

## **MINUTES**

ABSF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday December 8, 2025

3:00 PM

Old Chicago Club

**Board Members Present:** Paul Eckerline, Kathie Pautsch, Jan Guenther, Tom Duffy, Andy Ubel, Karen Manske, Chris Morley, Jeff Olson, Mike Cleary, Marit Ross-Sonnesyn, Sue Scheer (Emeritus)

**Electronically present:** Kris Bjerkness, Bill Brown, Mike Mandli Yuri Gusev (Emeritus)

**Absent:** none

**Staff Present:** Mike Brown, Ben Popp, Kristy Maki

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

**Approval of Minutes** from October 20, 2025 meeting: Morley move. Ubel second. **Approved.**

**President's Comments:** Paul Eckerline

- Paul thanked everyone for a wonderful year. The holiday party for staff, board, endowment and LWC follows tonight's meeting. Extra thanks to the Trails and Facilities staff who have been working hard on snowmaking over the last 2 weeks.

**Staff Update:** Mike Brown

- Efforts continue to improve staff appreciation, professional development, and work/life balance. This includes clear expectations and helping employees feel fully supported.

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

- The Turkey Birkie went very well.
- Trail pass sales are increasing since we have snow.
- Gitchi Gami Games are December 20-21. Volunteers are needed.
- We have secured a new (10<sup>th</sup>) Endowment Forerunner.
- Continuing to work with the Nordmor group on a resolution for the road easement.
- Staff are working on a 5-year Strategic Plan (document was shared). Goal is to have this completed by June.
- The Telemark Biathlon Club is now a 501(c)(3) organization and is working on a MOU agreement with ABSF. They have had two demo days so far.
- We have bought a (used) tractor with a bigger mower, sold a groomer to Ariens, and will be getting a (used) Prinoth on January 12 with a 12-month interest free loan.

## **LWC Update**

- A small working group including Attorney Mark Hooley are developing a contract with the goal of creating a new 501(c)(3) LWC organization. They are also working to create a property holding group to include LWC, MTV and the Outdoor Center at OO.
- The Documentation Committee will explore liability/waivers for LWC as well as for mountain biking at MTV.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance:** Mike Brown and Kris Bjerkness

- The next Quarterly Finance Committee meeting will occur in January. Second quarter financials will be shared at our January meeting.
- The 2024-2025 fiscal year financials are complete and have been sent to auditors for review.
- The construction loan is being used to reimburse Operations for money lent to the Capital Campaign (\$900K). The remainder of the loan money will be put in a Merrill Lynch account with the ability to withdraw funds within 48 hours.
- ABSF cash balance is higher than last year (\$673K vs \$634K).
- LWC cash balance is \$160K.

### **Telemark Capital Campaign:** Bill Brown

- The Junior Development Community Match effort is ongoing to raise \$400K to support youth skiing, training and racing with MTV upgrades in time for Junior Nationals in March 2026. Thanks to Brent Carlson and other donors, over \$230K has been raised so far.
- Board members will be asked to help call potential donors. John Munger is also helping about 2-3 hours per week.
- The Campaign Committee is working on an impact statement to let people know all that MTV is doing for our community.

### **Birkie One:** Chris Morley

- There has been a lot in interest in activities involving Birkie One including:
  - Drummond Schools (programs at the Hub as well as school).
  - Cable Rod and Gun Club (adding Biathlon education/opportunity to Hunter Safety and youth group programming).
  - LCO (programs on site at LCO).
  - Tamarack Health (partnering with them for a Get Ready for Birkie Program and a Community Education Program).
- The Spring Running Series at LCO is also being planned.

**Documentation:** Andy Ubel

- The Procedures Manual needs to be updated to include the US Ski and Snowboard Transgender Policy that ABSF is also adopting. Andy will send out the final document to be voted on at our next meeting.
- A recent meeting with the Nordmore group about the road easement went well. A draft agreement is in progress.

**Team Birkie:** Yuri Gusev and Marit Ross-Sonnesyn

- The World Cup TB athletes have been doing very well. The rest of the team was present for the Turkey Birkie and now are in Alaska.
- Team Birkie Board has formed committees including Finance, Media & Communications, Strategic Development, Performance & Personnel.
- Renaming/rebranding is a priority with the goal of maintaining a positive view for the community and athletes. TB is currently working with a (donated) rebranding specialist. Mission and values of TB are also being established. Maintaining transparency is also a priority.
- Julie Ensrud is now the managing director of Team Birkie.

## **Green/Birchleggings Club:** Paul Thompson

- Paul Thompson is not present today. It was noted that we are in search of a new Race Chief for Birkie Green.

## **New Business:**

- Kristy Maki was present to discuss Birkie event registrations which are all behind from last year (except for the Epic). New promotions are being offered such as a “Refer a Friend” link that gives a \$25 value toward a future ABSF event. Birkie representatives will be attending other area events to promote ABSF events. The recent snowfall is helping. The largest cohort not signing up is first time skiers. Suggestions included a value-added gift for first-time skiers and talking to training groups about the Birkie. Further noted that ABSF memberships are also down. A suggestion was made to combine the annual meeting with an event.
- Our next meeting is Monday January 26, 3PM, at Birkie Headquarters.
- **Motion** to adjourn: Duffy move. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 by acclamation.