KAWO Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
February 4th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at Quyen Edwards's house

Present: Ann Klobucar, Beth Bradburn, Cameron Lockwood, Ellie Shenker, Holly Hooper Rowe, Mel Luna, Mike Weis, Paul Laferriere, Quyen Edwards, RosaLee Ward

Absent: Ilse Gebhard, Kira Griggs, Kathy McGoff, Laura Moss, Noel Ocen

1. Call to Order by President Quyen Edwards at 7:15 p.m.

2. Reading of Minutes from November 12, 2025 for discussion and approval
Motion to approve the minutes was made by Ellie and seconded by Beth. All in favor and motion approved.

3. Changes to the Agenda
None proposed.

4. Introduction of Executive Committee Members
Members of the Committee introduced themselves. Special note was made of the new members joining the Committee this year, namely Holly Hooper Rowe, Kira Griggs, and Laura Moss. Quyen expressed her intent to hold quarterly Executive Committee meetings in 2026, but encouraged individual Standing Committees to convene their own meetings as needed throughout the year. She asked that Standing Committees make the broader Committee aware of any such meetings in the event that other members might wish to participate. She also said to let her know if you need a room to meet and she can arrange that at the library. Beth identified Google Calendar as a potential channel (which the Committee should have access to via its Gmail account) for meeting coordination.

5. (a) Reading of Treasurer's Report dated December 2025 for discussion and approval
Motion to approve the report was made by RosaLee and seconded by Beth. All in favor and motion approved.

(b) Reading of KAWO Bank Accounts and Funds Proposal
Ellie explained that she has been looking at multiple credit unions with the intention of transferring KAWO's banking. Currently her proposal is to change banks from Fifth Third to Lake Michigan Credit Union. She outlined the pros and cons of various account options and identified the opportunity to place funds in a Max Money Market Account and seven-month Certificates of Deposit. In compliance with National's policy, both Ellie and Quyen (as Treasurer and President, respectively) would be signatories on all accounts. Motion to approve the proposal was made by Mel and seconded by RosaLee. All in favor and motion approved.

6. Old Business
(a) Educational Scholarship Reminder

Quyen reminded members of the initiative approved in 2025 which enables any member of the Committee to request up to $200 for training or other educational events. Such requests must be made in writing and the Committee then votes to approve or reject. Expenses are reimbursed by the Treasurer.

7. New Business
(a) Bylaws Change
Quyen identified her intention to hold a vote on modifications to KAWO's bylaws by the end of the year. She reminded members that current KAWO bylaws were passed in 2015 and also drew attention to National's standard template which has been developed in the meantime. She stated that Noel has already expressed an interest in this work. Ellie and RosaLee said that they would be happy to help edit.

(b) Conflict of Interest
Quyen asked that Committee members disclose any potential conflicts of interest for full transparency. As an example, she identified that she and Cameron will be opening a native plant business in 2026. She also clarified that, as President, she is unable to vote, according to current bylaws. Mike Weis confirmed that he owns and operates the business Dropseed! Native Gardens and Ecological Restoration.

(c) 2026 Plant Sale
Quyen confirmed that Hidden Savanna Nursery has agreed to collaborate in this spring's plant sale. She expressed the view that the sale continues to be a good way to fundraise and support the local community. She stated that Noel has registered an interest in helping, and Beth confirmed that she will set up the website again this year. Ellie stated that she would be willing to take over from Beth at some point. RosaLee said she would be happy to do the same. Quyen and RosaLee agreed to serve as co-chairs of the plant sale committee. Quyen explained that the dates (in terms of when the plant list will be available, the website will go live, orders will be sorted, and orders will be available for pickup) should more or less align with those of last year. She confirmed her intention to recruit specific volunteers to assist with order sorting and order pickup.

8. Report of Committees
(a) Programs
Mel talked through each of the upcoming events planned for the remainder of 2026. These include the plant sale and a movie screening at Dormouse Theatre in May; a garden tour in June (location to be determined); a fieldtrip to Coloma dunes and ideally another garden tour (potentially in the Gull Lake area) in July; a garden tour in August (in Beth and Paul's neighborhood); and a collaborative event with the Audubon Society in October. She explained that there is no program currently planned for September, but that the plant exchange will be held in Crane Park that month. There was general discussion of the plant exchange hosted by Tom Small that will occur this spring. Community Projects will assist Tom with spring cleanup and plant prep, but Quyen invited the broader Committee to participate. She also emphasized that she would like to see a concerted effort to remind and encourage members to pot up plants to share at the exchanges. To that end, Ellie suggested that something about winter sowing be added to

Seedlings. With regards to a program for September, Mike identified the possibility for a tour of the restoration work occurring at Milham Park. Both Paul and Mike said they could reach out to the relevant party to discuss. Mike also explained that the new volunteer coordinator at SWMLC reached out to see if he would be interested in leading a tour of a SWMLC property, and he proposed that this could be a good collaboration opportunity, most likely for an event at Chipman in June. Mike also expressed a desire to see KAWO partner with the Southwestern Chapter of the Michigan Botanical Society in future, whose theme this year is savannas and prairies.

