

# MINUTES

## ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday November 16, 2020

3:00 PM

Samuel C. Johnson Family Outdoor Center at OO Trailhead (or Online)

**Board Members Present:** Mike Mandli, Brett Rondeau, Jeff Tumbleson, Kathie Pautsch, Mike Brown

**Electronically Present (Microsoft Teams Meeting):** Paul Eckerline, Charlie Dee, Bill Brown, Yuri Gusev, Sue Scheer, Karen Manske

**Absent:** Tom Duffy, Jan Guenther

**Staff Present:** Ben Popp

**Approval of Agenda:** Pautsch move, Rondeau second. **Approved**

**Approval of Minutes** from October 19, 2020 Board Meeting: Pautsch move, Rondeau second. **Approved**

**President's Comments:** Mike Mandli

- Two big issues that we will be focusing on are the purchase of Telemark and putting on events during Covid-19 pandemic. This will be discussed in more detail in Executive Director's report.
- Our next meeting will be December 14, 2020.
- Schedule of Events Approval: tabled until next meeting.
- Executive Director's yearly review is completed. Ben is currently in the third year of his 5-year contract with no changes made. Three goals for the next year include:
  - Close on the purchase of Telemark.
  - Restructure the management of staff with separate costs centers, each with their own leadership roles and budgets.
  - Focus on diversity and involving minorities: "One Community".
- The ITU (International Triathlon Union) would like to collaborate with ABSF for the 2022 Winter National Triathlon Championships.

**Executive Director's Report:** Ben Popp

- Telemark Update (with Jim Coors and Allison Slavik)

The Purchase Agreement has been signed; closing set for March 2021. We will receive \$250K from the Idle Site State Grant. In January, we can apply for an additional \$250K.

Other funding includes the Legacy Gift, selling property for development, and Conservancy Project.

Jim Coors presented information regarding Landmark Conservancy which is a nationally accredited, non-profit land trust serving 20 counties in western and northwestern WI. They work with landowners who wish to conserve their land in perpetuity, as well as with local, state and federal entities to create public preserves and trails for all to enjoy. They focus on climate resiliency as well as ecologic sustainability.

Conservation Easement (CE):

- A legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that is perpetual – attached to the title of the land.
- Restrictions and reserved rights are negotiated; terms are tailored to the property's ecology and landowner's goals.
- Landowner continues to own and manage land, pay property taxes, etc.
- Terms are monitored and enforced each year by Landmark Conservancy.
- FYI: Minocqua Winter Park and ABR operate under Conservation Easements.

New Project Process:

- ABSF would be in charge of the process/restrictions; Landmark would provide guidance.
- One-time fee at start; yearly donation thereafter to cover monitoring costs.
- Using Landmark's services would bring credibility to our commitment to the Conservancy and make this more attractive to donors.
- Initial fee is negotiable as using Landmark offers them a tremendous marketing opportunity. \$15K is a baseline amount, but again negotiable. (Cost of doing this ourselves is estimated to be \$10-15K.)

Mike Mandli would like to create a Fundraising Committee for the purchase of Telemark; this will be formed at our next BOD meeting in December.

Allison Slavik discussed Fundraising Projects and Survey.

- Excel Energy has money (\$20M) set aside for philanthropy. We are hoping to receive a significant gift for the Telemark Project. (This is possible due to tax advantages and deductions for corporations through the end of the year as part of Cares Act.)
- Brett Rondeau has been working with Allison Slavick and local corporations for donations.
- Telemark Survey is a fundraising tool to engage people in the Telemark Project. This is a first step to tell people about the broad vision and get their ideas and views. It will be open to anyone between December 1-14, at [birkie.com/Telemark](http://birkie.com/Telemark). Emails will be sent to 30K+ in the ABSF database, volunteers and businesses. Press releases and local flyers will also promote the survey. The survey will include 11 multiple choice questions regarding land use as well as business strategies, with room provided for written comments. There will be two questions regarding

demographics and a key question regarding Conservancy support by donors (by the acre or by the share). This survey will also build a donor list and profess the importance of this project to the community.

