

## MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday May 16, 2022

3:00 PM

Samuel Johnson Outdoor Center at OO

**Board Members Present:** Paul Eckerline, Jeff Tumbleson, Tom Duffy, Kathie Pautsch, Mike Mandli, Sue Scheer, Kris Bjerckness, Jan Guenther

**Electronically present:** Charlie Dee, Bill Brown, Yuri Gusev, Karen Manske

**Absent:** Madelaine Rekemeyer

**Staff Present:** Ben Popp, Jeff Hommes

**Approval of Agenda:** Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

**Approval of Minutes** from April 18, 2022 meeting: Duffy move. Mandli second. **Approved.**

**President's Comments:** Paul Eckerline

- Madelaine Rekemeyer is appointed to the ABSF BOD as our Bayfield County Representative. She is unable to attend today, but will be introduced and greeted at our June meeting. Brett Rondeau is thanked for his years of service to the ABSF and will be formally thanked at our annual meeting in August.
- Reminder that Birkie Trail clean-up work days are this weekend: Friday May 20 and Saturday May 21. There are many opportunities to volunteer. There will be a thank you cook-out at OO on Saturday at noon. Please volunteer if possible and recruit helpers!
- Adopt-A-Highway: ABSF has adopted a Highway in honor of Dave Landgraf. Discussed adding other areas of Highway in honor of Ernie St. Germaine and in memory of Joe Timmerman.

## Jeff Hommes:

- ABSF Sponsorship Director was introduced to those who have not yet met him. Jeff presented his Birkie Sponsorship Business Plan for 2022. The focus is on partnership vs. sponsorship, with partners that share common vision and values and grow over time. Reminded that we should all make a point of patronizing the businesses of our sponsors/partners as well as referring potential sponsors/partners.

## Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp

- Jan Guenther and Ben introduced a new event that requires board approval. *Ski de She* is a camp/race weekend set to occur on the last weekend of January (January 26-28, 2023) and will include an expo and program for women as well as a women only ski races.

Goal is to offer support and enhance confidence to women skiers of all abilities, and especially to new skiers. Second goal is to host the largest women only ski race in North America. Three events are planned including a 30K Skate race with prize money, a 20K Classic race, and a 10K race for both techniques.

Budget is in place and it is expected to at least break even for the first year. Goal is to have 500 participants in the ski races and 100 in the expo/camp program.

**Motions:** ABSF BOD approves the addition of the *Ski de She*, a new women's ski event that will occur on the last weekend of January. Scheer move. Duffy second. **Approved** unanimously.

- Ben shared the Registration Curve which tracks our event registrations. Numbers are encouraging with 3900 registrations for Birkie week events so far (vs 4200 at this time last year, but we haven't gone through a price increase yet).

- Birkie One is meeting every Thursday morning at 9am to help refurbish an old ski trail at the LCO School. They are always looking for volunteers to help with this.
- Gitchi Gami Games: It is still undetermined if we will host this event this season; we will know more after USSS and CXC complete their spring meetings.
- Seeley Hills Classic is now confirmed to be part of the Super Tour Races. The citizen component will be unchanged. The Super Tour Races will include a 30K race (expecting about 25 men and 15 woman to participate) and a Super Tour Freestyle Sprint on Sunday. This is scheduled for the second weekend in January.
- Birkie Tour is scheduled for the third weekend of January and will have changes this season, with the inclusion of a night race.
- Office Space is being remodeled as space is tight. The museum will be moved to Telemark Village. Allison Slavick will help with the reconstruction of this when the building is ready. The space previously used for the museum will allow for 3 more work spaces. Budget for this project is approximately \$10K.
- World Cup Update  
A timeline is in place with commitment from US Ski and Snowboard to be made by October (including final contact and financial commitment from USSS). A sponsorship meeting is being arranged. Housing remains a big factor and several possibilities are being considered. Final decision to be made by December.
- Health Insurance for ABSF staff will be offered and go into effect on January 1, 2023. This will include a Term Life Insurance Policy. If a staff member chooses not to participate in the insurance plan, then funds will be paid into an HRA account.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance:** Kris Bjerkness

- A draft of the 2022-2023 budget was presented. This will be voted on at our next meeting. The most significant change is the addition of 3 FTE employees.
- Event Ops income is up 14% (due to more events and price increases).
- Total donations/grants/sponsorships has decreased from last year (primarily due to a significant one-time donation to Telemark Village that we received last year).
- We did not receive the Federal EDA Grant that we were hoping for to build the Outdoor Community Center at Telemark Village. While the news is disappointing, Plan B is being developed.

