

VAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

October 26, 2009

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES, OFFICERS & STAFF PRESENT: Conrad Stewart-Addison; John Perkins(*via Phone*)-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia; Jeff Fay-Chittenden; Ray Dubriel(*absent*)-Essex; John Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Matt Goodyear-Lamoille; Larry Trottier-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Merritt Budd-Rutland; John Lynds-Washington; Tom Baltrus(*absent*)-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Jim Hill-President; Joe Cicia(*via Phone*)-Vice-President; Mark Ellingwood-Treasurer; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary; Bryant Watson-Executive Director, Pat Poulin(*absent*)-Past President; Alexis Nelson-Trails Administrator; Kent Gardner-VAST News Editor
GUESTS: Mitzi Oakes, Jim Holbrook, Ed Hebebrand, Mike O'Hara, Dave Pastula, Roberta Stammers, Frances Pillsbury, Josh & Zoe Nelson, Sue Trottier

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by President Jim Hill.

AGENDA: *Bruce Murray moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the agenda as printed. Motion carried unanimously.*

SECRETARY'S REPORT: *Bruce Murray moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the minutes of August 24, 2009 Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried unanimously.* Jeff Fay requested the draft of the Annual Meeting minutes and the short Board meeting minutes directly following the Annual Meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Bruce Murray moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* Mark Ellingwood gave a brief overview of the budget. We had a positive year-to-date cash flow as well as for the month. Bonnie Holbrook requested that we receive a list of the donations for the LVRT instead of copies of each individual letter to save paper and expense. Jeff questioned the payment for internet services.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: *Conrad Stewart moved and Mark Ellingwood seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*

COUNTY REPORTS:

Champlain Valley; Addison County reported the upper trail near Silver Lake in the Goshen area is in the works. Texas Falls should be open this year. **Chittenden County** has their landowners' dinner coming.

Central Vermont; Orange County had some really bad flood damage from the floods this summer. Route 110A had a bridge go way down the brook. The landowner do not want us on their property anymore and we have not been able to secure any permission from the abutting land owners, so 110A will be closed this year. **Washington County** has settled down from the Annual Meeting. They are working on the Winooski Wonder and have done emergency repairs. They have replaced the decking and done some cabling repair. They will begin the process for the major repairs in the spring. The county had Vermont Traditions Coalition come in and they did a \$2800 donation. They are purchasing a couple of new snowmobiles for Washington County Sheriff's Department. They are also working on a rescue sled for the Waterbury area. They will have the northwestern basin of the county covered. Johnny Lynds thanked everyone for all of their hard work. Dave Rouleau was a tremendous help. He also thanked others for their help. Johnny is working with Froggy Radio a lot this winter and will be on the air quite a bit with JD Green. Other counties are invited to participate and get information out about functions can contact Johnny Lynds and he'll help coordinate.

Northeast Kingdom; Caledonia County thanked John Lynds and Washington County for a job well done. He thinks the meeting was the best in a long time. The county has been working on trails and has begun putting up signs. They are hoping to change a section of trail in East Burke. **Essex County** was not present. **Orleans County** had damage from vandalism in Jay and it was actually worse than they originally thought. The repairs have been done. Brian Cook would like to submit Matt Tetreault's article that was in the VAST News to the Chronicle. The authorities did catch some of the culprits.

Northwest Vermont; Franklin County reported all is good. There was a project done on Hazen Notch a couple of years ago and then the trail was closed, but now it will be open. One of the clubs donated a \$1,000 to the LVRT. The county asked if all forms could be filled out and submitted online. Most forms are on the VAST website. **Grand Isle County** undertook a large bridge project. They had several agencies they had to work with to make this possible. The bridge is in place and they will do the bridge decking in November. The Town of Alburg, the State of Vermont Fish & Game, the club and VAST all worked together to obtain the bridge and get the work done. In another area, they have one landowner that they are negotiating with. **Lamoille County** had a big conversation regarding the LVRT. Brian Currier is in Arizona so Matt is sitting in. They've begun working on trails.

Southeast Vermont; Windham County was not present. **Windsor County** reported that things are well. The Windsor Side-Hill Crunchers had an article in the paper. They had 43 people show up for a 2 mile stretch of trail reroute.

Southwest Vermont; Bennington County is doing well. Everyone is doing their trail work. They are a little late in the GMNF area because they were waiting on the Forest Service. **Rutland County** reported things are as good as they can be. The connection of Corridor 7 is still in the works. The latest stumbling block is the Wheelerville road in Mendon which hopefully will be resolved shortly. There is a bridge project that is being work.

OTHER: Jim Hill presented Bill Oakes with a "Sheriff Bill" pin to go with his honorary Deputy Sheriff pin from Chittenden County!

APPROVE REVISED LVRT MANAGEMENT PLAN: The LVRT Management Plan has revised the hours of operation on the LVRT with the curfew hours. We made some concessions and hopefully the State will too. *Bruce Murray moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the revised LVRT Management Plan. Motion carried unanimously.*

LANDOWNER APPRECIATION BOOKLET: Kent Gardner provided a draft copy of the cover for the Landowner Appreciation Booklet. Kent was asked to provide a space with a "Thank you from your local VAST snowmobile club" and leave a space in case a club wants to include their name and address. Joe Cicia asked that we get the book out as soon as possible because some of the coupons are time sensitive. Kent Gardner was asked to get them printed and sent out in the next two weeks. Kent will also include the list of clubs inside the back cover. John Perkins suggested that a mailing to club presidents requesting them to contact VAST with the number they need for their landowners.

