

VAST Board of Directors – February 26, 2018 – Meeting Minutes

Approved at the March 26, 2018 Meeting

OFFICERS PRESENT:

President: Tim Mills
Vice President: Jeff Fay
Treasurer: Sonia Koehler
Secretary: Jim Hill

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Addison: Lewis Barnes
Bennington: Mike Viggiano
Caledonia: Ken Gammell
Chittenden: Pat Poulin
Essex: Stewart Ahearn
Franklin: Mike Burns
Grand Isle: Vacant
Lamoille: Ellis O’Hear
Orange: Ron Garvin
Orleans: Roger Gosselin
Rutland: Curt Marechaux via phone
Washington: Mark Reaves
Windham: Drew Fraser
Windsor: Dick Jewett

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS PRESENT: Carmin Lemery, Lamoille County; Doug Jacobs, Windsor County; Merritt Budd, Rutland County, John Hull, Essex County; Conrad Stewart, Addison County; Ivor Stevens, Windham County.

STAFF PRESENT:

Executive Director: Cindy Locke
Trails Administrator: Matt Tetreault via phone
Trails Manager: Ken Brown
Office Coordinator: Cyndy Carrier Brown

GUESTS PRESENT: Angel Emmons, Ed Hebebrand

Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.

Recognition of Visitors:

Approval of Agenda: Lewis Barnes moved to approve; Ron Garvin seconded, so moved.

Secretary’s Report - Dick Jewett moved to approve with changes; Roger Gosselin seconded, so moved.

Treasurer’s Report: Sonia Koehler reported that our numbers are up a bit for Early Bird TMAs, 14,973 for The 2018 season, and for 2017, 14,754.

- Last year Regular Season at this time was 1,195 and so far we have 1,487 and still have many clubs that have not turned them in.
- Cindy Locke noted the handout of information for TMAs for the comparison of last year to this year.
- We are ahead by \$142,000 right now, but if you look at how much we budgeted to come in overall, we are down \$869,000, which includes what is completely budgeted for grooming. So to clarify, we are not “down”, but until all the TMAs come in, this is the money needed to balance the budget.

Dick Jewett moved to approve; Roger Gosselin seconded, so moved.

Tabled Items

2016 – 2017 Grooming Cost Analysis

Pat Poulin moved, and Roger Gosselin seconded, to take this item off the table, so moved.

- Matt Tetreault – We are going to have a meeting, probably the middle of March to discuss this. We are looking to change/streamline the information that we get from clubs, so we end up with better information.

Mark Reaves moved and Roger Gosselin seconded, to put the item back on the table.

New Business

Working with Multi-Use Trail Users

- Cindy Locke – Last year at the board retreat we decided that we would put a temporary committee together to talk about other trail users. We will be holding our next retreat in June.
- Committee for this topic: Scott Jenness, Mark Reaves, Roger Gosselin, Curt Marechaux, Mike Burns, Mike Viggiano, Stewart Ahearn, and Roger Gosselin will chair it. Tim Mills and Jeff Fay will be exeficio.

VAST Ambassador Program

- Tim Mills – I received an email from a person that has been rider in the past, but now has no one to ride with. He had sold his snowmobile.
- This person tried to get involved with the club, to volunteer, but they were not interested in his input.
- Tim responded to him that he wish he had contacted him before he sold his sled.
- Cindy Locke also talked to the person and has invited him to ride with her, as we have an extra sled available.
- Ambassador Program – Possibly have 20 all over the state, go through a training program, highlight them in the Travelers Guidebook, their profile, etc.
- Curt Marechaux – I would definitely be interested in doing that.
- Drew Fraser – A few people have contacted me, new riders, early in the season. I would be interested also.

Mileage Classification

- Jeff Fay – There is a handout of information on this. We are making these changes for auditing purposes.
- Personal Vehicle Mileage for official VAST business. I just inserted the word “Business” between federal and travel. It classifies which rate we reimburse them on.
- This change will make it less apt to cause problems in the audit.

Roger Gosselin moved that we accept the travel reimbursement policy change as permitted by the Policy Committee; Ron Garvin seconded, so moved.

Clubs Wanting to Switch Counties

- Tim Mills – I have been contacted by a club that wants to change the county that their club is in. This has happened in the past for various reasons. Sometimes it's for travel for monthly meetings, etc. There are no guidelines, restrictions, etc.

There was considerable discussion regarding this issue.

- Some suggested that VAST not be involved in any decision regarding the governance of the club. It needs to be directed to the county they are planning on leaving and the county they want to go to. The County oversees the individual clubs, so it would be up to them. They could put something in their bylaws that say, we only allow clubs from our own county, or even if they could restrict clubs from leaving to go to another county. The county is their own association.
- But, if you have a county that has 7 clubs and 5 of them are leaving, that is a big question as to what that is happening.
- It also has to be connecting counties.
- There are a lot of little clubs that are struggling; why don't they merge? I don't know that it is justifiable if a club wants to leave just because they don't like what's going on in the county. Years ago clubs did this, two people in the club didn't like others and they joined/created a club, which puts us in the predicament that we are in now; too many little clubs. I think I know what some of the issues are with the one in question, and it's not a big issue. Unless it's like a traveling issue, then I think they need to stay within their county.
- We would have to change the articles of association?
- According to the articles of association, anyone can go anywhere.
- If it does come to fruition, then they go to the county directors, if they have a problem with it, then present it to the BOD and we have a legitimate problem and then talk about it.

