

**Governor's Snowmobile Council**  
**May 5, 2021**  
**Final Minutes**

**Present:**

Pat Poulin, Chairman  
Trevor Carbo, Vermont State Police  
Shannon Fassett, Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles  
Sean Fowler, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department  
Cindy Locke, VAST Executive Director  
Tim Mills, VAST President  
Gary Nolan, VAST Law Enforcement Committee  
Star Poulin, Governor Appointee  
Jessica Savage, Forest Parks & Recreation

**VAST Staff Present:**

Ken Brown, VAST Trails Manager  
Matt Tetreault, VAST Trails Administrator

**Guests:**

Stan Choiniere, VAST Safety Committee Chairman  
Mike Mutascio (in for Ken Gammell)

The meeting was convened at 3:06 PM via Zoom.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:**

Cindy Locke moved that the minutes of the April 7, 2021 be approved as circulated, motion seconded by Star Poulin. **Motion carried.**

**SSTP Financial Report**

Matt said he has just today received the financial report so it is not ready for presenting to the Council.

**Agency Reports**

Vermont State Police

Trevor Carbo reported the following stats: 968 actual hours and 8,400 miles on trail, 51 tickets (including 4 registration tickets, 29 TMA tickets, 11 insurance tickets, 1 defective equipment ticket, with the remainder probably related to lack of safety education proof) and 51 warnings. There were 589 checkpoints with 5,499 visual inspections, many times more contacts this year than last. The department just added eight more people, which has made a huge positive difference in coverage. VAST will be evaluating contracts to reflect the additional coverage.

### Fish & Wildlife

Sean Fowler said information is not in yet as the department's data analyst is on maternity leave. Sean will have the information for next meeting of the Council.

### Sheriff's Association

Not present, but Cindy Locke said she has emailed all sheriffs to request their year-end reports as per their contracts.

### Southern Vermont Wilderness Search & Rescue

Not present.

### Department of Motor Vehicles

Shannon Fassett reported 21,416 snowmobile registrations, with \$543,028 in revenue as of May 3, which compares to last year through May of 20,456 registrations and \$520,569.

Cindy Locke said the DMV miscellaneous bill has passed out of the House and is slated for signature.

### Forest, Parks & Recreation

Jessica Savage reported that the RTP grants have been awarded, and VAST was successful as the only motorized applicant, with a grant of a little over \$227,000. The department is working on the next VORAC grant plan for COVID recovery relief. Request for letter of interest will be launched next week. Cindy asked whether funding would be available for a multi-use purpose, specifically for replacing a bridge over the Winooski River. Jessica said such a project would be eligible to apply for an RTP grant subject to availability of funds. She also noted that the ranking committee does consider trail connectivity as a factor in evaluating proposals.

## **VAST**

### FY 2022 Budget Presentation

Matt Tetreault reviewed the draft SSTP budget. For the general trails program budget, Line 5, Safety Education, a question was asked whether we have a sufficient supply of safety booklets. Matt said he would check on that to make sure the budget number is adequate for that line. As always, the biggest increase in the expense budget is line 9, insurance, which is substantially above last year's budget. It was noted this number is always difficult to budget because VAST doesn't find out until July what the carrier will charge.

In the Law Enforcement budget, the question arose as to whether we should fund/expense the entirety of the budgeted \$102,500 to basic law enforcement, and the consensus of the Council was yes. In answer to a question about the

equipment line (line 2 in the Law Enforcement expense budget), Trevor Carbo said State Police will need additional snowmobile equipment, and with 80% grants to start-up organizations for snowmobiles/trailers, the Council indicated decided that line needs to be bumped up an additional \$25,000. Sean Fowler said Fish & Wildlife's main need is for speed enforcement equipment. Gary Nolan noted that additional enforcement will also generate increased revenue from registrations and TMAs as well as fines. Matt will update the draft budget and bring the revised budget back to the Council next month for a vote.

#### Ice Crossings Update

Cindy Locke reported that the Long-Range Planning Committee has met with clubs to identify where the trail closings will be and how they will be marked. Ken Brown will develop the implementation particulars, with clubs to vote on the plan in May or June.

#### Law Enforcement Committee

##### ***Safety Inspection App for Law Enforcement Safety Inspections***

Cindy Locke said that Beth is aware of the need and doesn't think such an app will be hard to develop. The Law Enforcement Committee will be meeting on it either this month or in June, with Sean Fowler and Trevor Carbo to be included in the discussion.

##### ***Law Enforcement Equipment Funding***

Covered earlier in the meeting in the budget discussion.

#### VAST Safety Committee

Stan Choiniere said the Safety Committee met April 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed the proposal from landowners for a safety video for classes, but after extensive discussion, the Committee members felt this just wasn't feasible. However, they did say short videos on particular safety topics could be posted on social media or in TV spots as a practical option. The Committee also talked about signage to emphasize safe riding, to be posted at trailheads and intersections, with a stress on not drinking, driving safely, and carry in/carry out. Trash on the trails was a significant problem in 2020 because business shuttering during Covid required everyone to carry in supplies, the empties of which some did not want to carry out.

##### ***SSTP Trail Report***

Matt Tetreault noted that grant in aid season is here, with applications for equipment grants due in June.

##### ***Legislative Report***

Legislators were not present as the legislature is in session. Cindy is compiling a list of desired legislative changes, including legislation on snowmobile accident

reporting, and Pat Poulin said that, In the next month or in the fall, the Council should begin addressing that. In discussion, it was noted that legislative change proposals can be a double-edged sword because they sometimes leave an opening for legislative incursion into other areas besides the ones being proposed. Proposers have to go in prepared with answers to anticipated questions so as not to leave openings for unintended legislative involvement. Trevor Cabo underscored the bottom line of such proposals: the “why” of the matter is that insurance coverage is at stake. If VAST insurance is lost, that has major implications for VAST and outdoor recreation in Vermont.

### **Appointee Reports**

#### Northwest

Star Poulin reports trails are wet and muddy; not all trail signage has been picked up. Richmond has been asked to remove bridges on a trail no longer needed. Chittenden clubs have participated in the construction seminar. Trail cleanup is proceeding this spring.

#### Northeast

Mike Mutascio had to leave the meeting earlier.

#### Central

Tim Mills said the major activity for the spring will be construction projects.

#### South

Dick Jewett sent in info that his region is also gearing up for cleanup and construction projects. He, too, is concerned about trash buildup along the trails during the season, and it was suggested at this Council meeting that cameras may need to be put up and footage posted on social media as a disincentive for people to keep tossing out what they packed in.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> to include a vote on the SSTP budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Whiteneck  
Recording Secretary