

MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday September 20, 2021

3:00 PM

Samuel Johnson Outdoor Center at OO

Board Members Present: Mike Mandli, Jeff Tumbleson, Kathie Pautsch, Mike Brown, Paul Eckerline, Sue Scheer, Bill Brown, Brett Rondeau

Electronically present: Charlie Dee, Karen Manske, Yuri Gusev, Jan Guenther

Absent: Tom Duffy

Staff Present: Ben Popp

Approval of Agenda: Mandli requested an additional agenda item to discuss refinancing of loan for Telemark Property. Pautsch move to approve amended agenda. Eckerline second. **Approved.**

Approval of Minutes from July 19, 2021: Mandli move. Eckerline second. **Approved.**

President's Comments: Mike Mandli

- The election for the 2021-2022 ABSF BOD Officers will take place at our meeting in October.

Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp

- Would like to apply for an EIDL loan through SBA (as they have increased the cap to \$2M) in order to pay off our higher interest Telemark Property loan. If accepted, the EIDL loan would be a 2.75% interest loan over 30 years.

Motion: Move to proceed with application for a \$1.4 M EIDL loan. Scheer move. Mike Brown second. **Approved** unanimously.

- World Cup Update
 - Meetings continue with US Ski and Snowboard and FIS.
 - Met with Fastenal for possible Title Sponsorship of \$1M. If granted, ABSF would share this with the Loppet Foundation.

-ABSF budget is \$2.5M; Loppet Foundation has a similar budget. (Combined budget is \$5M.

-Our \$2.5M budget includes \$200K contingency (10%) and \$200K in-kind donations. Therefore approximately \$2.4M needed, which would be obtained through sponsorships, donations, and ticket sales.

-US Ski and Snowboard Board of Trustees were presented with this and are unanimously supportive of being involved with fundraising.

-Final decision will be made in spring of 2022.

- We are tentatively set for Gitchi Gami Games here in December as part of Super Tour. US Ski and Snowboard requests that we allow fluorinated waxes for this event. Athletes feel that this is needed to ensure a level and fair playing field. Discussion followed. ABSF does not wish to go backward in this matter. However, the affected athletes want to fairly represent our country at the Olympic Games. No decision made at this time.
- Telemark financing was updated.
 - Cost is \$2.15 M (\$1.4M for purchase of property and \$750K for demolition of lodge).
 - Income total thus far is \$925K (Idle Site Grant \$250K and Sale of Property \$675K).
 - \$1.2M still owed.
 - Opportunities include an acquisition grant that has been tentatively approved by the DNR for \$325K.
 - Refinancing our Telemark Loan with the EIDL grant (2.75% over 30 years) would reduce our payments from \$56K to \$38.5K, saving \$17.5K annually.
- Opportunity to purchase land that was part of the golf course at Telemark.
 - This property is being listed for sale as vacant land in parcels, including a 120-acre parcel adjacent to our property. We also own 15 acres of land that we could trade out. Valhalla is interested in buying 5 of the acres, leaving 105 acres that we could purchase.
 - Discussion regarding concern of taking on more debt vs a missed opportunity.
 - There is a public road to the property. We have no current easements on the property.
 - Would like to see a general plan for how we would use the land and how we would benefit from the purchase.
 - Treasurer Mike Brown commented that we are in good financial health whether or not we buy the land.
 - Attorney for the Titus family requests that ABSF sign a "Waiver and Release of Claims" document that was shared with board members. Attorney Dana Rasmussen has reviewed this and feels that there is no down side to signing this.

Motion: Move to allow Ben Popp to sign the Waiver and Release of Claims document as described above. Dee move. Guenther second. **Approved** with one recusal from Scheer, otherwise unanimous.

- Staff continues to work with Cable Planning Commission and Cable Town Board and Zoning Committee on a master plan for the Telemark Property. There are many ordinances in place. Working on conditional uses for activities, buildings, etc.
- Allison Slavick is working on an Economic Infrastructure Grant, which is a Federal Grant for up to \$8M (with an 80:20 match). Deadline for grant application is Jan. 30, 2022. Putting together a proposal with LHB that focuses on a Nordic Center and Museum. The application requires a bid from a contractor. However, the contractor cannot be used for the construction. (Suggestions included using a non-local contractor for the grant bid.)

Committee Reports

Finance: Mike Brown

- Financial updates are now being reported to board quarterly. First quarter results will be presented in October.
- Finance committee met earlier today and discussed the EIDL loan that was discussed earlier in Ben's report, as well as the logistics of changing to quarterly financial updates.
- Capital Expenditure Budget is \$300K; with depreciation this budget is closer to \$448K. Trail and Operations crew need a heavy duty pickup truck and are looking at a Ford F350. No decision made at this meeting.
- As an Addendum: On September 29, 2021, Ben Popp requested a resolution from the board authorizing him to sign documents on behalf of the ABSF for the purchase of a 2015 F350 from Dahl Auto Fleet.

Motion: Move that ABSF BOD authorize Ben Popp as Executive Director to sign any documents necessary to purchase the 2015 F350 truck. Dee move. Guenther second. **Approved** unanimously.

Telemark Capital Campaign: Bill Brown

- Campaign has brought in \$271K thus far (including a \$100K grant) with 52 donors and 9 acres sold. Most common donation amount is \$500.
- The tour/presentation at the Telemark Property prior to the annual meeting was very well attended and well received.
- Another direct mailing will be going out at the end of October.
- Remote promotional events are being planned for Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Madison. These events will have some training/content and will not be just fundraising.
- Team Birkie members will host a happy hour at the Turkey Birkie and will be another opportunity to inform/fundraise for Telemark Capital Campaign.
- All board members will be receiving a letter asking for contributions to the campaign. Looking for 100% participation from board members, hopefully by October 15.

Documentation Committee: Charlie Dee

- Committee will be meeting in October to reach an agreement on a Grant Acceptance Policy that will then be brought to the board for approval.
- The committee proposes the following addition to our Mission Statement:

Current:

*To promote and conduct the finest international cross-country ski competition;
To serve as good stewards of the American Birkebeiner Trail;
To support healthy lifestyles among people of all ages and abilities.*

Proposed:

*To promote and conduct the finest international cross-country ski competition;
To serve as good stewards of the American Birkebeiner Trail, **the environment and a climate that provides snow for winter sports.**
To support healthy lifestyles among people of all ages and abilities.*

Motion: Move to add the words “the environment and a climate that provides snow for winter sports” to our mission statement as written above. Dee move. Pautsch second.

Discussion:

-Mission statement should not be changed lightly or often.

-Birkie Green is now part of our marketing and brand.

-While the sentiment is important, it is part of the ABSF values and does not need to be added to our mission statement.

Motion is **not approved**.

Diversity Committee: Jeff Tumbleson

- Birkie One has been working with LCO. Goal is to reclaim cross country ski trails and host events with LCO.

New Business:

- There is interest in having a retreat to talk about board values in the future.
- Next meeting is October 18, 2021 at 3:00 PM.
- **Motion** to adjourn: Eckerline move. Pautsch second. **Adjournment** at 4:45 PM.