



SNOWMOBILE VERMONT

**Board of Directors
March 25, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

OFFICERS PRESENT

President, Jeff Fay

Vice President, Mark Reaves

Secretary, Ruth Halpin

Treasurer, Patty Companik

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Addison: Lewis Barnes

Bennington: Carol DeJohn

Caledonia: Bruce Carlson

Chittenden: Pat Poulin

Essex: John Hull

Franklin: Mike Burns

Grand Isle: Jeff Porter (Not Present)

Lamoille: Dustin Turner

Orange: Juliann Sherman

Orleans: Roger Gosselin

Rutland: Mike Stewart

Washington: Jeff Halpin

Windham: Michael Garber

Windsor: Doug Jacobs

STAFF PRESENT:

Executive Director: Cindy Locke

Trails Administrator: Matthew Tetreault

Office & Programs Manager: Mandy Dwinell

Technology & Media Manager: Beth Flint

Office & Programs Assistant: Tina Bedard

GUESTS:

Ivor Stevens, Windham County Alt. Director, Ed Hebebrand, Caledonia County Alt. Director; Greg Rouleau, Washington County Alt. Director, Stan Choiniere, Windsor County Alt Director.

President Jeff Fay called the meeting to order at 6pm

Approval of Agenda

Addison County moved and Lamoille County seconded, to approve the Agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Adenium to agenda to include adding Waterbury Suspension Bridge to Old Business. Under New Business, TMA Update is to be included with the ED Report and National Volunteer Week moved to April's Agenda.

Secretary's Report

Chittenden County: Motion to approve, Franklin County seconded to approve Secretary's Report.
MOTION CARRIED.

Treasurer's Report

Data thru February 2024 - 5 months into our Fiscal Year - ~42% of FY

	Feb-21	Feb-22	Feb-23	Feb-24	Feb 2024 w/o \$10	
						<i>Mrbrshp Income w/o \$10 increase The \$5.00 is included since it is reflected in prior data trckg per yr</i>
						<i>\$10 per TMA estimated</i>
Membership \$\$						
Budget	\$2,481,915	\$2,478,385	\$2,767,295	\$2,767,295	\$2,767,295	
MONTHLY activity	\$420,881	\$228,762	\$170,959	116,546	\$104,871	\$11,675
Season So far	\$2,757,664	\$2,725,939	\$2,329,143	2,292,634	\$2,123,519	\$169,115
	\$275,749	\$247,554	-\$438,152	-\$474,661	-\$643,776	
percentage	111.11%	109.99%	84.17%	83%	77%	
	Feb-21	Feb-22	Feb-23	Feb-24	Feb 2024 w/o \$10	
Income \$\$						
Budget	\$3,255,180	\$3,310,443	\$3,436,342	\$3,586,956	\$3,586,956	
MONTHLY activity	\$450,563	\$252,735	\$199,625	318,103	\$306,428	
Season so far	\$3,001,612	\$3,002,994	\$2,803,938	2,835,667	\$2,666,552	
	-\$253,568	-\$307,449	-\$632,404	-\$751,289	-\$920,404	
percentage	92.21%	90.71%	81.60%	79%	74%	

Membership - February 2024

Increase of \$10.00 per TMA implemented this Season.

~116,546 Membership Income Activity for February/ 83% of budget expectations
(WITH \$10 increase included)

77% year over year comparison (WITHOUT \$10 included) which is about 7% less than last season at this time (or 2,329,143-2,123,519=205,624 less)

Data Reference: NSB-Trails Special Reserve Acct - \$256,235 (5.00 & 10.00 per TMA sold) x 66% = \$169,115 Season

Oct: \$11,101 Nov: \$38,336 Dec: \$91,964 Jan: \$20,002 Feb: 11,675

Income - February 2024

~318k Income - of which ~116k was from Membership (includes \$10.00 TMA Increase funds) and ~156k in RTP grooming grants

We are 79% of Expected Income Budget (includes the \$10 increase) - about 2% less than last season at this time

74% year over year comparison (w/o the \$10 included) - or 7% less than last season at this time

Expense - February 2024

Monthly Expenses of ~\$170k of which ~\$82k is in Trails of which ~\$74k was in Grooming payments and ~\$62k in Salaries/Benefits

We are at 42% of our fiscal year and 47% of Expense Budget has been utilized

Review of % spent for expenses - a few areas to watch:

GF: Office Supplies ~90%, Advertising 67%, PR&Mktg Supplies ~72%,
Equipment - Computers ~127% (over but a small number)

A few line items OVER budget are listed below.

Sharing Grooming line item as an FYI Only - not a budget concern.

