

MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday October 16, 2023

3:00 PM

Birkie Office

Board Members Present: Paul Eckerline, Tom Duffy, Mike Mandli, Sue Scheer, Chris Morley, Madelaine Rekemeyer

Electronically present: Kathie Pautsch, Jan Guenther, Andy Ubel, Bill Brown, Karen Manske

Staff Present: Ben Popp, Mike Brown

Absent: Yuri Gusev, Kris Bjerckness

Approval of Agenda: The agenda is modified to add an introduction to Andrew Manoscheo who is here today to inform us of his role as Partnership Director. Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

Approval of Minutes from September 18, 2023 meeting: Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

President's Comments: Paul Eckerline

- Kristy Maki will attend our December meeting to discuss the state of the 50th Anniversary of the Birkie.
- We will not have a November meeting. Our next meeting is December 4th. The meeting will be followed by a Holiday Party which will include Birkie staff and Endowment group.
- Saving the History of the American Birkebeiner: Memorial statues to honor the legacy of cross-country ski legends Sven Wilk, Marty Hall and Tony Wise are planned for Mount Telemark

Village. Funding for the statues for Hall and Wilk have been provided independently of the ABSF. The funding for the statue of Tony Wise is incomplete, with a small percentage paid for by his family. The remainder of the \$70K has not been raised. Discussion ensued regarding the fundraising for this.

Board members unanimously agreed that while we are very much in favor and supportive of the memorial statues, we are not in a desirable position to lead the fundraising for this. We are currently fully launched into our Capital Campaign for Mount Telemark Village. Other fundraising options for the statue were discussed including a GoFundMe page set up by family. We will plan to place an article in the Birch Scroll about this initiative to raise interest and help with outside fundraising.

- Paul Eckerline introduced Andrew Manoscheo who provided an update of his role as Sponsorship Director, which he has held since January 2023. His goal is to increase sponsorship revenue next year to \$902K. He is collaborating with current sponsors and has creative ideas for new sponsors including bike related sponsors. He is also considering adding discussion panels at the Birkie Expo.

Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp

- Ben sent out a detailed report electronically prior to the meeting.
- Ben recently returned from the Worldloppet Ski Federation meeting in Estonia. Many Worldloppet members are interested in being part of the 50th American Birkebeiner. The Worldloppet has a large membership and a strong financial position.
- The Chequamegon Fat Tire Festival is run by Lifetime who pays us a fee to use our infrastructure at the start area.
- A roller ski race and coaching clinic is scheduled for this weekend at Mount Telemark Village. There will be a fundraising event for Team Birkie Friday night from 5:30PM – 7:30PM at the Samuel Johnson

Outdoor Center at OO Trailhead. All Birkie staff and board members are invited to attend.

- A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Trek Trails at MTV is scheduled for 10/28/23. (This is a postponement from last weekend which was cancelled due to weather conditions.)
- Base Camp construction at MTV has started!
- Gitchi Gami Games are scheduled for the weekend of December 15-17, 2023. We are expecting over 450 juniors and youth to participate. There will not be a Super Tour event here this year. Super Tour finals are scheduled to occur in Duluth in late March. Kristy Maki is working on the possibility of hosting Senior National here in 2028.
- Staff update: Tracy Lynn will be leaving the staff in near future. Blair Flickinger will be leaving in mid-January. Nancy Knutson has agreed to come back temporarily to help with the 50th Anniversary.

Committee Reports

Finance: Mike Brown (Kris Bjerkness absent)

- A Financial Summary was sent out prior to this meeting.

This has been a strong quarter driven by restricted donations and historic numbers of Birkie registrations. There was concern of lost revenue due to selling more registrations at the lower cost point, but this is offset by the additional waves added to the open track event as well as Saturday events.

September: Revenue \$688K
Expense \$340K
Net Income \$348K

Year to date: Revenue \$3.52M (\$858K good to budget)
Expense \$1.02M ((flat to budget)
Net Income \$2.5M (allocated for upcoming expenses)

Total Current Assets \$2.4M (up 15% to last year)
Total Current Liabilities \$433K (down 19% to last year)

Total Assets \$10.9M
Total Liabilities \$2.0M
Debt Ratio 19%

Bank Balance \$\$2.05M

SBA EIDL Loan \$1.35M at 2.75% for 30 years

Capital Expenditures (excluding MTV):
\$48K for September (12% of budget)
\$74K Year to date (18% of budget)

A/R Aging \$253K
A/P Aging \$123K

Trail Pass Revenue is strong: \$3.5K for month (up 4.8% to last year)
\$69.5K YTD (up 13% to last year)

Event Participants are strong for Birkie week this year at 11.8K.

Goal is to have a surplus in budget that can be used toward our fundraising campaign or to pay off debt. This will be clearer by late spring/early summer.

Telemark Capital Campaign: Bill Brown

- The project total is \$10.2M.
\$5.6M raised to date; \$4.6M to go.

Goal is to raise an additional \$2.8M by April 2024 which covers the needed amount (minus \$1.9 for snowmaking).

- The five subcommittees are collaborating to achieve this goal. These subcommittees have helped recruit people outside of ABSF to bring in more talent and expertise. The groups meet separately as well as all together to coordinate between groups and assure cohesiveness. We are asking all subcommittee members to sign a confidentiality agreement.
 1. Lead Gift Subcommittee: Any donation over \$5K is considered a major gift. This has been our most significant category for donations.
 2. Public Campaign subcommittee: The Surly event was the kick-off for this. There was a house party last weekend. We are receiving 2-3 electronic donations per day with registrations, and 2-3 other electronic donations per day.
 3. Grant Funding Subcommittee: We are applying for a \$750K grant through Bremer Bank and expect to receive outcome on this in mid-November.
 4. Commercial/Sponsorship Subcommittee
 5. Mountain Bike Subcommittee: This is currently an untapped resource for ABSF. Goal is to raise \$500K from this subcommittee.

Birkie One: Chris Morley

- Ernie St. Germaine has moved to Minocqua but plans to stay engaged with this initiative. Committee is looking for another contact with LCO Charter School and hoping to expand to the other LCO schools. Mondays are adventure days with the LCO Charter school, providing students with an out of school experience.
- The group is considering other communities to focus on including under-served youth and a possible urban/rural youth exchange program.

Documentation Committee: Karen Manske

- ABSF membership category changes (including changing all registrations to individual only) will be reviewed by the Documentation Committee, after which a motion will be presented to the board at our December meeting.
- Recommend that the current Bylaws and Procedures Manual be recirculated to board members and updated on the website. Ben will assist with this.

Old Business:

- Inclusion Policy

The motion made at our October meeting will be tabled until we receive additional information and meet with an outside consultant and/or member of the trans-gender community.

A separate committee will be set up with the goals of educating ourselves on this complex topic and making further recommendations for our inclusion policy, specifically focusing on race policy. All female board members expressed interest in participating on this committee. Chris Morley will head this committee; he will send out an email to board members regarding future meetings.

New Business:

Our next meeting is Monday December 4, 2023, 3PM at Birkie Headquarters which will be followed by ABSF Holiday Party.

Motion to adjourn: Duffy move. **Adjournment** at 5:05PM by acclimation.