

## MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday June 26, 2023

3:00 PM

Birkie Office

**Board Members Present:** Paul Eckerline, Tom Duffy, Kathie Pautsch, Bill Brown, Mike Mandli, Andy Ubel, Sue Scheer, Chris Morley, Yuri Gusev, Kris Bjerkness

**Electronically present:** Jan Guenther, Karen Manske

**Staff Present:** Ben Popp, Mike Brown

**Absent:** Madelaine Rekemeyer

**Approval of Agenda:** (Agenda modified to bring the New Business discussion of transgender athletes earlier in the meeting so that Event Director Kristy Maki can be present.) Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

**Approval of Minutes** from May 22, 2023 meeting: Scheer move. Bjerkness second. **Approved.**

**President's Comments:** Paul Eckerline

- Executive Director's Review  
Paul Eckerline and Bill Brown met with Ben for review earlier today. After the meeting today, we will go into Executive Session to formally approve Ben's contract.
- Cable Community Garden  
A lease agreement is close to being finalized. Thanks given to Andy Ubel for his work on this.
- ABSF BOD Elections

There are four board positions to be elected this year. Candidate applications are due by 5PM on June 28, 2023. Election period is July 1 – July 28; results will be announced on the Birkie website on August 1, 2023.

### **Executive Director's Comments:** Ben Popp

- Ben sent out a detailed report electronically prior to meeting.
- Lumberjack World Championships are July 20-22. There will be live music in the Lumberjack Bowl Wednesday night July 19. There are many available volunteer opportunities.
- Birkie event registration is very strong with over 8,300 registered skiers (up 50% from last year at his time). Goal is 12,500 participants.
- Open track participants will be receiving information about volunteer opportunities for other Birkie events.
- Ben just returned from the AGM Worldloppet meetings in Oberammergau, Germany. The meetings went very well. The Worldloppet is strong with 132K participants currently (rebounding after a decrease to 95K during Covid). The American Birkebeiner is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest WL ski race, with Sweden being the largest. The organization is looking for a new approach to best benefit the members of the greater worldwide ski community.

Ben has been nominated to be President of the Worldloppet next year. This would be a four year commitment with travel taking up most of the time commitment, as the administrative office of the WL runs very well. Overall consensus is that this would benefit the ABSF from an international standpoint. Ben has not yet made a decision; the board is supportive.

- Team Birkie will be announcing the team athletes tomorrow. Yuri Gusef has been helping to lead this project and he is very excited about the caliber of the athletes and the excellent coaching staff. Focus is on

helping athletes advance to the next level. Also working on defining goals and stipends for elite vs. professional athletes.

- The Observation Tower at Mt. Telemark Village will be completed soon, and we will have 6 more miles of mountain bike trails built by Rock Solid builders by fall.
- The ABSF Annual Meeting will take place at the Samuel C. Johnson Outdoor Center at the OO Trailhead on August 12, 2023 at 3PM. There is a Race Chief picnic proceeding the meeting at noon.

### **New Business:**

- Transgender athletes

Currently athletes register for ABSF events as male, female, non-binary, or prefer not to say. Our Participant Rules state: “The ABSF supports all athletes and their quest to live an active, healthy lifestyle. We request that you register under the name and gender that is listed on your government ID.” Only individuals who register as male or female are included in gender results.

Other organizations are adopting new rules for transgender athletes. Paul Eckerline sent out the World Athletics Eligibility Regulations (link below) for Transgender Athletes approved in March 2023.



C3.5 – Eligibility  
Regulations Transge

This document details eligibility conditions for transgender male and female athletes.

Currently FIS and USSS have not adopted these policies. ABSF staff plan to initiate discussions with these organizations so that a uniform policy can be implemented.

## Committee Reports

### **Finance:** Kris Bjerkness

- The 2023-24 Proposed Budget was shared at our last meeting and requires approval. (It is acknowledged that there are some possible minor changes due to unknown final cost of new groomer, possible Mt. Telemark Village loan, and Executive Director's salary.)

**Motion:** ABSF BOD approves the proposed 2023-2023 budget. Mandli move. Ubel second. **Approved** unanimously.

### **Telemark Capital Campaign:** Bill Brown

- Ben Popp shared a slide show giving an overview of the Mt. Telemark Project. The project includes: Mountain Bike Trails (10 miles), Nordic Ski Trails (20K) with 4.5K of snowmaking, Observation Tower, Warming Cabin, Fitness Park, Paved Roller ski Loop, Competition Stadiums; Interpretive Path, Adaptive Wheelchair and Adaptive Bicycle availability, Lobby Plaza, Biathlon Range, and Base Camp Outdoor Center.
- Total Mount Telemark Village cost is \$10.2M of which the building cost is \$3.435M. We have raised \$5.1M (including pledges of \$1.7M, grants \$2.7M, land sale \$0.7M).  
Board members were thanked for their combined donations of \$152K, which includes a \$64K match from 2 board members.
- An updated construction contract with Royal Construction was shared and discussed.
- Telemark Comprehensive Snapshot of Income and Expenses was shared and key fundraising strategies were discussed. We are currently in the Quiet Phase of the campaign, and plan to launch the Public Phase in August both at the Annual meeting and with a planned public event in Minneapolis on August 22, 2023.

- Financing options were discussed. A construction loan for \$2.8M (80% of the building cost) is being considered. A potential loan agreement with Johnson Financial Group was discussed in detail. No decisions made. An additional meeting is scheduled for July 10 at 3PM at Birkie Headquarters to further discuss the financing and construction of the Base Camp Building at Mt. Telemark Village. Ben will send out a link for those who are unable to attend in person.

**Documentation Committee:** Karen Manske

- Andy Ubel has updated the Procedures Manual as discussed at our last meeting. He is thanked for all of his work on this.

**Birkie One:** Chris Morley

- Sue Scheer and Chris Morley met with Ernie St. Germaine. There will be a run on Saturday July 15, 2023 associated with LCO Homecoming and Celebration Pow-Wow.
- Birkie One will host a one day fall running event (more information on this to come). The weekly spring run/walk series will resume in spring of 2024. Birkie One has applied for an \$11K grant to help support the running series.
- Birkie One is collaborating with Joseph Gray, the founder of Project Inspire Diversity. Gray is a world-renowned trail runner and 2021 Birkie Trail Run USATF half marathon champion. Gray is hosting a youth camp in Colorado Springs in August. Birkie One is helping to support scholarships for registration and travel expenses to enable youth to attend this camp.

**Old Business:**

- An executive session occurred to discuss ED Ben Popp's review and contract renewal, which was unanimously approved.

**New Business:**

- There is usually no scheduled July BOD meeting. However, a special Board meeting is called for July 10, 3PM at Birkie Headquarters (or on-line) to further discuss the financing and construction of the Base Camp Building at Mt. Telemark Village.
- The August meeting will be held in conjunction with the ABSF Annual Meeting at the Samuel C. Johnson Outdoor Center at the OO Trailhead on Saturday August 12, 2023 at 3PM.

**Motion** to adjourn: Duffy move. **Adjournment** at 5:30PM by acclimation.