GENERAL FUND

ACCT NO	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET	MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	BUDGET BALANCE	% RECEI'D/USED
PR & MARKETING						
8100/1004	VAST Promo Items	3,000.00	0.00	6,010.20	(3,010.20)	200.34
8100/1005	PR Travel Expenses	1,500.00	0.00	5,594.85	(4,094.85)	372.99
8100/1013	Safety Program	2,000.00	0.00	3,037.96	(1,037.96)	151.90

TRAILS FUND

ACCT NO	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET	MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	BUDGET BALAN	%REC'D SED
8300/2011	Grooming	1,418,000.00	74,522.03	733,891.21	684,108.79	51.76

	2020 Season Final	2021 Season Final	2022 Season Final	2023 Season Final	Feb-24
Trails Encumbered					
Budget	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$550,000	\$554,170	\$554,170
MONTHLY ACTIVITY					\$67,483
Season so far	\$363,721	\$434,560	\$501,293	\$583,721	\$318,535
8310/2010 Trail Construction		\$100,764	\$157,804	\$223,860	\$3,164
8310/2010a Trail Maintenance		\$283,450	\$268,248	\$303,654	\$64,319
8310/2021 Trails Emergency Fund		\$24,895	\$45,556	\$26,499	\$0
8310/2027 Trail Debrushing		\$26,942	\$29,686	\$29,708	\$0
8310/2030 Next Year's Trails Projects		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Flood Relief Trail Work	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Budget	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
MONTHLY Project Expenses 8310/2010b	\$16,044	\$91,518	\$150,784	\$109,968	\$9,003
Season So Far	\$16,044	\$107,563	\$258,348	\$368,316	\$377,319
Percentage of Budget Utilized	2.14%	14.34%	34.45%	49.11%	50.31%
BALANCE	\$733,956	\$642,437	\$491,652	\$381,684	\$372,681

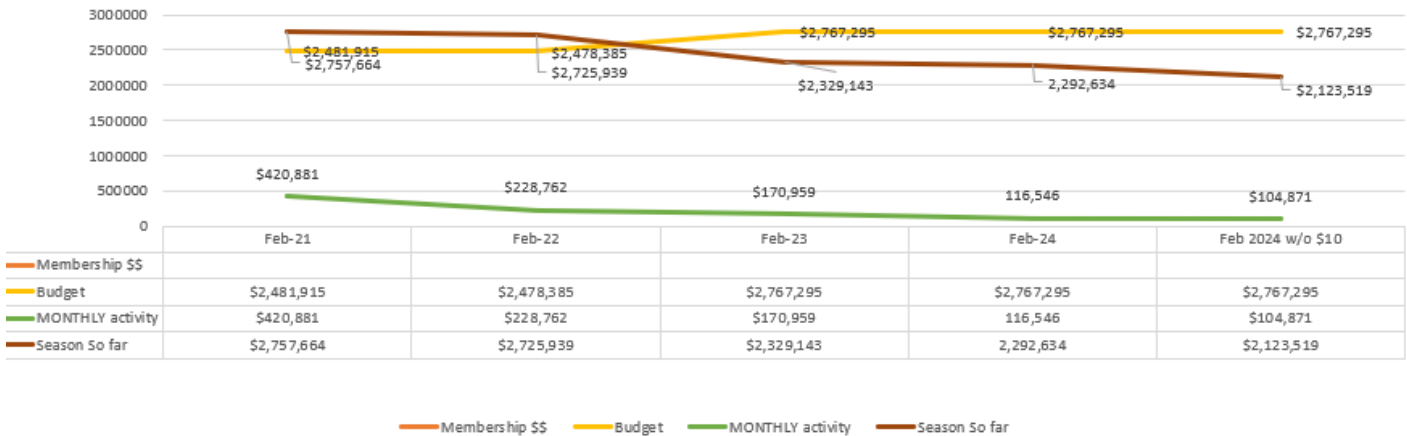
Trail Projects - February 2024

Regular Season Projects for February: \$67,483
Regular Season Projects for the Season so far: \$318,535

