

MINUTES

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday June 16, 2025

3:00 PM

Birkie Office

Board Members Present: Paul Eckerline, Kathie Pautsch, Yuri Gusev, Tom Duffy, Andy Ubel, Mike Mandli, Chris Morley, Jeff Olson, Karen Manske, Sue Scheer (Emeritus)

Electronically present: Marit Ross-Sonnesyn, Kris Bjerkness, Jan Guenther

Staff Present: Ben Popp (by phone), Mike Brown, Louise Dressler

Absent: Bill Brown

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

Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2025 meeting: Bjerkness move. Morley second. **Approved.**

President's Comments: Paul Eckerline

- Yuri Gusev (who is up for reelection) is interested in being our second Emeritus Board Member.

Motion: Move to appoint Yuri Gusev to serve in the position of Emeritus Director for a three-year term which can be renewed as outlined in our bylaws. Mandli move. Pautsch second. **Approved** unanimously.

- Paul asked board members to consider moving board meetings to a different time to accommodate younger board members. He passed around a survey for board members to fill out for preferences for this.

- ABSF received a letter from the Ski for Light Organization which expressed concerns about seven of their athletes that we were unable to accommodate for Para Birkie. Paul explained that the athletes in question had never registered. ABSF will reach out to address their concerns.

Staff Update: Mike Brown

- The Marketing Coordinator position has been filled. Kelly Jennings will start in this position on July 1. She has a strong background in graphics design and will also be helping with the Birkie Store.
- Trails and Facilities Director position is still open.
- Stephanie Martin has retired from the position of Sr. Staff Accountant but is still working from home until this position is filled. A contract for a bookkeeper is in the works. This is a person known to us and is familiar with ABSF.
- Paul Eckerline has been helping with event coordination.

Executive Director's Comments: Ben Popp

- Ben sent out a detailed report electronically prior to the meeting.
- Ben has a meeting next week with Telemark Stays to continue work on the proposal for camping at MTV.
- TIOA is revisiting the green space agreement with Bayfield County.
- There were 2,200 visitors to MTV in May.
- Registrations for ABSF membership has been soft. Epic Bike Fest went very well but registrations were down by approximately 100.

Committee Reports

Telemark Capital Campaign: Louise Dressler

- The Capital Campaign Budget was shared:
Total spent \$10.798M
Total raised \$10.079M (which does not include our loan)
Net (\$719K)

Uncompleted projects include:

Lobby Plaza (which is on hold until we secure a dedicated donor)
Biathlon Range
Mountain Bike Trails-phase 4
Snowmaking infrastructure
Pedestrian Bridge
Bathrooms at the start area

\$2.548M budgeted for these projects and \$1.232 spent thus far.

Total left to raise is \$131,143.

Total funds spent \$9.249M

Current MTV Balance (\$197, 916)

Total pledged funds \$2,428M

Birkie One: Chris Morley

- The Ziigwan Bimibaatoo Run Series is over for the year.
- The committee will be focusing on the future and sustainability of Birkie One. Continuing to look for grant opportunities and ways to increase resources.

Documentation: Andy Ubel

- Elections for 2025-2026 ABSF board members is in progress.

Team Birkie: Yuri Gusev

- Team Birkie is now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is appointing a new board of directors. Marit Ross-Sonnesyn is interested in serving on both Team Birkie and ABSF board of directors. Mike Brown will serve as the liaison ABSF staff member with Team Birkie.
- Debt to ABSF will be paid off by the of June. ABSF will continue to support Team Birkie. Details are being worked out on new agreement which will include Team Birkie's obligations to the ABSF and Hayward/Cable community and ABSF's obligations to Team Birkie.

Birkie Green/Birchleggings Club: (Paul Thompson not present today.)

- Andy Ubel and Paul Eckerline plan to attend the next Birchleggings Club/Birkie Green meeting.
- Birkie Green is thanked for their donation of electric chain saws and snowmobile to ABSF.
- Suggestions for future needs that would be a good fit for Birkie Green's generous donations include replacing generators with permanent solar power (especially needed at the wax cabins near the Birkie start) as well as an electric car (leased).

Finance: Mike Brown and Kris Bjerkness

- A revised budget proposal was sent out electronically to be voted on today. The revised budget has an operational net income of \$113,605 with an operational cushion of 2.2%, satisfying the requirement of the 1.5% cushion that was approved at our last meeting.
- The Finance Committee met earlier today and now recommends that the operational cushion be changed back to a 3% surplus, requiring a net operational income of \$153K. Thus, the following motion was made:

Motion: Move to approve an amended budget requiring an operational cushion of 3%. Mandli move. Morley second.

Discussion on the above motion raised concerns about the proposed changes that would be needed to obtain the increased revenue. This includes:

- Eliminating or decreasing Team Birkie donation (up to \$30K).
- Reducing Trails and Facilities Director position to part-time.

The majority agreed that these are not good alternatives as we have already made a commitment to Team Birkie, and the Trails and Facilities Director position is important and valuable to the foundation.

It was recommended that ABSF make a one-year commitment to Team Birkie with a sponsorship agreement that is detailed and includes accountability.

After lengthy discussion, a new motion was made:

Motion: Move to rescind the motion made above requiring a 3% operational cushion and to approve the original proposed budget with an operational net income of \$113,605 and operational cushion of 1.5%. Further move to continue to support Team Birkie with sponsorship agreement of \$30K for this fiscal year.

Bjerkness move. Yuri second. **Approved** with one opposed and one abstained.

New Business:

- There is no meeting in July. Our next meeting is Monday, September 15 at Birkie Headquarters.
- The ABSF Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday August 2 at Mt. Telemark Village.
- **Motion** to adjourn: Mandli move. Meeting adjourned at 5:35 by acclamation.