

MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday March 20, 2023

3:00 PM

Birkie Office

Board Members Present: Paul Eckerline, Tom Duffy, Kathie Pautsch, Madelaine Rekemeyer, Chris Morley, Mike Mandli, Yuri Gusev, Kris Bjerkness

Electronically present: Karen Manske, Andy Ubel, Sue Scheer

Staff Present: Ben Popp, Mike Brown

Absent: Bill Brown, Jan Guenther

Approval of Agenda: Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2023 meeting: Mandli move. Duffy second. **Approved.**

President's Comments: Paul Eckerline

- Cable Community Farm (Garden) Lease
The contract is being looked at by staff and looking favorable.
- There have been discussions with Francis Wise (daughter of Tony) regarding recognition for the Wise family at Mount Telemark.
- Karen Manske will be updating the website regarding committees. Please update Karen regarding committee on which you serve.
- Birkie One is working to incorporate an LCO representation at Birkie 2024.
- Staff Appreciation Day has been rescheduled several times and will take place tomorrow. Board members that are available are asked to

participate by skiing and/or helping with lunch. Plan to serve lunch at 2PM at the Birkie start area.

- Andy Ubel will be delaying the motions drafted by the Documentation Committee until next month when he will be able to attend in person.

Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp

- Ben sent out a detailed report electronically prior to meeting.
- Birkie 2023 was the biggest Birkie ever and a huge success! Ben thanked board members and gave kudos to staff, volunteers, sponsors/partners who helped create an amazing week of events.
- Plan to finish the 5K competition loop this summer. Working on adding an arm to the excavator for brushing the trail.
- We are selling our 2013 piston bully; looking to replace with a newer used machine (Prinoth desirable).
- 2024 marks the 50th anniversary for the Birkie and working on ideas to make this a huge celebration. Please communicate to Ben any ideas you have for this. The budget process is being started.
- LWC ticket sales for 2023 are open and numbers are ahead of last year. ABSF has contract with LWC to help with operations and management.
- Board members are encouraged to attend the Forerunner's/FEAB event at OO on Tuesday, April 11. The Capital Campaign for Mount Telemark (still in silent phase) will be introduced. FEAB will be launching a campaign to obtain 50 legacy gifts for the 50th anniversary.
- CBS Morning Show will be featuring their story highlighting Birkie 2023 this Sunday. Spread the word!

- Birkie 2023 had about 20 medical responses with, sadly, one fatality. Debriefing with the Medical Director and EMS felt that the responses were all timely and efficient and went smoothly.
- Ben just returned from skiing the Engadin Worldloppet in Switzerland. It was a great experience and he learned some things that we can incorporate and also realized things that we do really well. He spotted lots of Birkie backpacks!

Committee Reports

Finance: Kris Bjerkness

- The Finance Committee will meet before the April BOD meeting and a more detailed report will be given at that meeting.
- Mike Brown presented the February 2023 YTD financials.
Highlights:
YTD Revenue is \$5.7M, up 4.2% to Budget by \$208K (due to restricted grants/donations and other income).
Expense YTD is \$3.1M, which is 7.8% worse than Budget by \$213K (due to unexpected trail expenses as well as facilities, sport development and administrative expenses).

Bank Balance \$1.5M, down 20.1% to LY.

Cash is down \$393K from LY but offset by an increase in fixed assets by \$1.1M.

Capital Expenditures \$1.2M YTD which is 75.9% of Budget.

Trail Pass Income YTD \$184K which is up 3.9% to LY.

Diversification of bank balance was discussed and is being explored.

Telemark Capital Campaign: Kathie Pautsch (Bill Brown absent)

- The committee continues to meet every other week. Ben shared the following good news at the last meeting:
 - One Track Mind is providing a \$390K grant toward mountain bike trail development.
 - We have a confidential gift of \$300K toward the campaign.
 - WEDC grant is close to completion and we expect to receive \$250K toward the campaign.
 - Owner of SRAM is providing \$50K to the project (above SRAM's sponsorship toward the EPIC).
- Fundraising has been very successful from bike companies; discussed importance that our campaign and materials appeal to skiers and bikers.
- Lead Gift Prospects and Naming Rights discussions are in progress.
- Additional grant opportunities are being explored.
- Board participation is essential to the campaign. More on this at our next meeting.
- Where we are at:
 - \$10.5M project including \$1M in private investments.
 - \$9.5M Capital Campaign.
 - We have now raised approximately \$4.1M.
 - We have \$5.4M left to raise.
- Ben discussed the Base Camp Construction:
 - 80% of the documents are completed.
 - Once 90% complete, they will be sent to Royal Construction for bid, after which a construction contract can be drawn up.
 - Goal is to break ground for Base Camp this summer.

Documentation Committee: Karen Manske

- Motions presented at our last meeting have been revised. These will be discussed and voted on at our April meeting.
- Reminder to board members to send Karen Manske information regarding committees that you serve on.

Birkie One: Chris Morley

- Birkie One has had 5 ski days with the LCO youth this season. Plan to continue to have ongoing activities with them through the spring and summer. A spring running series is in the works. Mountain bike events are being considered for the summer.
- A traditional Maple Syrup Camp is also being planned. Reach out to Ernie St. Germaine or staff if you wish to participate.
- Looking into securing an ABSF staff person (funded by Lifetime Fitness Foundation) to drive forward with the Birkie One initiative.

New Business:

- Team Birkie discussed by Yuri. They are looking for a new head coach as Caitlin Gregg is stepping down. Yuri will continue to have a high level of involvement. Two top athletes are definitely staying on and applications are coming in for others. Discussed sustainability and commitments for Team Birkie through the Olympic cycles. Discussed ways to fund the program through donors and non-profit organizations.
- There is a project planned to construct a memorial plaza at Mount Telemark Village with statues to celebrate and memorialize Tony Wise, Marty Hall and Sven Wiik, all of whom were instrumental in the creation of the American Birkebeiner Trail. The statues for Sven and Marty have been funded. The funding for Tony has not yet been determined. Various funding ideas were discussed including grants, GoFundMe

possibility, and working with the Tony Wise Museum of the American Birkebeiner.

- Mike Brown (CFO) needs to be added as a co-signer to our Ameriprise Account.

Motion: Move that Ben Popp as Executive Director and Mike Brown as CFO be co-signers of the Ameriprise Account. (With the removal of Andrew Wall). Gusev move. Bjerkness second. **Approved** unanimously.

- Further discussion regarding diversification of our bank balance. CFO and treasurer will look at different plans for this and bring suggestions back to board.
- Next board meeting is Monday April 24, 2023 3PM at ABSF Office.

Motion to adjourn: Duffy move. **Adjournment** at 5:10PM by acclamation.