

MARCH 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; Brian Wells-Lamoille; 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, Star Poulin, John Ross, Betty Roark, Sandy Woodbeck, Conrad Stewart, Ross Page, Maridelle Tomlinson, Mike Todd, David Pastula, Alan Towle, Howard Smith, John Lynds, Roberta Stammers, Jim Hill, Tony Mirando, Paul Beaulieu, Don Glover.

At 6:03 P.M., President Ron Bartemy called the meeting to order. We began our meeting with a moment of silence in honor and thoughts for our military overseas.

Dave Labelle moved and Jodie Ross seconded that we move action item 7a to 2a. So moved. Bryant Watson requested Jon Valsangiacomo, legal representation from Valsangiacomo, Detora & McQuesten, to join us and discuss our responsibilities for people with disabilities. VAST falls under the American Disabilities Act. There was some question as to whether we fall under the disabilities act due to being a private club and the membership criteria. Mr. Valsangiacomo has determined that we do need to follow the American Disabilities Act. If an individual club feels this would prove undo hardship, then they would have to pursue help. The burdensome would be on VAST. It is up to the individual that has special needs to contact us prior to the meeting.

Hal Coughlin moved and Dave Page seconded to reimburse Chittenden County for the approximately \$140 in expenses they incurred for the hearing impaired visitor they had and for VAST to cover expenses for county and local clubs through July 1, 2003 as needed to give a chance for them to change their bylaws to cover these expenses. So moved with Orange County and Caledonia County opposing.

AGENDA: Norm Roark moved and Barry Bradley seconded to approve the Agenda. So moved.

SECRETARY S REPORT: Dave LaBelle moved and Dave Page seconded to approve the minutes of February 24, 2003 with the two corrections. The two corrections were the guests' names of David Pastula and Alan Towle. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: David LaBelle provided an additional handout on the FY 2003 Membership totals. David LaBelle answered a question from Jodie Ross regarding the expense paid to Moore Brothers Body Shop for repairs to vehicle caused by Groomer accident. This was for the part of the \$25,000 deductible of our liability insurance.

Ann Shangraw brought up that we are a member of the Blue Ribbon Coalition and she was requesting why we have not asked Steve McLeod from the Vermont Traditions Coalition to attend the Board. This organization addresses snowmobile issues in our state. Ron Bartemy requested that we move this question to item to 8J. Roone Gibbs moved and David Page seconded to accept the Treasurers Report as presented. So moved.

CONSENT CALENDAR - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: David LaBelle moved and Roone Gibbs seconded the approval of the Consent Calendar as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Ron Bartemy requested that we switch the order for agenda items 8a and 8b.

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL COMMITTEE: Sandy Woodbeck did not have anything new to report. He did request our DC Fly-In entourage to speak up and promote the request for federal funding of \$7.5 Million for the Lamoille Valley Rails-to-Trails project when they get the chance. Bryant Watson noted that we have the support of Bernie Sanders for this project. There was a letter that we needed signed by the Governor expressing the support from the State for this trail but unfortunately we have not received the signed letter back. There was more discussion on the funding and the removal of the rails. Hal Coughlin questioned the information in the Directors packet. There is a bill addressing the ACT 250 and how it affects our trails. The House Natural Resource Committee hopes to hear the bill regarding ACT 250 within the next week or two. There may be a few people that will be asked to come and address the House Natural Resource Committee. Then we hope to be able to bring it before the House. It sounds encouraging.

COMMERCIAL TOUR OPERATORS: Two Commercial Tour Operators requested to address the Board of Directors. John Lynds with Stowe Tours and Howard Smith with Killington Tours were the only Commercial Tour Operators that showed up to address the Board. They questioned businesses that advertised in the VAST paper for sled rentals. It has been brought to our attention that Jay Peak has been operating illegally beyond their property. Howard Smith, Killington Tours, questioned the number of rental sleds throughout Vermont that have not purchased Commercial TMAs. Howard Smith also questioned the assessment study for the impact of commercial tours that was talked about last fall. We did not receive the money (due to the lowering of the increase for commercial TMAs) to do the impact study. We are working on another impact study in the lower part of the state that may help with some of the questions on the impact of snowmobiles on the trail system. The two commercial operators present at the meeting requested the Board of Directors to give them more notice of a rate increase for commercial TMAs to help them plan their budget. Both John Lynds and Howard Smith have Act 250 permits. Ron Bartemy asked Howard Smith and John Lynds to return to the June Board meeting to address the Board to discuss proposed Commercial TMA increases. Ron also requested that they let other tour operators know and invite them to the June meeting. Ann Shangraw asked Bryant Watson if we have a plan on how we are going to address the impact of commercial sleds on the local club trails. Bryant Watson is hoping to have more information from the study on the Forest Service land. Ann Shangraw questioned how many of the commercial operators operate on the private lands. Bryant feels that we will have some of the parameters in place and feels that we will have enough information to make an educated decision on the rate for the Commercial TMAs.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ron Bartemy announced the appointment of David LaBelle as the new Trails Committee Chairman. Ron has asked Ann Shangraw to join the Recognitions Committee. Pat and Star Poulin, Maelene Watson, Lisa Viau and Jodie Ross will also be on the Recognition Committee. Ron Bartemy requested that all directors go back to their counties and request award nominations. Ron asked if there is anyone on the Board or in the gallery that would like to participate on the Responsible, Safe Riding and Law Enforcement committee. Pat Poulin reported that Corporal Robert Stebbins from Chittenden County has volunteered to join the committee.