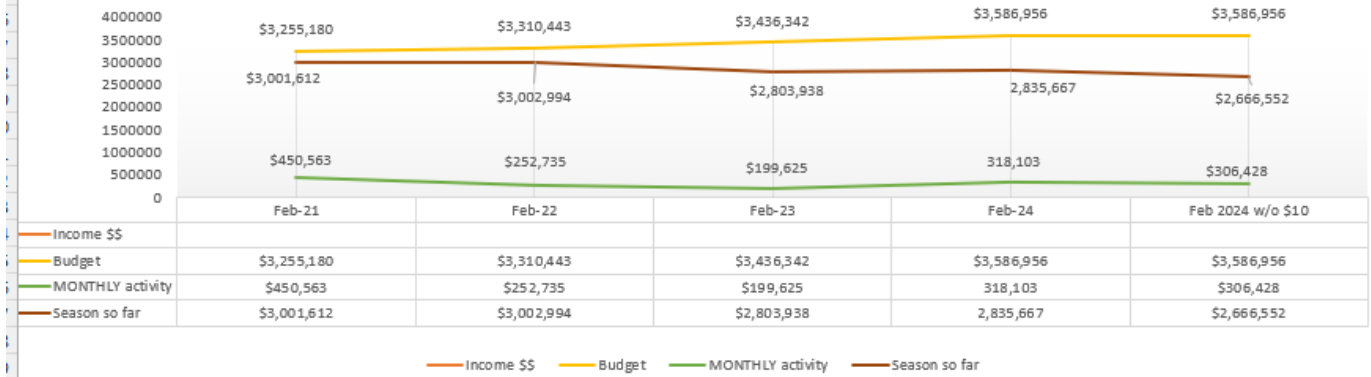
Flood Relief Projects for February: \$9,003
Flood Relief Projects for the Season so far: \$372,681

TOTAL: \$691,196 paid for Reg & Flood projects (\$318k + 372k) for the Season so far

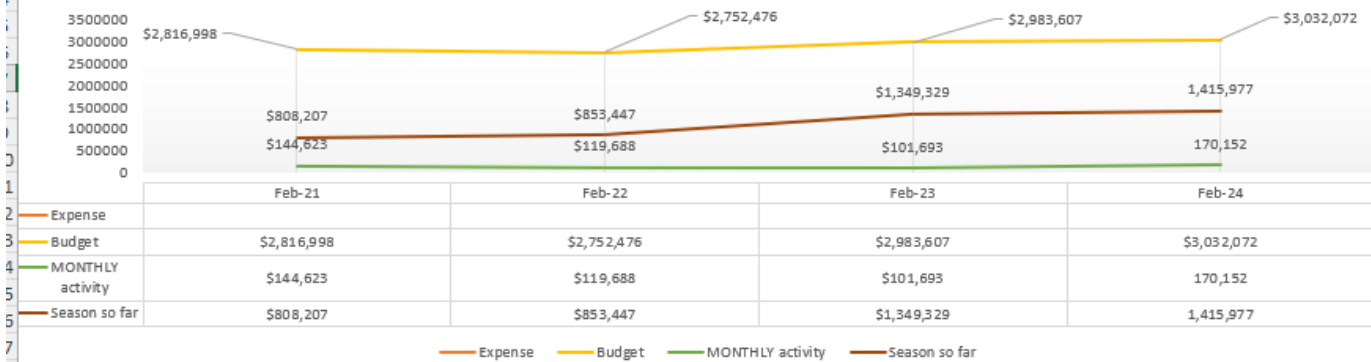
February 2021, 22, 23, 24 with and without \$10 increase: Membership



February 2021, 22, 23, 24 with and without \$10 increase: Income



February 2021, 22, 23, 24: Expenses



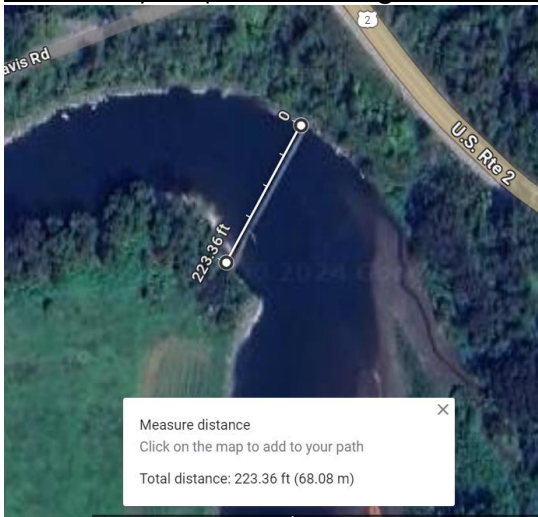
Essex County: Motion to approve, Windsor County seconded to approve Treasurer's Report. MOTION CARRIED.

TABLED ITEMS

Nothing new to report.

Old Business

Waterbury Suspension Bridge, Jeff Halpin



Jeff Halpin recently met with the Green Mtn Roamers Club regarding the Waterbury Suspension Bridge and its safety concerns.

