

Governor's Snowmobile Council
September 7, 2022

Present:

Pat Poulin, Chairman
Star Poulin, Governor Appointee
Dick Jewett, Governor Appointee
Chief Paul Doucette, Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue
Jenna Reed, VT Fish & Wildlife
Jeff Haplin, Governor Appointee Central VT Representative
Mark Anderson, Windsor County Sheriff

VAST Staff Present:

Cindy Locke, VAST Executive Director
Matt Tetreault, Trails Administrator
Ken Brown, Trails Manager/LVRT
Mandy Dwinell, Office & Programs Manager

Guests:

Stan Choiniere, VAST Safety Committee

The meeting was convened at 3:05PM via Zoom by Pat Poulin.

Approval of Minutes

Star Poulin moved to approve the June minutes as presented; Gary Nolan seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of SSTP Financial Report, Matt Tetreault

Not a lot of expenses during the summer months, the standard admin and office supplies. August, we did ask for the advance with liability for volunteer insurance to be transferred for RRG.

Jeff Haplin moved to approve the SSTP reports as presented; Star Poulin seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Agency Reports

Vermont State Police, Trevor Carbo
N/A

Fish & Wildlife, Jenna Reed

Nothing to report for snow. 4 trainees in the process and F&W are hiring more. Jenna will not be available for upcoming meetings. Sergeant Randy Hazard is stepping in for Jenna.

Question on the revised partnership with F&W and VSP regarding potential for F&W reassignment and possible concerns on presence for recreation and snowmobile coverage. Jenna shared F&W taking over 3 areas traditionally covered by VSP: animal cruelty cases, hunting-related incidents and State Park details. Jenna shared she doesn't foresee these changes being an issue for F&W presence.

Sheriff's Association, Mark Anderson – President of Sheriff Association

Introduction to Mark Anderson, President of the Sheriff's Association and Windham County Sheriff's Dept.

Bill Banyak has transitioned to the role of president of the National Sheriff's Association. Mark shared the Sheriff's Association has always been interested in supporting outdoor recreation and they can do to further the conversation and getting patrols out on the trails, while being mindful of varied snow coverage areas.

The Windham County Sheriff's Association has 2 sleds.

Next steps for VAST, Gov Council to connect with Sheriff's Association to review budget, coverage areas, and Law Enforcement Committee.

The Sheriff's Association is in the progress of moving to Brattleboro. Previously the coverage area was focused on Windham and Windsor counties.

Department of Motor Vehicles, Pat Poulin

6,604 VT snowmobiles registered as of September.

Forest, Parks & Recreation, Becca Washburn

N/A

VAST

VAST Financial Request to Governor, Cindy Locke

\$750k for equipment and \$50k for Law Enforcement working with the State of Vermont regarding the grant process. More information to come.

Question on requirements for Law Enforcement funding. Currently no stipulations on the funds. Suggestion to be used for emergency situations and reevaluated in the spring as needed. Reminder the \$50k funds received are for law enforcement.

Washington County question on funds to be used for Washington County sheriff's equipment. If a new agency there's an 80% cap and if it's an existing agency there's a 50% cap. Suggestion to search for used equipment first, if not then new and shopping for the best deal. Details would then be presented to the Governor's Council committee for a vote.

Law Enforcement Committee, Gary

- L/E Financial report for last year, Cindy
 - Came in a lot lower than anticipated due to the low snow season. In good shape for funding for the upcoming season.
- Hardwick Contract, Gary
 - Contacted Hardwick Police Dept, contact with the chief and town manager. The conversation started with the change with LVRT and increased speeds on the rail trails. Talked with Jason Luneau, Morrisville PD he is concerned with increased speeds as well, and has purchased a second handheld radar gun.

Cindy Locke moved to approve the Hardwick Contract as presented; Star Poulin seconded. Motion Carried.

It was suggested for Hardwick's proposal to include a commitment expectation, the suggestion of a 2-year commitment was mentioned.

The would-be a brand-new equipment program, similar to Morrisville. Offering 80% of the funding for new equipment. Cindy to review the format of Morrisville's program and the stipulations and will reconnect with the Governor's Council.

The question posed if approval with accepting Hardwick with a similar format of Morrisville's program.

Question from Jenna RE: if any changes with insurance requirements. Cindy Will reconnect with Frank. Statues are posted by end of August.

VAST AORRG Insurance Update, Cindy

A new insurance company was created and in place as of September 1st. This is a new insurance company that covers our trails liability for ourselves, trails liability, volunteers and landowners, and then also directors and officers' insurance.

VSAP Ambassador Program, Cindy

All but 1 ambassador renewed for this year. One new application was received from Central VT, this area is saturated with ambassadors currently. The Safety Ambassador briefing is on October 5th at 5pm.

VAST Safety Committee, Stan

Met in August. Project to create QR Code stickers to add to intersection junction signs accessible to iPhones and Android that will bring riders to VAST trail map. Passed on adding GPS coordinates on the intersection signs and connecting with Ken. This is not mandatory but is an option for clubs.

January 21st Military & First Responders Appreciation Day with the location secured at Oxbow Park. Local clubs involved through the county doing food and kids rides with a hay bale course for 120 sleds. Stan will reach out to the army guard or blue angels for a flyover.

Discussion on clubs connecting with instructors for more in-person classes for next season.

Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue, Chief Paul Doucette

Secured funding with the State of Vermont for up to \$35k, the same dollar amount that they've given us every year, application approved and returned to the state.

Windham County Sheriff's Dept is looking to snowmobile patrols they indicated their snowmobiles are in fair condition so they will connect with Windham and Winhall fish & game in Bennington to have a conversation.

Traditionally count of Fish & Game covers certain parts of Windham County like the northern part. Would recommend covering the northern part of Windham County. Shared updates on rates for a Deputy County from Bennington County on a weekend are charged \$90/hour.

SSTP Trail Report, Matt Tetreault

Annual Meeting this coming weekend. Lots of projects starting to go underway with trail construction. Trail signs should start going up soon. The TMA price will be confirmed at the Annual Meeting and will be going on sale soon.

Legislative Report

House Report, Brian

N/A

Senate Report, Jane

N/A

Appointee Reports

Northwest, Star

Chittenden County held a landowner appreciation cookout recently in Jericho and had a good turnout. People are reviewing trails and starting to plan out things for the new season.

Northeast, Mike/Ken

N/A

Central, Jeff

Going well. Placing an order soon for sign stakes. Lots of trail and bridge repairs coming up. Lots of groomer equipment repairs were evaluated.

South, Dick

Lots of projects in review. County meeting tonight. Hoping to be in good shape for the season. Dick's term is scheduled to end in February, and he doesn't wish to extend his term.

Next meeting Wednesday, October 5, 2022 at 3pm via Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn:

Star Poulin moved to close the meeting at 3:57pm; Paul Doucette seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Dwinell

VAST Office & Programs Manager