OTHER: Mark Ellingwood reminded everyone to keep a very close track of the ancient roads in their towns. There is a February deadline coming up.

Bruce Murray brought forth that Windsor County is disgusted that they feel that they are 'short changed' with trail repair and construction grants. Jim Hill has assigned the Trails Committee to look at the cost of trail construction. Mark Ellingwood also reminded everyone that we have a budget that we have to work with. Bonnie Holbrook asked about 100% funding and if it is in the VAST Trails Policy. On the construction application it reads 100% "of the approved" amount. Not all applications are approved at the requested amount.

EQUIPMENT GRANT-IN-AID APPLICATIONS POLICY CHANGE: The Trails Committee requested a policy change to have the deadline June 1st. *Bruce Murray moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the equipment grant-in-aid applications policy change as requested. Motion carried unanimously.*

LVRT REVISED FY 2010 BUDGET: We are still waiting for VTRANS to file an appeal to the Environmental Court on the Jurisdictional Opinion with us. Apparently the Attorney General is holding up the appeal because he has not issued an opinion on whether the State will appeal with us. We cannot appeal without the State appealing with us as they are the owners. Bryant Watson reviewed the revised FY 2010 LVRT budget. We received proposals from marketing firms. One of the concerns that Jeff Fay expressed was control of the budget and staying within the budget line items. Some of the budget line items are over budget was from VTRANS saying we would receive FEMA money for culverts taken out in storms and then us not receiving the FEMA money and had to take it out of VAST budget. Johnny Lynds questioned the staff mileage reimbursement and why aren't they using the VAST Trucks. We have the deadline of October 30 to appeal. John Perkins noted that at the Annual Meeting that the Jurisdictional Opinion had passed and that we would not have to go through ACT 250. After the Annual Meeting the Jurisdictional Opinion was allegedly illegally appealed and therefore rescinded. *Ken Gammell moved and Matt Goodyear seconded to approve the revised FY 2010 budget. Motion carried unanimously.*

AUTHORIZATION FOR LVRT LOANS TO COVER BUDGET AMOUNT: At the Annual Meeting, the membership authorized the Board to loan up to \$750,000 to the LVRT. Bryant Watson requested an initial loan from VAST to the LVRT of up to \$100,000 as needed. *Bruce Murray moved and John Perkins seconded to approve up to \$100,000 as needed. Motion carried unanimously.*

VTRANS LEASE FEES FOR RR XINGS: VTRANS contacted Bryant Watson with an invoice to VAST charging a fee for State owned RR Xings. The State Statutes have given us permission to travel on state owned property including state owned railroad property. Bryant Watson contacted Trini Broussard regarding this. We have not paid this invoice and are not intending to.

PROPOSED 15% REDUCTION TO STATE FUNDING FY '11: Bryant Watson received a call from Jason Gibbs saying they were looking at budget cuts and that the money that Vast receives from snowmobile registrations was being looked at and could be cut by 15%. This year we have already given about \$340,000 of snowmobiler's money paid through snowmobile registration fees. This means \$170,000 to the Department of Motor Vehicle funding and \$170,000 for Law Enforcement funding with the \$10 increase to snowmobile registrations. This is money paid by snowmobilers and not other Vermont taxpayers that are helping to fund revenue for government services. We need to make sure we are prepared to converge on the State House with hundreds and hundreds of snowmobilers if this comes up during the legislative session.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS: Jim Hill asked everyone let Cyndy know when we have committee meetings scheduled so she can get it on the Board Room Calendar so we don't have overlaps.

FOREST SERVICE ARRA FUNDING UPDATE: Bryant Watson gave a report in the Board packet. He received a call from the Forest Service and they want to schedule a meeting as soon as possible for the southern half of the GMNF. She wants to move forward with the planning and the work on the trails. Bryant Watson has asked Jesse to contact all the clubs in the southern half and get a list to her of all the projects they want/need to do. There probably won't be a lot of work done this fall but we should be ready to go in the spring with several projects.

LVRT UPDATE: There is a company (North Link One) that is in negotiations with VTRANS on the laying of fiber optic along the LVRT from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. We should have been included in the public meetings with the Act 248. They will be installing ditches, culverts, banking and de-brushing. Ken Hoepner is looking for a legislative sponsor to adding a box on the Vermont State Income Tax form that people can check and donate monies for the LVRT.

MK RICHARDSON LETTER TO WASHINGTON COUNTY: Mark & Sherri Richardson of MK Richardson in Chelsea sent a letter to VAST expressing their pleasure with the setup for the Annual Meeting this year. Washington County Snowmobile Clubs did a great job!

OTHER: The MASS SAM show had record turnouts at their Fall SAM show. There were many people that stopped to talk about the LVRT and were well informed. There were hundreds of cards given out about the Military Appreciation Event. Jim Hill heard many times that a lot of people ride several states but their favorite is Vermont. We heard the New York show also saw record numbers. Bob Meyers from Maine also had the highest turnout and sales.

Jim Holbrook asked about the VAST website listing that we will be charging the \$20 grooming surcharge again this year. If people are still seeing the surcharge when they log onto the VAST website, they should hit the refresh button and then they shouldn't see it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: No reports this month.

The November meeting will be Monday, November 23rd, 2009 at 6:00 PM with refreshments being provided by Essex County.

Mark Ellingwood moved and Jeff Fay seconded to adjourn at 9:03 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
VAST Recording Secretary