

VAST Board of Directors – December 16, 2019 – Meeting Minutes

Approved at the January 27, 2020 Meeting

OFFICERS PRESENT:

President: Tim Mills
Vice President: Jeff Fay
Treasurer: Sonia Koehler
Secretary: Jim Hill

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Addison: Lewis Barnes
Bennington: Scott Westlake
Caledonia: Ken Gammell
Chittenden: Pat Poulin
Essex: Mike Daley
Franklin: Mike Burns
Grand Isle: Dave Ladd
Lamoille: Ellis O’Hear
Orange: Juliann Sherman
Orleans: Roger Gosselin
Rutland: Curt Marechaux
Washington: Mark Reaves
Windham: Drew Fraser
Windsor: Dick Jewett

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS PRESENT: Doug Jacobs, Windham County; Ivor Stevens, Windsor County.

STAFF PRESENT:

Executive Director: Cindy Locke
Trails Administrator: Matt Tetreault
Trails Manager: Ken Brown
Office Coordinator: Cyndy Carrier Brown

GUESTS PRESENT: Ed Hebebrand, Bent Spears, Angel Emmons, Summer Ladd.

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM.

Recognition of Visitors:

Approval of Agenda. Roger Gosselin moved to approve; Mark Reaves seconded; motion carried.

Cindy Locke - I would like to add an Executive Session to the Agenda.

Ken Gammell, I would like to add two items: 1) Lost TMAs and 2) LVRT.

Secretary’s Report: Curt Marechaux moved to approve; Lewis Barnes, seconded, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: A brief review of the Treasurer's report was presented.

Lewis Barnes moved to approve; Drew Fraser seconded; motion carried.

Old Business

LVRT

- Ken Brown – We have been contacted by the USDA; they have some funding available for grants.
- Possibly repair the two bridges between Cambridge and Sheldon that are currently bypassed on the trail.
- We hired an engineer to get a new assessment of those; they were looked at 10 years ago; and of course, they have gotten worse.
- There was just recently an outside person from St. Albans who wanted to run his own fundraiser.
- We have a few more donations coming in than we normally would have because of this.
- The USDA grants are more flexible than the VTrans ones. The biggest difference is they would be willing to do an isolated project like that.
- Cindy Locke – We had a committee meeting last week. There are some new members and some movement to fundraise on a local level.
- Hans is the vice chair of the committee; he volunteers on the LVRTC.
- He wrote up information to send to the towns to put this on the ballot for town meeting, for money for maintenance and to help build the trail.
- There has been some renewed interested in fundraising by some of the new members.

New Business

Halloween Storm Damage

- Cindy Locke – Matt and I have been working on this together. Bad storm which hit Lamoille, Orleans and Franklin County, with a little damage in Chittenden and Caledonia.
- We are trying to help clubs with the damages.
- Lowell Club – Bridge completely washed a mile down the trail. Steel was in the river.
- They were able to salvage the decking and use it to fix 3 other bridges.
- Money coming out of the Disaster Relief; some emergency money left over.
- There were some projects that had already been approved, but the damage became worse.
- Ken Brown – Lot of damage on the LVRT from that storm. Big washout in Hyde Park and a lot of the small washouts where the culverts got plugged. Surface got washed away. The state has enacted a part of the lease called force majeure, where they take over the trail back from us.
- So the State is responsible for the Halloween storm damage, not VAST.
- VTrans is expecting to get FEMA funding for it, but it is going slowly.
- Big washout on the LVRT and another one on the Mississquoi Valley Rail Trail were put out to bid; it's in the works.
- Estimate on LVRT damage is about \$2 million.

Law Enforcement Updates

- Cindy Locke – We have a Law Enforcement Committee and we have worked very hard this past summer to make the approach with law enforcement better, our dollars stretch further and make enforcement better.
- Really trying to mimic what the Southern VT Task Force does because they do it very well.
- During the course of this, we were approached by F&W who offered to manage that for us.
- As far as being dispatched to regional offices, they would be the ones to contact the sheriffs and state police.
- We have an MOU with F&W so far.
- We had a meeting with State Police and they have some concerns.

