

**FEBRUARY 24, 2003**

**DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES & STAFF PRESENT:** Lisa Viau-Addison; Norm Roark-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia, Patrick Poulin-Chittenden; David Page-Essex; Jodie Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Ann Shangraw-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Barry Bradley-Rutland; Greg Rouleau-Washington; Roone Gibbs-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Ron Bartemy-President; Hal Coughlin-Vice-President; David LaBelle-Treasurer; Bryant Watson-Executive Director; Alexis Nowalk-SSTP Trails Administrator; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary.

**GUESTS:** Mitzi Oakes, Bill and Ruth Benham, Jim Holbrook, John Ross, Betty Roark, Sandy Woodbeck, Ralph Farwell, Conrad Stewart, Maridelle Tomlinson, Andrew Nemethy, Mike Todd. Matt Tetreault-Trails Assistant, David Pastula, Matt Towle, Marian and Steve Gray, Kip Stockwell, Howard Smith, John Lenz and Ross Page.

At 6:00 P.M., President Ron Bartemy called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA:** Dave LaBelle moved and Barry Bradley seconded to approve the Agenda with the following additions. So moved.

8h. Chittenden County club minutes

8i. Survey for Directors

6a. Marian and Steve Gray for recognition

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Dave LaBelle moved and Dave Page seconded to approve the minutes of January 27, 2003. The motion carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Ann Shangraw questioned what the January 2 expense for Moosalamoo Association. They are a recreational group of folks in the Moosalamoo recreational area. Jodie Ross questioned the acquisition for Addison County that was charged to VAST. Addison County will be reimbursing VAST. They purchased an equipment through VAST to get it tax exempt. Bill Oakes questioned Item #28144 for four tickets to the Republican Legislative Elective Dinner. Norm Roark motioned and Pat Poulin seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. So moved.

**CONSENT CALENDAR - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL**

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** David LaBelle moved and Norm Roark seconded the approval of the Consent Calendar as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

**RECOGNITION:** Mrs. Marion Gray and her husband Steve presented a plaque to Bryant Watson for all of VAST staff's support and work on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation ride-in. Mrs. Gray expressed special appreciation to Alexis Nowalk, Matt Tetreault and Lauri Thomas for the tremendous amount of work they did for the ride. Kip Stockwell, Busch North Race Car driver, was present and also a recipient of an award for all of his support for the ride-in. Over \$73,200 has been received so far with more monies coming in. WCAX donated \$22,900 in advertising. Many riders expressed thanks to Mrs. Gray at the end of the ride because every intersection was

signed as requested. Riders were surprised and most appreciative of everyone's cooperation and through out the state.

**ACSA WASHINGTON DC FLY-IN (March 29-April 2):** Bryant Watson presented information on the fly-in. Alexis Nowalk, Ann Shangraw, Norm Roark, Pat Poulin and Greg Rouleau are interested in going. Bryant Watson will also be going. We have budgeted for four to go. It would cost \$800-\$1000 each additional folks. Ron Bartemy emphasized how important it is for visibility at things like this to promote the snowmobiling sport. VAST is going to DC to ask for \$7.1 Million dollars for the Lamoille Valley Rails to Trails. Norm Roark motioned and Barry Bradley seconded that VAST send seven delegates to the Washington DC Fly-In and keep within the constraints of the budget. Motion carried.

**LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL COMMITTEE:** We are still setting in rail banking. The Agency of Transportation does not know what is going on with the congressional money we are asking for. Bryant Watson reviewed the letter that he drafted to be sent to Congressman Bernie Sanders requesting \$7,268,486 in the FY 2004 federal budget for transforming the existing railroad bed of the Lamoille Valley Rail Road (LVRR) into a four season recreational trail. The money would come to VAST and not through the Agency of Transportation. More than half of these miles are already being used as snowmobile trails.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Ann Shangraw reported that the Legislative Dinner was a success. We came in way under budget for what was originally planned. This year's cost was \$4,301.92. Ron Bartemy suggested that we check on possibly delivering excess meals from no-shows to a food bank or shelter.

Bill Oakes reported on the Ad-Hoc Committee. He has only received three of the questionnaires back that was handed out to the directors in December. He would like to receive more back. He would also welcome receiving questionnaires filled out by local clubs for their input too. It's important that we find a way to get more folks involved in clubs. It was suggested for the folks that do not want to get involved, maybe have them pay a little more.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Bryant Watson spoke with Brian Wells last week and he now knows that Lamoille County is hosting the Annual Meeting this year and he has started organizing the meeting.

