

Board of Directors
April 26, 2020
Final Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

OFFICERS PRESENT

President, Tim Mills
Vice President, Jeff Fay
Secretary, Jim Hill
Patty Companik, Treasurer

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Addison: Lewis Barnes
Caledonia: Bruce Carlson
Chittenden: Pat Poulin
Essex: Mike Daley
Franklin: Mike Burns
Grand Isle: Jeff Porter (for Damien Henry)
Lamoille: Carmin Lemery
Orleans: Roger Gosselin
Rutland: Curt Marechaux
Washington: Mark Reaves
Windham: Michael Garber
Windsor: Doug Jacobs

STAFF PRESENT:

Executive Director: Cindy Locke
Trails Administrator: Matt Tetreault
LVRT/Trails Manager: Ken Brown
Beth Flint, Technology & Media Manager

GUESTS:

Ivor Stevens, Alternate Director, Windham
Stan Choiniere, Chairman, Safety Committee
Edward Hebebrand, President, St Johnsbury Sno-Blazers
Peggy Whiteneck, recording secretary

President Tim Mills called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Michael Garber was welcomed to the Board as the incoming director from Windham County.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Grand Isle moved and Lamoille seconded approval of the agenda as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Secretary's Report

MOTION: Rutland moved and Lamoille seconded approval of the March 22, 2021 minutes with the following correction: Edward Hebebrand affiliation is St. Johnsbury Sno-Blazers (not Danville S Kimos). **Motion carried.**

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Patty Companik presented the financial report through March. Membership income was \$58,000 (rounded) for March, with \$3 million income for the season thus far, including \$2.8 million in TMA sales. Majority of expenses were trails related, including grooming. The organization is at 52% of budget for expenses through March.

MOTION: Addison moved and Essex seconded that the financial report from March be approved as submitted. **Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS

Trails Policy Changes

Matt Tetreault presented some proposed changes, mostly policy wording to reflect, for example, the switch to online TMA registrations.

MOTION: Orleans moved and Chittenden seconded approval of policy changes as presented. **Motion carried.**

Staff Reports

Staff reports were submitted in packets sent to Board members prior to this meeting. Carmin Lemery will follow up with Lamoille for late season log reports, weeks 14-16. Matt has followed up with all clubs that have missing post-season data. It was noted that Ivor Stevens had sent the reports for his county three times but they did not come through to Matt's email, nor did the cc to Ken Brown; Cindy Locke asked Ivor to send the information to her email. Carmen Lemery asked about the note in the Executive Director's report concerning equipment for law enforcement. Cindy explained there is a 50% grant program through the Governor's Council for equipment for snowmobile law enforcement. A subcommittee of the Council is also looking into the feasibility of a one-time higher-percent grant program for newer law enforcement agencies who need snowmobiles or trailers. This would need to be done without taking funding from elsewhere in law enforcement grants, as existing coverage is still needed.

Committee and Other Meeting Reports

Northeast Chapter and USA

Vermont representatives Pat Poulin and Jeff Fay reported on a meeting last week where one of the issues raised was the federal RTP program requirement that authorizes purchase only of equipment made in the USA. For grooming, this is a problem because only Tuckers can be bought under that restriction. The new federal administration is being asked to broaden that coverage to include other groomer providers. Cindy Locke said that she will be bringing this issue up in a meeting with Congressman Peter Welch on Friday and will make it clear that VAST is in favor of this broader inclusion, as this is not only a question of "buying American" as other grooming companies also create American jobs.

VT Snow Trails Conservancy

Jim Hill, President of the VSTC, had nothing new to report.

Law Enforcement Committee

This was covered in Cindy Locke's in Executive Director report.

LVRT

Ken Brown said the state is starting work in Highgate and is moving the LVRT forward. Cindy and Ken met with AOT to talk about building volunteer stewardship among communities that will be newly impacted as the LVRT moves forward.

