

## **Minutes**

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

October 21, 2019

4:00 PM ABSF Office

**Board Members Present:** Paul Eckerline, Dennis Kruse, Mike Brown, Mike Mandli, Brett Rondeau, Sue Scheer, Yuriy Gusev, Jeff Tumbleson, John Kotar, Jan Guenther, Charlie Dee, Kathie Pautsch

**Absent:** Tom Duffy

**Staff Present:** Ben Popp

**Call to order:** 4:00 PM

**Approval of Agenda:** Mandli move, Dee second. **Approved.**

**Approval of Minutes from 9/23/19:** Mandli move, Kotar second. **Approved.**

**President's Comments:** Paul Eckerline

-Birkie Enterprise Meeting:

BE is profitable and moving forward.

2018 Event Sales vs Event Revenue was 8.9%

2019 Event Sales vs Event Revenue was 9.1%

(National average for this is 2.8%)

-Discussion on the ABSF Board and the direction it should take for the future.

\*Now that the ABSF has such talented and hard-working staff, less direct input is needed from the board from an operational level. (Currently there are 16 full-time and 7 part-time staff.)

\*General feeling from ABSF BOD that the staff could use the board more effectively. Would like improved communication and feedback on issues that arise.

\*Ben suggested that there should be more focus and engagement regarding ABSF's future mission and vision.

\*Governance and Committee work is essential and will continue.

\*Supporting and considering the plans of the ED is an essential role.

\*Board members will consider these issues, in particular vision for the future of the ABSF BOD. This will be discussed in more detail at the December BOD meeting.

-Brief discussion on the future of Sports Development for the area, as well as "what does it look like to be green" and what we need to do as an organization to facilitate this. This will be on the agenda for December meeting as well.

-Discussion of Telemark Properties.

## Executive Director's Report: Ben Popp

### -Snowmaking:

- \*Prep is in full swing and will be more efficient this year.
- \*4 km of trail planned for snowmaking.
- \*Power is in and we have immediate access to water.
- \*Limiting factor is that we have only two guns.
- \*\$30K is budgeted for snowmaking (not including labor).

### -OO Venue:

- \*Private events are possible but need to be limited; could be feasible with users making a donation.
- \*Spider Lake Town Board approved the re-zoning (with some opposition). Now awaiting County approval. Hope to be approved by December. This would allow us to serve coffee and snacks at the OO Lodge.

### -Bridge over Highway 77

- \*Construction is underway; considerable delays due to wet weather.
- \*11,000 cubic yards of dirt is needed
- \***Motion Made** (electronically on October 31)  
Dee move; Mandli second.  
Move that we purchase the lot, adjacent to the Birkie's HWY 77 property, from Hatchery Creek Development, for \$25,000, to be paid the Summer of 2020, use the lot to secure dirt for the bridge and then put back on market.  
(Purpose of this action is to reduce the cost of the bridge: purchasing and hauling dirt may cost as much as \$50K, whereas the lot would cost \$25K, with the surrounding lots beginning at 40K each. Taking the dirt may improve the value of the lot and there has already been some interest in the lot.)  
**Approved.**

### -Sawyer County Event Tax

- \*Temporarily stopped and going back to the committee for review.
- \*If passed, it would impose a user fee for Birkie events that use the Birkie Trail in Sawyer County.
- \*Concerns are that a municipality cannot charge more than it provides.
- \*If implemented, it should apply to all events that use the trail.
- \*Still lots of work to do to prevent this.

### -World Cup

- \*Discussion on what role the Birkie can play in this world-class event.
- \*Sponsorship levels are 10K/30K/60K. Would like to sponsor at 60K level which could include quite a bit on "in-kind" donation (ie, grooming support, help with ticket sales, etc).
- \*Organizing a Birkie Group to man a Birkie Booth, ski the course, provide

- Birkie Warriors and wear Birkie bibs.
- \*Hope to use this as an opportunity to promote the Birkie.
- \*Birkie Bash theme this year is focused on promoting awareness of the World Cup.

## **Committee Reports**

Finance: Mike Brown

- \*Presented the ABSF Financial Summary as of September 2019. Showing surplus of \$148K for Sept. and \$1,133K year-to-date. Bank balance of \$545K
- Fundraising efficiency very good at 5.9% for month, and 8.5% for year. Very strong assets to liabilities (very little debt). Working on minimizing expenses.

Trail: Mike Mandli

- \*Plans for snowmaking is going very well. Discussed role of this committee. Plan to meet with groomers before the snow flies.

Documentation: Charlie Dee

- \*No report

Competition: Dennis Kruse

- \*Discussion of the role of this committee in regards to World Cup. We should maximize this opportunity as the last World Cup in US occurred in 2001.

Skier Development: Jan Guenther

- \*No report

## **New Business:**

- \*Discussion of a letter received by email (sent to Charlie Dee from a long-time Birkie skier) regarding concerns about inexperienced Prince Haakon skiers create a danger to experienced but slower Korte skiers. She described an incident that resulted in a bad experience last year for both her (finishing the Korte) and new PH skiers.
- \*Several ideas were discussed.
- \*More education needed to U19 kids and new skiers regarding trail etiquette.

\*Ben to make a follow-up call to author of this letter to further address this.

**Adjournment:** Pautsch move. **Acclimation.**