(b) Outreach & Education
Quyen confirmed that she has been coordinating requests from the community for KAWO speakers and tabling. She invited anyone interested to participate in a specific event to feel free to do so and said she will try to step in wherever she can. In terms of relevant materials, Holly volunteered to update the tri-fold board. ~~Quyen and Ellie agreed to work together to update business cards. Quyen also expects to order stickers with the new logo to give away to volunteers and as part of outreach efforts.~~ Ellie recommended that a QR code be added to the stickers. (Update: Mel will order stickers and business cards with the new logo and QR code.) RosaLee offered to take on public speaking events. She and Quyen agreed to collaborate on development of a standard slide deck. Beth said she would also be willing to participate in events if such a resource was available. Holly and RosaLee offered to look into whether their respective places of employment might be able to offer free meeting spaces for events. Quyen explained that tabling at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery will not occur since burst pipes at the visitor center have led to the associated event being cancelled. She reminded everyone of the opportunity to participate in the Michigan Waterways Stewards event in March, Kalamazoo Nature Center's Earth Day event in April, and World Migratory Bird Day with ASK in May.

(c) Monarch Group
No updates.

(d) Hospitality
No updates.

(e) Community Projects
Paul provided background on Planting Partnerships, the grant program he has been developing. He stated his intention to undertake fall plantings this year due to winter weather. On the topic of site selection, Paul raised the point that it currently remains unclear whether the Committee will vote on approval of each new site. Ellie put forward a motion to empower the project coordinator to make that decision, and Ann seconded the motion. All in favor and motion approved. Paul then walked the Committee through the current list of potential sites, two of which he feels are particularly promising. His aim is to select three to five sites each year. Paul also outlined his vision for the program as comprising three pillars: (1) the selection of new sites; (2) the stewardship of existing sites; and (3) having KAWO serve as a hub for existing sites, namely by maintaining a webpage listing and encouraging the growth of a network. He explained his intent to offer tours of relevant sites on Fridays starting in May and running through September. There was general discussion of the best time window for offering such tours, and there was a consensus that 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. would be most amenable to people's schedules.

(f) Mentorship & Site Visit
Ann explained that she already gave an overview of mentorships at the beginning of the meeting, when she confirmed that interest continues to grow. Her intent is to offer site visits between March and October. She will contact members who have offered to do site visits in the past and welcomed any EC members who are interested to participate.

(g) Publications
Beth said that she would provide updates about the Mass Mailer via email. Quyen reminded the Committee that anyone can contribute to Seedlings, with a variety of content. Beth explained that she has been working with Ilse Gebhard on a digital book project which will consolidate various columns Ilse has written over the years into a standalone resource. She proposed that the book be offered for sale through KAWO, and that KAWO serve as the publisher. She explained that this would involve purchase of an ISBN, which should cost around $125. RosaLee made a motion to approve this request and Mel seconded the motion. All in favor and motion approved.

(h) Membership
No updates.

(i) Social Media
Quyen made a request for support with the KAWO Facebook account. She called on members to make posts or send her content that she will post. She explained that she is considering turning articles from Seedlings into individual posts. Beth said doing so should become easier with the migration to the new platform. Mel commented that, in the past, postings about the "plant of the week" were incredibly successful and generated a lot of engagement. RosaLee said she is happy to support social media efforts, given her past experience. Quyen confirmed that she will add both RosaLee and Mike as account administrators, as Mike regularly asks her to post content.

9. Announcements & Action Items

Mike gave a general update on Asylum Lake. Quyen spoke about the potential Bronson Park planting and recent meetings between KAWO, the City and the Gun Lake Tribe. Quyen also explained that the League of Women Voters is looking for feedback on a new advocacy initiative encouraging Portage to incorporate native plants into landscaping on city property.

10. Adjournment
Quyen thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9:30 PM.