Awards and Nominating Committee

Committee chairman Patty Companik announced two scholarship recipients. All current officers are seeking re-election. A meeting is scheduled for May to review nominations for awards, and Patty reminded the Board this is the deadline week for submitting nominations.

By-laws and Policy

Jeff Fay said the committee will be meeting in anticipation of some changes to reflect online TMAs and deal with insurance issues.

Annual Meeting

Jeff Fay reported planning is underway, with the Annual Meeting scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 11 at Forest and Field under whatever Covid protocols may be in place at that time. A commemoration will acknowledge the national anniversary of the lives lost in the 9/11/2001 attacks. Cindy Locke has signed the contract for tents and will coordinate volunteers, including Safety Ambassadors for parking. Chittenden is hosting the meeting and decided to hold it again in Waterbury because of the convenience of the site and its proximity to Chittenden. Essex County is host for 2022.

Long Range Planning & Organization Committee

Committee chairman Mark Reaves said the committee met recently and worked on ice crossing issues and defining what constitutes a VAST Trail.

Resource Committee

Ivor Stevens said there will be a May meeting. Proposals from prior meetings will be reviewed over the summer and then presented to the Board, a firm date for that submission not yet set.

Personnel

There was discussion about the plan is for replacing Cyndy Brown on her retirement. VAST advertises on the Vermont Department of Labor website, which has worked well for VAST in past hiring. Cindy is working on a job description and will be gathering resumes in the next couple of weeks with a view toward having someone on board to work with Cyndy Brown in her last week. Cindy Locke noted that a full-time position with Cyndy's caliber of expertise may not be needed because both Cyndy Brown and Peggy Whiteneck have agreed to help in times of heavy workload.

Trails Committee

Committee chairman Jeff Fay said the committee met last week after the first construction seminar, at which time they hashed out trail policy changes just voted on here. He reminded the Board that requested club changes to mileage or changes to groomer class that would have an economic impact should be in to Matt Tetreault by the 10th of May (in advance of the next committee meeting on the 17th).

Safety Committee

Committee chairman Stan Choiniere reported that the committee met on the 19th. The committee has been contacted by two landowners who are concerned about new riders and what the landowners perceive as the lack of training for new riders. Safety class attendance is required to ride, but these landowners feel that is not enough. The issue was discussed with Trevor Carbo of the Vermont State Police to see if lieu of the current online Power Point, a video version of a simulated class could be developed instead, but he felt there were too many logistical hurdles. The committee then discussed making some short videos focusing on key points of safe riding that could be placed in various media outlets, including Facebook and the VAST web site. The committee will be in hiatus over the next few months, and Stan will be doing research in anticipation of revisiting this issue in the fall. The committee also talked about custom signage at trail heads and intersections. The next meeting of the committee is August 9.

Carmin Lemery said the magazine issue right before the start of the season would also be a good place to highlight safety. Stan said he saw greater compliance with the "Hands On" campaign to discourage hand signals. Carmin noted that groomers are still concerned about snowmobilers not staying in lane. Stan responded that it is hard to emphasize this more strongly than we already have: "Stay on trail and ride on the right." Matt Tetreault questioned whether signage fixes the problems for common sense behaviors people should know anyway: don't drink and ride, stay in lane, etc. It was noted that reminder signs are most useful when they are strategically placed at trailheads and intersections, not all along the trail.

Governor's Council

Chairman Pat Poulin said the Council is still meeting. There have been 2400 online safety classes this year. Stan Choiniere said he would like to do some demographic analysis to see how many riders with safety issues fall into which age categories to see where safety education is most needed.

In May, the Council will review the SSTP budget and then approve it in June. Cindy Locke is collecting a list of legislative changes to be proposed for next year. This year, revised exhaust language is proposed for the transportation bill that will aid law enforcement in monitoring compliance.

MOTION: Rutland moved and Chittenden seconded that the meeting be adjourned. ***Motion carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Hill
Secretary