**GROOMING RATE INCREASE:** Alexis Nowalk presented a PowerPoint presentation for the 2003 Grooming Rate Increase Proposal. Previously Alexis and the Trails Committee were charged with obtaining more information on current costs for grooming and grooming equipment costs. After compiling much information, the Trails Committee came up with the 2003 Grooming Rate Increase Proposal. There is a significant increase in costs for equipment and diesel/gasoline. The Directors' requested Alexis to conduct a groomer survey and requested 100% participation. It is statistically impossible to have 100% participation in a survey, especially when involving volunteers. Alexis received more than 64 surveys but only used 55 of the surveys that involved Class I and IV groomers. Ralph Farwell shared that he has been asking folks around the state about where they thought the TMA money is going and if they would be willing to pay more for TMAs if the extra would go to grooming. He has found that on average,

folks do not know where all the TMA money goes and they would be willing to pay more for TMAs if they knew the increase was going for grooming. There was a discussion on how much would be realistic to ask for in the increase. The largest item in the budget is for grooming. Howard Smith suggested that we put the breakdown on the back of the TMAs to better educate people where their TMA money goes.

We should be getting our preliminary budget proposals from the Fiscal Committee in April. At this point we are at the discussion level and not at the action necessary. There was a discussion on increasing the grooming fund by 25% to support a grooming rate increase. If we increase the grooming rate then we should also increase how much we budget to replenish and increase the contingency fund. Howard Smith suggested that we look into creating a short term (2-3 days) TMA for non-residents that want to come up for a weekend and try out our trails. This has been brought up before at meetings. Dave LaBelle brought up the fact that we need to make sure we plan for the agreement that we have with the finance institution to cover the lease equipment buy-out within the next two years. Ron Bartemy asked the directors to bring back to their counties that there is a possibility of a \$10 increase to the TMAs and this would only be for grooming and not cover any other budget needs.

**POTENTIAL BUDGET SHORTFALLS:** Bryant Watson raised upcoming issues with the budget. In addition to the possible grooming increase we have the possibility of other impacts to the FY 2004 budget. We will have Liability Insurance to pay for if S.055 does not pass. We also may lose as much as \$165,000 in funding that we currently receive from the National Recreational Trails Fund. We also still have one more year of the Piston Bully contract. There is a need for insurance coverage for administrative functions. If we total all of the projected increases we have a grand total of \$682,500. Then if we add into this the amount the \$250,000 needed to bring the Contingency Fund back to base-line, this raises the total to \$932,500. Based on this figure, we would have to ask the membership for an increase of \$26.64 each. And this does not take into account any other increases that may be needed to cover any other programs. Based on a three percent increase we would have to ask for a \$30 TMA increase.

**ACSA GRAND RAFFLE:** VAST has 40 tickets at \$100 each to sell for the annual ACSA Grand Raffle. Contact the VAST office if you want to purchase one.

**HELP WANTED FOR THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS:** Bryant Watson received a note from Leslie Kaigle with Special Olympics Vermont requesting help from VAST members to assist with the Winter Games on March 22 and 23. They are looking for folks with snowmobiles to give the children a ride up the mountain.

**CHITTENDEN COUNTY CLUB MINUTES:** Pat Poulin is requesting VAST to reimburse the Chittenden County Snowmobile Club for \$140 for a deaf interpreter. Pat was approached by David Krueger, a gentleman in his county, requesting attendance at the County meeting and informed Pat that he had to provide an interpreter at the County's expense. The purpose for this person to attend the County meeting was to request the county to allow him to start a club for the deaf community. This issue will be an action item on next month's agenda.

**SSTP FUNDING UPDATE:** Bryant gave a brief update.

**OTHER ITEMS:** Howard Smith, of Killington Snowmobile Tours, asked to have a discussion on the commercial TMAs. This will be on the agenda for next month.

Hal Coughlin made the motion and Pat Poulin seconded to extend by 15 mins.  
Bruce Murray suggested that we add to the landowners' permission form that landowners must walk the land with the club member asking permission.

**NEXT MEETING/REFRESHMENT:** The next meeting will be March 24, 2003 at 6 P.M. and refreshments will be provided by Addison County.

Dave LaBelle moved and Pat Poulin seconded to go into executive session.  
Dave LaBelle moved and Pat Poulin seconded to come out of executive session.  
Dave LaBelle moved and Pat Poulin seconded to adjourn at 9:20.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Bonnie Holbrook  
Recording Secretary