### **Telemark Capital Campaign:** Bill Brown

- Phase 1 of the Capital Campaign has been successfully completed. Now transitioning to Phase 2.
- Allison Slavick has done an amazing job coordinating Phase 1. She will be stepping away from this position at the end of June. Discussed formally thanking her and recognizing her efforts at the annual meeting.

### **Documentation Committee:** Charlie Dee

- The Documentation Committee recently met and approved the following draft of proposed language for the ABSF Procedures Manual:

## Protecting Personal Information of Contacts

1. The ABSF is diligent about protecting the personal information of all participants in our events, all sponsors of our events, and all contributors either to the ABSF or the Foundation for the Endowment of the American Birkebeiner (FEAB).
2. Accordingly, the ABSF shall comply with all state and federal statutes governing privacy and the sharing of contact information.
3. The ABSF may never sell any lists of members, participants, sponsors or contributors to any business or non-profit corporation.
4. The ABSF may share participant and contributor lists with FEAB.
5. The ABSF may, on rare occasions, share portions of our participation list with organizations that share our values under the following conditions:
  - A. The organization and the ABSF reach a cooperative agreement that benefits both organizations and is strictly defined in writing.
  - B. This agreement is a sharing limited by clearly defined scope, number of uses, or time frame.
  - C. The agreement includes an opt-out or opt-in selection, clearly displayed in the same font-size as the rest of the printed or emailed material, allowing the recipients to easily and quickly communicate their desire to receive no further communication from the organization.
  - D. The information shared will be strictly limited to
    1. Name + email address, or
    2. Name + US mail address, or
    3. Name + email address + US mail address.
  - E. The full written agreement is approved by majority vote of the ABSF Board of Directors.

## Discussion:

Presently, this only applies to the FEAB and the Birchleggings Club, as they are the only groups with whom we share information. This policy was developed after researching legality and best practices as well as obtaining feedback from ABSF staff. This is intended to insulate our staff in the event they need to turn down a request for our contact list. This policy is not intended to encourage sharing contact information with other organizations. In fact, it expressly prohibits selling to or sharing with commercial enterprises and establishes a rigorous process before sharing with another nonprofit.

**Motion:** ABSF BOD approves the proposal presented by the Documentation Committee regarding Protecting Personal Information of Contacts, and that this language become part of the Procedures Manual. Dee move. Mandli second. **Approved** unanimously.

## Competition Committee:

- Sue Scheer presented the following draft of an official statement from the ABSF to the Worldloppet Ski Federation in response to the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation is united in its mission to contribute to peace through sport and to unite the world in peaceful competition beyond all political disputes. The Worldloppet unites athletes of countries which are in confrontation and sometimes even war.

At the same time, the ABSF is united in its sense of fairness not to punish athletes for the decisions of their government if they are not actively participating in them. We are committed to fair competitions for everybody without any discrimination.

The current war in Ukraine, however, puts the ABSF in a dilemma. While athletes from Russia and Belarus are able to continue to participate in

sports events, many athletes from Ukraine are prevented from doing so because of the attack on their country.

The ABSF Board of Directors has therefore today carefully considered the situation and, with a heavy heart, issued the following resolution:

1. In order to protect the integrity of competition and for the safety of all the participants, the ABSF will not invite or allow the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes or officials in any of our competitions.
  2. The ABSF recommends that the Worldloppet not organize any event in Russia or Belarus.
  3. The ABSF welcomes and appreciates the many calls for peace by athletes, sports officials, and members of the worldwide skiing community. We look forward to unite with skiers of ALL nationalities once again when able to do so.
- **Motion:** Move to accept this statement as an official statement from the ABSF to the Worldloppet Ski Federation in response to the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine. Scheer move. Pautsch second. **Approved** unanimously.

**Birkie One:** Jeff Tumbleson

- As mentioned earlier, Birkie One is working with LCO youth and adults to refurbish an old 2.5 ski trail near the LCO School. The group meets every Thursday morning and volunteers are welcome. Contact Jeff for more information.

**New Business:**

- Request made for an up to date contact list for ABSF BOD members and staff. Ben will have a staff member send this out.
- Next meeting is Monday June 20, 2022 3PM at the Samuel Johnson Outdoor Center 3PM.

**Motion** to adjourn: Duffy move. **Adjournment** at 5:00 PM by acclimation.