

## MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday April 18, 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

**Electronically present:** Charlie Dee, Brett Rondeau, Bill Brown, Jan Guenther, Yuri Gusev

**Absent:** Karen Manske

**Staff Present:** Ben Popp, Stephanie Martin, Mike Brown

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

**Approval of Minutes** from March 21, 2022 meeting: Mandli move. Duffy second. **Approved.**

**President's Comments:** Paul Eckerline

- Kris Bjerckness introduced himself and was welcomed. He has skied the Birkie since 1979 and now (retired) spends time coaching and volunteering. He has experience as a treasurer and CFO/CEO of other corporations in the past. It was unanimously agreed that his experience matches the needs of the ABSF.

**Motion:** Move to appoint Kris Bjorkness to the ABSF Board of Directors and Treasurer of the ABSF. Scheer move. Mandli second.

**Approved** with one abstention from Charlie Dee (who clarified that he is in favor of the candidate, but not the process).

It was then discussed that we need to develop a formal process of appointing members to the ABSF with clear job descriptions. This will be taken up by the Documentation Committee in the future.

- A BOD retreat is being planned for some time in late summer or fall. Goals are to clarify the roles of the ABSF BOD versus roles of the staff; examine our mission statement; and discuss key issues facing the Birkie from a strategic standpoint.
- Trail Clean-up work days are being planned for Friday May 20 and Saturday May 21, ending with a cook-out at 00. Please volunteer if possible and recruit helpers!

#### **Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp**

- The staff are now focusing on summer projects. Unfortunately costs of most of these are coming in much higher than originally estimated (due to rising costs of everything). For example, the paved trail at Telemark is now bid at 50% over original bid. The grant requires 5K to be completed by December 2024. We will need to have some additional fundraising to complete the entire 5K.
- Our SBA EIDL loan for \$1.4M has been finalized which will allow us to pay off our original loan for the Telemark Property. The SBA loan is locked in at 2.75% for 30 years.
- World Cup Update  
US Ski and Snowboard is very enthusiastic about having events hosted by ABSF and the Loppet Foundation in 2024. They will be making site visits this summer and there is an upcoming (virtual) meeting in Switzerland in May to plan the 2024 calendar.  
No decision made by ABSF yet.

- The Worldloppet Ski Federation has halted cooperation with the Russian Loppet, suspended the Russian Demino Ski Marathon from the Federation, and removed all Russian races from the Global Ski Marathon Calendar. This due to ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, which is against the values of the Federation. The ABSF official statement on this will be discussed formally at our next meeting.
- Team Birkie had a great first year with huge success on the trails as well as breaking even financially. They also did a lot of community outreach. An inspiring video developed by Caitlin Gregg and Team Birkie was shared. Current focus is on building a budget for next year and engaging with youth groups.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance:**

- Stephanie Martin shared and explained the Scorecard that the staff administrative team goes over each week. Stephanie encouraged us to reach out to her with any questions at any time.

- Financial Summaries as of March 2022:

Revenue \$261K; Expense \$689K; Net income (\$428K)

Revenue is up \$108% from last year. Expense up 57% from last year.

Bank Balance \$1.46M

Looking at health care insurance for staff; more to come on this at May meeting.

The 2022-2023 budget process has started and will be voted on in June.

Birkie pricing decisions are finalized with a 7-10% increase this year, depending on date of registration. We have gone back to increased pricing based on date of registration vs inventory (ie, number of

registrations received). This model is less confusing for participants, but more difficult to budget.

Birkie Enterprise is doing very well and is in a strong cash position. They will be paying off their loan to ABSF with 90% to be paid before June. Advised BE to keep 90 days cash in reserve.

- Upcoming event participant numbers as of March 2022:  
LWC 672 (vs 607 last year)  
Birkie Trail Run 133 (vs 76 last year)  
Epic Bike Fest 720 (vs 760 last year)

**Telemark Capital Campaign:** Bill Brown

- We expect to hear soon if we are awarded the Federal Grant for \$7.9M.
- Fundraising efforts are going well. Birkie event registration will serve as a venue to inform about the fundraising efforts for Telemark and provide an easy way to make donations. The acre for acre match from an anonymous donor is also helping the efforts.

**Documentation Committee:** Charlie Dee

- Documentation Committee will meet prior to our next meeting to develop language for our Procedures Manual regarding sharing emails of our members with other non-profit organizations. This will be presented and voted on at our next meeting.

**Diversity Committee:** Jeff Tumbleson

- An upcoming meeting is planned for April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**New Business:**

- Discussed the need to raise registration fees:

-The actual cost of the event per registrant is greater than the actual fee (thanks to sponsorships and donations). Pricing for youth events (Barnie and Junior Birkie) did not increase.

-The Birkie events improves each year.

-We are ensuring the future of the Birkie; it is so much more than one event.

- Next meeting is May 16, 2022 3PM at the Samuel Johnson Outdoor Center.

**Motion** to adjourn: Duffy move. **Adjournment** at 4:30 PM by acclimation.