Discussion on the proposed creation of an Informational Working Group to include members of the BOD, clubs, and VAST staff to focus on the Waterbury Suspension Bridge as well as for BOD to allocate up to \$5k from the flood relief funds for the bridge project.

Discussion on the liability concerns of the bridge.

Discussion on evaluating the potential required permits and resources.

Discussion on potential timeframe limitations for any work to be performed in connections to rivers and streams from July to October 1, there may be additional stipulations due to the July 23, 2023 flooding.

Discussion that the Waterbury Suspension Bridge is located on private property.

Discussion on a recommendation to connect with ANR for insight on regulations and policies.

Bridge is 92' from bank to bank.

Discussion on if the project has been submitted to an Arborist. An abbreviated project was submitted to VAST and was denied due to cost. VAST did submit the project to FEMA and was denied.

Discussion on an FRP and actual estimate be presented to the BOD prior to any funds being released for the project with clarification on the breakdown of the allocation of funds.

Discussion if the BOD would permit a vote via email regarding requesting potential funds. BOD is receptive to doing so if needed.

Discussion that VAST is responsible for the liability of the bridge.

Discussion of next steps to connect with Arborist via email and Zoom to gather more information and costs.

Discussion on whether there's a difference between the removal of trees and lumber, trees have been lodged under the bridge in addition to the decking lumber may be questionable.

Discussion of overall bridge condition, abutments, and towers on the banks. The bridge would need further evaluation to determine conditions.

Matt emailing the most recent evaluations from DeWolf from 2018 to the BOD.

Discussion on potential phases of the creation of the group and project.

Discussion to send a grant application request for removal of the bridge debris to Matt at VAST.

Discussion on adding the topic of the Waterbury Suspension Bridge to future BOD meeting agenda for the foreseeable future.

Washington County: Motion to approve, Windsor County seconded to approve the formation of the Informational Working Group to move forward with gathering information and reporting back to the BOD. MOTION CARRIED.

Email Jeff Halpin if interested in joining the Informational Working Group.

NEW BUSINESS

LVRT "loan" funding off VAST books: Cindy

When VAST started working on the LVRT it extended a loan to LVRT, with the hope to receive funds in kind.

As of March 25, 2024, the loan amount is \$851,331.10.

Discussion that currently the loan is showing as an asset, and whether it was considered an asset and it would be offset on a balance sheet. Will ask VAST Finance Manager and reconnect to BOD.

Washington County: Motion to approve, Essex County seconded to approve to forgive the loan to LVRT from VAST to start the LVRT. MOTION CARRIED.

Letter from Mt Holly Club: Cindy, Matt & Jeff

VAST received letters from clubs regarding Track Inc/Tucker and asked for them to be shared with the BOD.

Discussion on prior equipment delays with Tucker equipment due to track shortage, some delays of up to 3 years. Increased frustration from clubs on the delays. Matt with VAST spoke with Tucker's President, Marcus.

Discussion on whether there are any options as an association on if we can discontinue approval for Tucker requests and redirect to an alternate manufacturer. VAST has limitations on minimizing the club's options.

Discussion on if clubs are displeased and frustrated with a manufacturer to send a letter to VAST and VAST can connect with the manufacturer.

Currently, there are an estimated of 40 Truckers in the VAST fleet.

Over the last 5 years estimate there have been 5-7 Tuckers processed by VAST grant system at \$280k-\$300k each.

Discussion there are proprietary rights with the rubber tracks. Metal tracks seem to be more able to be replaced in a reasonable timeframe.

Rutland County shared that 3 clubs within the county are having to switch from Tucker, as they ordered tracks 3 years ago and haven't received the tracks. At the time they were \$9k/each, the current cost is an estimated \$10,200/each.

Tucker shared they experienced a staff shortage during COVID which has caused delays.

Discussion trail grooming is low on Track Inc/Tucker priority list, as they've shared it is less than 10% of their actual production.

Lamoille County Director had an email from Track Inc/Tucker dated January 9, 2024, shared with him by a volunteer with pricing information. BOD asked the director to share the email.

Discussion on feedback from clubs of inconsistency on the pricing structure for equipment from Track Inc/Tucker.

Orleans County submitting a letter of support for Tucker and mentioned inconsistency in pricing may be due to a club's volume of business with the manufacturer.

Orleans County shared that the Drift Dusters ordered an extra track from Track Inc/Tucker and if a club is in an emergent need in the Fall to contact the club.

National Volunteer Week: Patty

Item moved to the April BOD Agenda.

