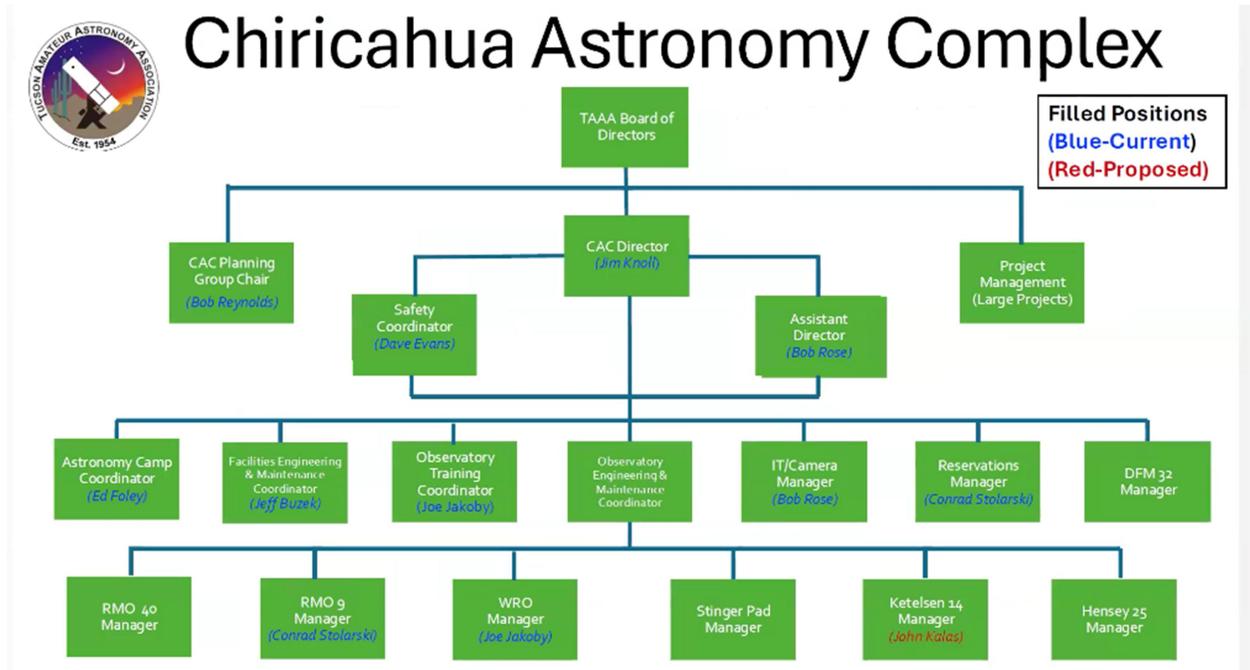
The teleconference Zoom Board open meeting was called to order at 6:32PM, M. Smith, President, presiding. Board members present: B. Whitehead, Treasurer; E. Foley, Vice President; B. Reynolds, Secretary and Members-at-Large D. Rosseter, S. Ferris, J. Kalas. Members attending included: Doug Smith, Jim Knoll, Terri Lappin, Ross Carnes, Greg Ruppel, John Mead, and Nelsey Toner.

Approval of Minutes:

- Subject to a change the spelling of Gila Monster and Bernie Stingers name, a motion was made by Stephen Ferris to approve the January 8, 2025 minutes. The motion was seconded by Barbara Whitehead and the motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

CAC Reports

- Jim Knoll presented the latest CAC org chart for review and approval. It was noted that John Kalas has accepted responsibility for the Ketelsen Observatory so the text should now be blue in color. Ed Foley made a motion that the BOD support the amended org chart. It was seconded by David Rosseter and approved by a vote of 6-0.



- It was noted that the new org chart will be included in an upcoming Bulletin.
- Ed Foley presented the Youth Protection Plan for the upcoming TAAA Astronomy Camp on Feb 23 and 24. It was also noted that the Southwest Foundation provided the school sponsoring the event with a \$500 check to cover misc expenses. A motion was put forward by Stephen Ferris to approve the plan with a second by John Kalas. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

- It was suggested that templates for the Youth Protection Plans be placed alongside the minor training materials.
- The 32" project is proceeding with completion of the foundation and the supporting steel structure. Painting will begin shortly as well installation of the siding. It is expected that the structure will be ready for the telescope within the next 2 months. Budget has a slight overrun of \$3k which may be reduced with savings in remaining work scope.
- John Kalas is working with Bob Rose to bring the Warren Hensley 25" into service. Some modifications may be required. Current plan is to house the 25" in a roll off shed on a new pad located adjacent to the amphitheater. The objective is to make the telescope usable with only one operator. Funding effort will follow further cost estimating.

Presidents Report:

- Mae wanted to confirm that the BOD is getting the email updates on community responses to heat related weather events and the impacts on electric grids. This is related to increasingly frequent and severe heat events.
- TAAA should consider some of these issues when planning events in the months of June and July.

Treasurers Report

- Barbara noted that the TAAA December balance sheet showed approx \$9.5k in its checking account and approximately \$276k in money market accounts. In addition, the endowment account balance is approximately \$15k as a result of recent additions. Further, fixed assets totaled approximately \$1.4 million with total assets sitting at \$1.71 million.
- The net revenue for the month of December was approximately \$37.5k while year to date stood at approximately \$155.7k.
- Revenue for the month was over budget due increased donations, star party revenue, and interest. This resulted in a very favorable actual net revenue vs budget (~250%+) thus far this fiscal year.
- It was noted that Barbara's financial summary charts are ready for inclusion in the Bulletin. This could be supplemented with a link to the TAAA 990 for a more complete financial overview.
- A motion was made by J. Kalas to approve the Treasurers Reports as presented for the financial month of January. The motion was seconded by E. Foley and passed by a vote of 6-0.
- The BOD, Jim Knoll and Terri Lappin should receive a report on budget status by class.

