

American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation  
MINUTES  
Annual Meeting  
August 5, 2017  
New Start Line  
Cable, WI

Board Members present: Paul Eckerline, Dennis Kruse, Joe Timmerman, Charlie Dee, Sue Scheer, Tom Duffy, John Garrett, John Kotar, Jeff Tumbleson, Jan Guenther  
Board Members absent: Mike Mandli, Brett Rondeau, Yuriy Gusev.  
Staff Present: Ben Popp, Nancy Knutson, Ronda Tworek, Colleen Dressen, Lisa Schmock, Audun Mikkelson, Jim Sokup, Chris Campbell, Louis Jones, Stephanie Martin

Call to Order: 6:45 PM

Board President's Remarks – Paul Eckerline, ABSF Board President

- Welcomed everyone.
- Thanked membership for support

Introduction of Board of Directors and Candidates – Charlie Dee, ABSF, Board Secretary

Treasurer's Report – Joe Timmerman, ABSF Board Treasurer

- Spectacular growth for our organization: total income has more than doubled in just four years to \$2.9 million.
- This results from amazing generosity of our membership, sponsors, and other donors.
- Ben and his staff have done a remarkable job of conducting both the Phase I and Phase II capital campaigns
- We are diversifying our income sources: five years ago entry fees were 80% of all income while the last two fiscal years have seen entry fees drop to just over 50% of total income.
- Accounting firm of Anderson, Hager, and Moe reviews our financials quarterly, insuring that our accounting systems are in conformance with generally accepted accounting practices. The firm will also perform a complete audit of our financials.

Endowment for the American Birkebeiner: Jim Coors, President, Board of Trustees

- Endowment, recently received its 501(c)(3) status as an independent organization with its own board of trustees dedicated solely to managing donations and bequests on behalf of ABSF.
- Partnering with the Eau Claire Community Foundation to handle investment management.
- Fully structured to accept unrestricted donations into its Priority Fund, targeted donations of \$25,000 or more into Legacy Funds, or bequests from estates, trusts, wills, etc.
- Created The Forerunner Fund, a special Legacy Fund named after the 35 skiers at the first Birkie. The first 35 donors of \$25,000 to the Endowment Forerunner Fund will be permanently recognized as a Forerunner of the Endowment for the American Birkebeiner and recognized on the Honor Wall at the "OO" trail head. Donors have up to five years to pay complete their gifts, either as individuals or groups.
- Now have three Forerunners, the first being John Garrett and Colleen Graham.

#### Trail Update – Chris Campbell, ABSF Trail Manager

- Fully 75% of repairs done last year following torrential rains have held, but 25% need to be re-done.
- Korte Start enhancements at OO are 75% completed.
- We groom 180 acres of snow in our trail system, much greater area than most trails since our trails are so wide.
- He urged people with questions or complaints to contact him directly.

#### Influencing Mother Nature – Jeff Tumbleson, ABSF Board Member/ABSF Trail Committee

- There is no denying our winters are becoming shorter, warmer, with less snow.
- Board initiated substantive discussions about snowmaking immediately after the cancellation of last year's race.
- Now have the basis of a plan to follow and build on to insure continued skiing and fat biking.
- Plan to have initial snowmaking up and going by December 2018 along with more detailed plan for expansion in phases.

#### Worldloppet Update – Dennis Kruse

- Explained current status of Worldloppet.
- Encouraged folks to attend other Worldloppet Races

#### Phase 2 Capital Campaign Update – Audun Mikkelsen, ABSF Development Director

A. Capital Campaign Phase I Spending

1. \$130,600 for Aid Station Trail Cabin development: Timber Trail, Gravel Pit and Fire Tower cabins with new wells, water heaters and solar panels, new generators, gas heaters and woodstoves.
2. Permanent weatherproof speaker audio wire and equipment installed at our starting line.
3. Renovation of the Boedecker Trail cabin.

B. \$45,500 Trail Repair and Development

1. New Classic and Skating Kilometer marker signs installed, counting down rather than up as in the past.
2. New Korte start has been excavated, leveled, grass seeded and lighting enhanced.
3. Design begun for new tunnel under Highway 77.

C. \$68,000 for Equipment and Vehicles

Used Phase 2 funding for a new dump truck, snowplow, Skid steer, snow bucket and Arctic snow cat snowmobile.

D. \$4,400 Outdoor Recreation Center at OO

Prep work and designs for new Birkie Outdoor center.

Working to raise the next \$800,000 from a public grant, private, family and corporate foundations, major donors, selected host receptions and a phone-a-thon.

Please fill out survey in your annual report for a new fundraiser.

The Foundation – '16 – '17 in Review/Moving Forward – Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director

- We've donated \$478,000 to other organizations -- mainly for youth programs -- to build our sport.
- Projects this year: Significant repair after heavy rain; Enhanced warming huts/feed stations/first responder stations at Timber Trail, Gravel Pit, and just today we christened the Franzen Fire Tower Cabin. Thanks to Marilyn and Greg Franzen for making this possible
- Excited about hosting the Half Marathon National Championship in September as part of Birkie Trail Run.
- Birkie Backpack a "green" change to replace plastic bags.
- Announced negotiations underway with NFL to have the Birkie Bridge – complete with snow and skiers – as a backdrop for telecasts during Super Bowl Week in Minneapolis next year.

- Birkie is hosting and operating a number of events this year: Wisconsin State High School XC Championships, Double-Pole Derby in December, the Gitchie Gamie games, Junior National Qualification races.
- Called attention to rendering of planned Outdoor Center at OO.
- We've submitted a DNR grant for the tunnel under highway 77.
- Introduced Allison Slavick to say a few words about the Tony Wise Museum of the American Birkebeiner.
- Introduced ABSF staff and praised their performance.

Board Election Results -Charlie Dee, ABSF Board Secretary

- Announced the four people elected to three year terms on the ABSF Board of Directors:

Mike Mandli  
Dennis Kruse  
Kathie Pautsch  
John Kotar

- Thanked John Garrett for his service to the Birkie.

Adjournment: Tom Duffy moved. **Acclimation.**