ANNUAL MEETING: Lamoille County Brian Wells is looking for a place for the annual meeting. The Stoweflake Inn of Stowe has presented a proposal but it is pricey. It is air-conditioned. The tentative date is September 13. Brian Wells had forwarded the Stoweflake proposal to Bryant Watson. At this point, Brian Wells does not have anyone from his county to help support him on the arrangements for the Annual Meeting. He is doing it all by himself. John Lynds offered to help Brian Wells. He also suggested that Brian contact the Stowe Association for assistance.

GROOMING RATES AND INCREASE: Ron Bartemy stressed that this is still a discussion item. It will be placed on the agenda as an action item next month for a decision. Brian Cook reported that his county voted to approve the increase but to hold off until the insurance issue is settled and the groomer buyouts have been honored. David LaBelle attended the last trails committee and there was a discussion regarding the groomer classes and rates. David LaBelle requests that we wait until he has more information for us. He will be meeting with the fiscal committee and the trails committee and further discuss the issues involved. David expressed that we need to be very sensitive to the costs of our sport and the impact of the cost to our landowners. David Page reported that Essex County has discussed this issue at length and want to push the rate increase through. Orange County was in favor of the increase for the groomer rate increase. Pat Poulin has not had a full feedback but there is some support. His county has some members in the county that are questioning the costs of the TMAs. They are not in favor of paying \$100 to ride and also volunteering their time working on the trails. Addison County is in favor of a 25% increase for the groomer rate but they are very reluctant to pay a \$30 increase. Roone Gibbs is concerned with the landowners and concerned for the affordability for many of our riders. Brian Wells reported that Lamoille County is concerned with the affordability for families and local riders. Franklin County expressed concern with the families with multiple sleds. Jodie Ross reported that Franklin County is in favor of a groomer rate increase. They also would like to see the budget reflect a higher average of TMAs sold. Washington County discussed all the increases. They left it that they would return to their clubs and get the opinion of their clubs and return to the county meeting with their consensus. Caledonia County is in favor of an increase. Barry Bradley questioned what warrants the contingency fund increase.

Roone Gibbs stressed that we need to obtain more monies from the State. We should not have to rely solely on the membership of 40,000 people to fund our budget.

S.055 - INSURANCE UPDATE: Bryant Watson reviewed the wording for the S.055 bill. There is wording that if we cannot find insurance that the State will put us on their policy.

LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNDING: Bryant Watson has put together some figures for law enforcement. Roone Gibbs has had some conversations with State Representative Michael Obuchowski. Michael Obuchowski requested some information from Bryant to present at the Transportation Committee. Bryant read the proposed bill.

CLUBS AND COUNTY PROCESS: Ron Bartemy asked how many counties/clubs are being utilized by the chain of command. Ron wants to know if our clubs are following the chain of command. Dave Page feels that we, as the Board, need to enforce policies. Barry Bradley, Rutland County, reported that Rutland County has the policy that if a club misses more than five County meetings a year then the club is disbanded. Rutland County feels that if clubs that do not attend the county meetings are a high-risk liability to VAST. Ann Shangraw shared information of how Orange County has handled this. Ron Bartemy suggested that the County Directors bring in their county bylaws to share with each other. Don Glover shared that there is a club in Caledonia County that petitioned the county to rescind from that county and be moved to another county.

David LaBelle moved and David Page to extend the meeting by 20 minutes. So moved.

VOLUNTEER INCENTIVES: A VAST member approached Ronald Bartemy and suggested a way to award our volunteers. They suggested a special TMA that would be handled by the clubs to award to a special volunteer. This has been presented to the Board before and was shot down. Star Poulin is on Recognition Committee and she expressed how few nominations we receive.

David LaBelle moved and David Page to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. So moved.

Dog sleds and Vermont Traditions Coalition will be added to the agenda for next month's meeting.

NEXT MEETING/REFRESHMENT: The next meeting will be April 28, 2003 at 6 PM and refreshments will be provided by Bennington County.

Dave LaBelle moved and Pat Poulin seconded to go into executive session. Hal Coughlin moved and David LaBelle seconded to come out of executive session. Brian Wells moved and Greg Rouleau to pay for legal council for Bryant Watson. Norm Roark moved and David Page seconded to adjourn at 9:34.

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
Recording Secretary