Jeff Tumbleson introduced a Board Challenge where ABSF board members shall set an annual goal for fundraising. (Similar to the NNF drive for 25.) More on this idea to come.

Ben noted that an architectural plan is a necessary part of the commitment. (Yuri Gusev has experience with this.)

- **Logging on the Birkie Trail**  
Many complaints regarding this have been made to BOD members and the Birkie Office. The Forestry department executed a large clear cut of Aspen trees on the classic trail just north of OO. There is a (discretionary) 150-foot buffer from the trail that was not enforced. Ben talked to the Forestry Department about this and voiced the concerns that have been heard from many. Ultimately, this is public property and management is up to the Forestry Department. The land use plan is being revised; we are directing concerned people to write to Sawyer County Board and Forestry Department. It is felt that signage from the Forestry Department explaining the need for clear cutting would be helpful.
- A Q&A regarding 2021 Birkie Week Updates is scheduled for tonight and will also be recorded and available for viewing on the website for those not able to view the live session.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Fundraising**

- Mike Mandli again discussed adding a fundraising committee specifically for the Telemark Project. Charlie Dee confirmed that the bylaws allow this. More to come at next meeting.

### **Finance:** Mike Brown

- Policies and procedures for authorization of new expenditures was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting.

**Motion:** Any new expenditure that changes any single line item in the budget by \$50K, and/or any total expenditure change of \$150K requires approval from the BOD. The Executive Director shall seek approval from the BOD of any such upcoming expense change within 72 hours. Mike Brown move. Pautsch second. **Approved** unanimously.

- Review of operating financials as of the end of October:

October:

Income \$106K; Expense \$151K; Net Income \$44K (deficit).

Revenue is unfavorable to Budget by \$92K.

Expense is favorable to Budget by \$31K.

Year to date:

Income \$1.645M; Expense \$683K; Net Income Surplus \$962K.

Revenue is favorable to Budget by \$289K.

Expense is slightly unfavorable to budget by \$58K, mainly due to Event Ops expense (\$47K)

Last year YTD:

Income \$2,034M; Expense \$871K; Net Income Surplus \$1.163M.

Variances from last year due to less registrations (income), and savings on expenses and payroll.

Bank Balance \$877K - includes money received from the Cares Act (\$372K):

-PPP (\$212K) which is almost entirely forgivable; application for forgiveness has been submitted.

-EIDL (\$149K) and SBA EIDL Advance (\$10K), both of which are 2.75% long-term (30-year) loans.

Debt ratio of total assets to liabilities is 23%, which is favorable.

Fundraising efficiency is very low (1.6%), which is also very favorable.

Capital Expenditures for YTD is \$109K.

Trail Pass Revenue is favorable compared to last year at this time, up 14%.

Event participation numbers for all Birkie week events are 7,305 this year, compared to 8,991 last year at this time. This equates to a \$266K loss of revenue.

- The budget for January – June 2021 will be emailed to BOD to be reviewed and voted on at our December 14 meeting.

**Documentation:** Charlie Dee

- The Documentation Committee will meet later this week with John Oman and Audun Mikkelsen to recap the BOD election.

**Competition:** Vacant

- This committee needs to be re-established. We will address this further at next meeting.

**Development:** Jan Guenther

- No report.

**Diversity:** Jeff Tumbleson

- A virtual kick-off meeting was held on November 12 with Ben, several board members and staff, as well as Bob Kovar. This was primarily a brainstorming meeting to identify ways that the ABSF can take action to build a better community.
- The next step is to organize a meeting with key members of the LCO tribe and/or tribal board to further discuss ideas that support this mission.

**New Business**

- Our next meeting is December 14, 2020, on-line with Teams Meetings. Mike Mandli will be sending out a list of dates for 2021 BOD Meetings.

**Adjournment** at 4:50 pm by Acclimation.