TIMPA Reports

- Six sessions were scheduled, three star parties and three training sessions.
- Six people have been trained for operating the 16" with 4 additional in the pipeline.
- Interstate 11 western routing has been paused but uncertainty level is high due to current political climate.
- TIMPA has started lease negotiations with the City.

- New roof has been installed on the 14" shed with completion scheduled for March 1.

Loaner/Training Equipment Program

- Doug Smith presented his loaner pool recommendations. These recommendations included: 4 ten inch dobs, 2 Celestron schmidt cass's on go to mounts, one Meade on a go to mount, a refractor on a go to mount, a conventional 6 or 8" Newtonian on a go to mount. The later 2 go to mounts are still needed. A remaining C11 and two 12" are not recommended for the loaner pool.
- Eyepiece kits are not needed for each telescope but rather have 2 types of kits. One for people to use for pre-purchase testing (an eyepiece comparison kit) and one "standard kit" with common eyepiece designs such that different telescopes and different focal length eyepieces can be tested. Recommendation is for 3 standard kits and 2 comparison kits. Most of these recommended kits can be built from existing inventory.
- One additional eyepiece kit made of 2" eyepieces is also recommended. We may, or may not, have inventory to build this kit.
- In addition, each telescope should have one attached eyepiece. These could be sourced from existing inventory.
- Also recommend 2 or 3 eyepiece filter kits to allow wide range of user experience. No solar filters would be included nor would no solar viewing would be allowed.
- Currently, the view is that use of all scopes in these pools would be limited to TIMPA site. However, eyepieces and filters could be used off site.
- Future expansion of the pool could include a couple of smaller 6"/8" SCT's and/or dobs that could be taken off site.
- It was recommended that workshops be set up to train potential users on various go to and push to systems.
- A request was made to also retain the 5" ETX to support the setting circle work shop. This scope would not be loaned out.
- It was noted that record of both on and off site equipment usage be instituted.
- It will take 1-2 months to compile and relocate inventoried items to build the recommended kits/equipment.
- The timing of availability and access of loaner equipment should be posted for members to see.
- During the comments session, it was recommended that the Stellarview refractor either be sold or we get more aggressive about finding a mount. A mount could come from soliciting membership or utilizing proceeds of surplus sales to purchase a mount.
- Also, don't sell surplus C11 as it could have a home at CAC.
- Ed Foley made a motion to accept Doug's recommendation with an amendment that the Stellarvue refractor either has a mount a mount by year end or the scope is sold. The motion was seconded by Stephen Ferris and passed by a vote of 6-0.

Membership Program Review Update

- David Rossetter led a group consisting of Ed Foley, Terri Lappin, Jim Knoll and Barbara Whitehead that has been involved in evaluation of Member Planet and possible replacements.

- Initial direction has been to go with TidyHQ which David previewed to the BOD.
- Estimate a 3 to 6 month development period before system migration.
- Barbara endorsed TidyHQ as an efficiency measure due to easier financial data entry.
- Ed made a motion as follows. Barbara seconded the motion and it was approved by a vote of 6-0.

1) Authorizes membership database service group to pursue further study, research, building, and testing.

2) Authorizes purchase of full version of TidyHQ for up to six months (\$500.00).

3) Understands that this motion is not a final decision for the TAAA to use TidyHQ for our membership database needs.

4) Expects monthly updates from the group for \$500 to further explore use of TidyHQ of development cost plus approval of the \$76 per month ongoing charge.

Astro Imaging Strategic Review

- Greg Ruppel gave an overview of the AISIG meeting history, subjects, participants, image postings, blog entries, etc.
- With the exception of the COVID period, trend is a steady growth in participants, participation, and involvement.
- Greg noted that new members need to be reminded that they need to specifically apply to be part of the SIG.
- Accolades were provided over the success of the SIG.
- It was noted that focus on beginners could be enhanced with separate meetings for beginners, etc.
- It was suggested that a survey of non-participating SIG members might be helpful.
- It was also suggested that there could be some coordination between the CAC effort to build imaging equipment/capability and the SIG agendas/membership. There could also be some synergy to run courses on “smart scopes”.

Stary Messenger Review

- Commitment to Stary Messenger zoom meetings has not translated into increased volunteerism.
- Main event is the Tucson Festival of Books which is a very large event. Cost of TAAA involvement has been mitigated by support of the U of A.
- Suggested more involvement of imagers to capture more public interest.
- Reviewed current status of science fair awards and library telescope programs.
- Galileoscope Program now includes approximately 30 scopes that will be made available at both CAC and in public schools.
- Night Sky Network Toolkits now includes 13 separate tool kits that feature training in basic astronomy/telescope skills. The space rocks toolkit is the most popular.

- Terri also noted her volunteer recognition program and challenges in recruiting needed volunteers. She also indicated the importance of being able to send out group emails.
- Challenges also include increased costs of banners and venues.
- Terri displayed her use of VolunteerSignup and Activity Reports to organize her team/events.
- Terri notified BOD that she will be requesting a commercial, climate controlled storage unit for storage of tool kits.

A motion was put forward by B. Whitehead to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ed Foley. The motion was approved 6-0 and the Board meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.