

Vermont Mushers Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 8232 Essex, Vermont 05451



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 30, 2015

DRAFT / To Be Approved at Next Meeting

Present:

Board Members: Allan Tschorn, Judy Gilmore, Erin Kelley, Kathy Bennett, Jeremy Bedortha, Julius Goodman

Absent: Ken Haggett

Members: Elizabeth Strobridge, Dave Boutin, Suzanne Tschorn, Laura Bedortha, Michael Mallick

Guests: none

Meeting called to order at 1 PM

President Allan Tschorn's Opening Comments:

In spite of challenges over the past year surrounding availability of Board members to meet for personal reasons, VTMA has accomplished a lot: website revamped and up and running, newsletter flourishing, donation made in support of mushers wiped out by the Sockeye wild-fire in Alaska, meetings of the Green Mountain National Forest attended re trail usage, input provided on various legislative issues, and working relationships established with VT Outdoor Guide Association, VT Federation of Dog Clubs, VT Traditions Coalition, and VT Trails and Greenways.

Goals for this meeting are identify the benefits and role of VTMA for its members and to the mushing community in the state of Vermont. December 2015 will be the 3 year mark for VTMA being revitalized. Where do we as an organization want to be? Where do our members want us to be?

A culture exists in any organization. The low # of VTMA members vs. the high # of mushers in Vermont suggests that we need to be doing something more or different. What? How adapt?

VTMA would like to work together with its members and mushers for the common good of everyone interested in the sport.

Executive Committee Reports:

Recording Secretary:

Minutes from June 13, 2014 meeting distributed and reviewed. Since it was an unofficial meeting due to lack of sufficient Board members for there to be a quorum, it is not necessary to make a motion to approve per point of order rules.

Treasurer:

Report generated and reviewed by President Allan Tschorn as there is no current treasurer. Current unofficial balance is \$1451.97. Earlier motion made by Kathy Bennett via email to donate \$450 donation to Willow Dog Mushers Association of Willow, AK for relief from the Sock-eye wildfire was carried unanimously by the Board of Directors and is included in the current treasurer's report.

Motion made by Judy Gilmore to accept the Treasurer's report. Kathy Bennett seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion about a) whether to change banks since current VTMA bank is located a distance from Ken Haggatt who has been receiving membership checks in the absence of there being a treasurer; and b) whether VTMA should do business with a VT based bank (vs. branch of an out of state bank); this decision will depend in part of who becomes the treasurer and where that person lives.

Corresponding Secretary/Membership:

This position is currently vacant. In the past, this position has been combined with Treasurer position to streamline the process, since the membership secretary receives applications and then forwards them to treasurer for recording and depositing.

Laura Bedortha volunteered to become Treasurer/Corresponding Secretary/Membership. Laura will research whether or not to switch banks and whether or not to stay with a VT based bank. She will send an email to BOD with her findings.

Laura's post office bank will become the new mailing address for VTMA membership applications. She will get this information to Judy to put onto website.

Membership application has been updated and is on website.

Red Goodman made a motion to appoint Laura Bedortha to the executive committee as Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer (which includes membership). Judy Gilmore seconded. Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

By-Laws:

Revised by-laws have been revised and adopted by vote at a prior Board meeting. Judy will locate these revised by-laws and post to website.

Communications:

Newsletter going strong; well received. Discussion re generating new and varied content from a wider variety of people. Suggestions: each person on BOD ask someone personally if they could write something or share a photo about something; Kathy willing to interview people and write up the article so that the interviewee does not need to write; a “Story Corner” about real subjects/actual stories; send out a fill-in-the-blank to all members (“The time that”). Allan will send this fill-in-the blank email to all members called The Learning Curve.

Discussion of how to engage people: what are things that will intrigue people enough to actually participate in/take time out of busy lives? How to draw people’s attention? Suggestions: all BOD members post on VT Musers Facebook page in addition to our own profiles and business pages; always have a speaker and/or a fun activity at VTMA meetings so that that becomes a regular and known event of possible interest; VTMA be an active participant/co-sponsor at an existing race(s); sponsor a casual and fun event that facilitates interaction/socializing/learning curve; have an event at the Northern New England Sled Dog Trade Fair; VTMA should also be a way of linking/facilitating connections between people/get the conversation flowing.

Discussion about how to share information from organizations that VTMA contributes to financially (VT Outdoor Guide Association, VT Federation of Dog Clubs, VT Traditions Coalition, and VT Trails and Greenways) with VTMA members and members of the VT mushing community at large. As the member of the Legislative Committee, Red Goodman will be the point person and will distill emails and information that he and Allan Tschorn receive from these organizations, and will then forward that information to Judy Gilmore as the member of the Communications Committee to post on website, VTMA members Facebook page, and VT Musers Facebook page. In addition: Judy Gilmore will make an announcement in the upcoming newsletter alerting members to look to these 3 sources for information on legislative issues; and each time Red Goodman has information for Judy Gilmore to share, he will also let Allan Tschorn know, and Allan will then also send an email to the membership with a heads up with a short synopsis that there is a new posting on such and such an issue on all 3 sources . Red Goodman will be the point person for deciding what information is disseminated to VTMA members via email and members FB page, and to the public via the Facebook VT Musers page and website.

Legislative:

Green Mountain National Forest doing a comprehensive general trail usage review. Attend meetings, get on mailing list, write a position paper. Jeremy and Allan have been attending meetings for a few years.

Minimum tether length and livable space legislation; definitions vague.

Website:

Judy and web site developer remain in touch; new membership application up; html writer needs to be purchased (free ones too limited) because pdf's don't always work.

Online membership and product (T-shirts) payments on website discussed for memberships so that people have a choice between paying online and sending a check. Laura and Judy will research this.

Event Planning:

Northern New England Sled Dog Trade Fair:

Have a membership table.

Sponsor a live auction of new and used mushing equipment and dog related items/ memorabilia in which the seller gets paid for their item and a percentage is donated to Willow Mushers Association (donator decides the percentage amount); announce on NNSDTF schedule and social media; collect donations; Erin will contact NNSDTF organizers for permission; if yes, Suzanne will spear head organization of auction and get back to BOD and others with To Do lists; Erin will contact a volunteer auctioneer; all BOD (including Ken Hagget via email) committed to attending and helping day of (with the possible exception of Red) and to helping organize beforehand.

Other Business:

Have a special meeting Tuesday, September 1 in the evening via phone to discuss auction further; Erin will figure how to set this up.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Kathy Bennett, Recording Secretary