- We have lost some sheriffs associations.
- This will allow us to redirect some funding to other areas that will use it better.
- Orleans County sheriff is retiring and they are not interested in patrolling, so we are contracting with Essex County to cover Orleans.
- There is also the Newport Police Department; they are interested in doing some of this.
- If you have a local police department that would like to be trained and be a part of this program, let me know.
- We want to get away from just doing safety checks.
- We want some night patrols, looking for unregistered sleds, TMA violations, corridor patrols.
- We will re-evaluate during the winter; as the snow changes, etc.
- We have talked to all the groups individually and will get all groups in for a meeting to go over details.
- The Sheriff's contracts have been sent.
- The budget for law enforcement for VAST for a year is \$102,000 and it comes out of the SSTP money.
- It is money that is mandated by the State that that money has to go to law enforcement and has to stay within law enforcement. It can't be used for anything else.

Equipment Grant Request Policy

Dick Jewett – In support of our Trails Committee, I'd like to make a motion to approve the Trails Committee recommendation made in the meeting minutes dated 12.9.19 under the heading "Equipment Policy Change – Grooming Drags". The committee has met twice on this and I think we should go with their recommendation.

Mark Reaves seconded; motion carried.

- Matt Tetreault – We thought there was some confusion at the board level, so I guess our intent was to have a better understanding of it. This is the exact same proposal that was rejected two months ago; nothing has changed.
- Jeff Fay – We are going with the 35% – 50%. The minimum allows the clubs that are applying to use a baseline figure where they know they will get at least 35%. The 50% is where we are at now, but with limited funding
- Matt tries to maximum the purchase of equipment with the allocated funds that he has. So, by adjusting the percentage he can usually get one club a drag, that wouldn't probably normally get a drag. This year, that club probably wasn't going to get a drag, if Matt stuck to the actual policy (policy was not broken).
- Matt Tetreault – This gives everyone a minimum. If you are applying for a drag, you can base your payments off the minimum 35%, and they might get more. He may not approve all the requests.
- Jeff Fay – Once Matt has decided which ones will be approved, those approved grants will all be for the same percentage., i.e., 8 drags all at 40%.
- On the lesser percentage this year, this was discussed 3 months ago at the Trails Committee meeting, and they were fine with the lesser percentage. It was a grey area, and that's why this came up.
- There was also discussion about budgeting for 4 or 5 drags a year and that would be it. But, with a 100 plus drags/contracts being out there, it would take us forever to get them all done.

Lost TMAs

- Ken Gammell - I have 32 lost TMAs from last year. We had a person doing our TMAs, and the person and her husband got a divorce. He was a member of our club, so things got complicated. She held the paperwork and TMAs for quite some time. Finally, she dropped them off. In order for us to get our TMAs this year, we had to pay ahead \$5,106 to get them, because of these "lost" tmas.
- I am asking if the Board would be willing to pay us back our \$5,106 for these 32 tmas. Our club doesn't have a lot of money now. This person also broke up the relationship with a few of our people that used to sell for our club. We are working with those people to see if they will sell for us again.

Mark Reaves moved to approve to refund Caledonia County Snowmobile Trail Club the amount of \$5,106; Roger Gosselin seconded; motion carried.

- Cindy Locke – We need to get in touch with our accounting firm to see how to refund the money, because the lost TMAs were from last year.

Please note that more information has come available. We will be expecting a new motion and resolution from the Board of Directors at the January meeting.

Mike Burns – Nay.

Committee Reports

Northeast Chapter

- Pat Poulin – We did have a meeting. Spring ride will be held in Island Pond this year.
- Directors are all welcome, let Cindy know if you want to attend.
- The dates are March 18, 19, 20 and the meeting is on the 21st.
- Possibly riding into NH as well.
- USAA did have a conference call at the Las Vegas meeting. We did approve the bylaw change to add non-member states.
- Basically the majority of the Canadian provinces want to join.
- We put a nominal fee of \$50, the membership fee is \$500.

Annual Meeting

- Scott Westlake – I did meet with people from some clubs and have delegated out some projects.
- We have narrowed it down to a few places, but need to check availability.

Governor's Council

Pat Poulin – We did meet; we have a lot of work to do with all the changes in the contracts.

Executive Session

Cindy Locke – To include directors, alternates, officers and VAST staff – not Cyndy.

Lewis Barnes moved to approve; (I will have to find out who the second was).

Mark Reaves moved to come out of Executive Session; Roger Gosselin seconded; motion carried.

No action was taken.

Curt Marechaux moved to adjourn; Pat Poulin seconded, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.