Annual Snowmobile Give Away

- Cindy Locke – This season we had 50 give-aways because of our 50th anniversary, which we contacted various businesses for.
- What if we bought a sled every year and gave it away in a raffle for buying an Early Bird TMA?
- Or a free TMA for the following year – one from each county.
- Dick Jewett – I think we need to bring this before the membership, it's a lot of money.
- Ron Garvin – How many extra tmas do we need to cover the cost of the sled?
- Cindy Locke – It would have to go into the budget, which would then be approved by the board and then approved by the membership. It could be something that we add to the budget this year and then every year you could set aside money for it.
- Pat Poulin – I would like the directors to ask their clubs if they sold more Early Bird TMAs because of the give-aways. I think we sold more because we had early snow. We are all having county meetings shortly, we could bring an answer/idea for next month's meeting.
- Jeff Fay – You are trying to get incentives out there to buy the Early Birds, rather than wait.
- Cindy Locke – We had early snow and the price increase for the regular season was more than in previous years.

Old Business

LVRT Status

- Cindy Locke - We have had meetings with the State and House Transportation and Senate Transportation Committees. We have given them the information that we have given to you in the handouts. They understand that we want to continue on with the project and understand that we need help in getting the private sector or state money that is needed for the project. We also sent them trail counter information, showing that 80% of the activity is in the summer on that trail.
- It was a very positive meeting and we are waiting to hear back from them.
- Ken Brown – I am passing out a handout of possible different scenarios of how we can approach different sections of the trail.
- We have up to \$1M/year for the 80/20 match for 3 years from the state – federal “Bid-Ped” money.
- Northern Borders Grant is \$200,000 – If we use it in Franklin or 1C or Lamoille County, it’s a 50/50 match we have to come up with. But if it’s in a REAP zone county, Orleans, Caledonia or Essex, then it’s 80/20. Top sections of the sheet are if we look at fully developing, and how much it will cost – 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D.
- Below each of those are smaller possible projects within each of those sections.
- 2B – Morrisville to Hardwick – 3 sections in there that could still connect Wolcott to Morrisville, Wolcott to Hardwick, Hardwick to Greensboro Bend, etc.
- If we don’t develop the trail to the full ADA standards, we can’t use the Bike Ped money.
- The three that catch my eye the most are the ones that would allow us to use the entire Northern Border’s grant that we have, with the least amount of money from us, and that is part of 1C connecting the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail to Sheldon Village, 1.5 miles, but it includes the big bridge. Or the very bottom one, to use the grant to work on drainage issues on the entire trail, or to connect Hardwick to Greensboro bend – either of those we could use the entire Northern Border’s grant, with the least money from VAST.
- Bridge 48 and 49 are right next to each other. State was supposed to replace bridge 49.
- Section from Morrisville to Hardwick is expensive because it has those two bridges in it.
- Ken Brown – The state gets federal money every year for the bike pedestrian trails, they are allowing us to use a big part of that money. It has to be built to ADA standards. It’s available every year. And it has to have a logical starting and ending point, connecting communities, end at a road.

A lot of discussion about funding, different stages of the trail to fix / not fix / to what extent / matching funds.

- Ken Gammell – Bridge 34 over Stannard Mtn Road was hit by a truck and knocked off its pillars. The state tore it down instead of fixing it. They told us at the time that it wasn’t going to cost us anything because of the insurance from the trucking company and the fact that they took it down when they shouldn’t have. Why are we paying \$250,000 to fix this?
- Ken Brown – I haven’t been able to find anywhere written how much money we can get from that insurance settlement, but it is mentioned in the lease that we can get the money from the insurance company. I will try to get that amount by the next meeting.
- Ken Gammell – When we hired Hans Huessy to look into this, we made a deal with them to get us out of Act 250, which we did, which should include wetlands / storm water run-off, which is also a regulatory process, and it is not allowed on any rail bed. Are we still going to pay \$50,000 to get us out of the wetlands/storm water issue?
- Cindy Locke – Our lawyer said that even though being exempt doesn’t mean we get out of “everything”. You still have to get some state permitting even though we have gotten out of Act 250.
- Cindy Locke - If the State helps out with funding, we can probably get something done this summer.
- They are hoping they can find \$200,000 to help us.

- Kenny Gammel – Bridge 27 over Route 15 – the landowner is willing to allow this to come across for two free TMAs. This was a while ago, but I think the son is willing to give us ROW / Easement to do this.

Committee Reports

Annual Meeting – Mike Burns – September 15th – The Abbey – Grand Isle County is joining us.

Long Range Planning – Mark Reaves - Upcoming retreat – June 23 and 24.

Miscellaneous

- Merritt Budd – I had real adventure ride over the Reciprocal weekend when we went up to Maine. Headed out at 10:00 AM – estimated 150 – 175 miles trip, low snow. The further we went, the worse the signing got. Out for 21 hours, rode 250 miles, most of that just trying to find our way back.
- Ken Gammel – I met some people that came over from Albany NY to Pownal VT, up to around Barre area, stayed overnight. They said the trails were signed well and the trails were in good shape. From there they went up to Newark to our camps and stayed for a week. They left us a note – “best time I’ve ever had snowmobiling. We can’t get over how well the trails are groomed and signed, and how well everything is taken care of in Vermont. liked it so much we are coming back next year for 2 weeks.”
- Cindy Locke – I talked to a person at the PA show and he said he was coming over riding and wanted to know if I could go. I couldn’t, but ended up meeting him on the trail. They’ve been up twice now.
- Mike Burns – East of St. J. – use the rail bed? Filed for Abandonment in place?
- Cindy Locke – there is a group over there that is working on it.
- Jeff Fay – Did VAST ever make a donation to ISC? We had discussed it last summer.
- Cindy Locke – I will look into it.

March 26th is the next meeting.

Lewis Barnes moved to adjourn; Ron Garvin seconded, so moved.

Motion adjourned at 7:30 PM.