Trails Committee Motion: John & Matt

At the March 2024 meeting the Trails Committee discussed concerns with the online Snowmobile Safety Course. Motion made to address the online safety course to be brought to the BOD to see if the format of class can go back to in-person and eliminate the online course option.

Discussion on an apparent increase in accidents due to an increase in the number of inexperienced riders.

Discussion on some aspects of the safety course is missed when it's presented in an online format.

Discussion If VT were to eliminate the online course option, the reciprocated safety course from other states may be taken as an alternative option. NH includes an estimated 50% of their subject topics based on ATVs for their online course.

VSP handles VT Safety education for Snowmobile Safety Course and VAST supplies the materials.

As of March 25, 2024, VSP reported 786 online participants and 83 in-person participants have completed the Snowmobile Safety Course. A trend with attendance tends to follow weather.

Discussion on the variations of information and material a participant may receive online vs in-person as online is by a 3rd party, not VT-focused or includes information on VAST. VSP includes information on VT laws. A class should be 6-hours, social media posts seen of participants completing online within 2 hours.

Jake with VSP seeking feedback from clubs on areas to modify and improve the online course. Jake shared that the VT online boating course allows an interactive aspect where students make choices and almost create their individualized adventure story.

Discussion on it being positive for VSP to be receptive to reviewing online course for updates.

VAST to reach out to Jake with VSP for a link to the online Snowmobile Safety Course and will share with BOD.

Discussion on potentially adding a ½ hour introduction at the beginning on VAST, clubs, and volunteering. The Governor's Council and Safety Committee will connect on topics.

Trails Administrator's / ED Report – Cindy

Reviewing End of year projects and FY25 Budget.

Working with VAST staff to review job descriptions.

63 TMAs sold since March 11, 2024 – a combination of full season and 3-day.

Committee and Other Meeting Reports

American Outdoor Risk Retention Group (AORRG) Insurance – Mark

Pat Poulin is stepping down from AORRG, appreciation for his hard work with the committee. If someone is interested in joining the AORRG Committee contact Mark or Cindy.

Cindy attending Captive Insurance on March 27 in Burlington.

Northeast Chapter and USA – Pat Poulin, Jeff Fay as VT Representatives

USA: No quorum at the last meeting.

Colorado testing a snow depth device for avalanches that connects to a cellphone via Bluetooth, will reconnect with more information.

Northeast Chapter: Scholarship applications are due April 15.

VT Snow Trails Conservancy (VSTC) – Cindy

No recent meeting.

Law Enforcement (LE) Committee – Cindy

Emailed LE on Friday, March 22 that some trails may re-open over the weekend due to the incoming snowstorm.

Awards & Nominating – Patty Companik, Chair

Scholarships

15 applications were submitted!

Committee reviewing and rating applications - 7 different categories are scored.

Committee to complete reviews and scoring by March 29th

NEC scholarship deadline is April 15 - Patty will submit our top-scoring applicant.

Patty thinks an increase in the scholarship (\$1500 to \$2500) and the communication reminders Mandy did for the committee via eNews and FB postings - resulted in a good number of applications sent in this year!

GPA requirement question was asked of the committee: The committee discussed and decided to leave the language as is "upon successful completion" of their first semester of study.

Nominations

All current VAST officers have confirmed they are seeking re-election.

Patty sent the BOD an email notice regarding this on March 4 and let folks know they can let their clubs know if others are interested, they can send in the notice. Amber Stevens is our committee contact for anyone with interest.

Post March 15th through mid-August – new candidates – notify Amber (copy Patty if you are comfortable doing so). The VAST eNews communication will be utilized to notify the membership.

Awards & Recognition

Patty sent Beth a summary for the next magazine publication - scheduled for mid-April

The committee decided to utilize eNews - with a ONE topic-only communication. Patty and Mandy worked together on this - it will be distributed on April 2.

Mandy will also continue to mention in regular eNews distributions (started early March)

The committee reviewed and made minor changes to the "individual" award nomination forms - Patty updated them and Beth updated them on the VAST website.

Nominations are due May 1 - The committee is meeting in early June to review and select award recipients.

By-Laws & Policy – Mark Reaves, Chair

Meeting within the next month or so.

Annual Meeting – Ivor Stevens

Planning is going well, working on organizing the event.

Executive Committee – Jeff Fay, President

Did not meet this month.

Finance - Patty Companik, Chair

Patty, Cindy & Sheila meeting on Monday April 1

April 15 Meeting scheduled - review current and projection of expenses.

May 22 Meeting scheduled - 2025 budget focus.

Ongoing review of budget Income & Expenses – created a summary & trend reports which is shared monthly at the BOD meeting.

If there is anything additional information the Board would like to see - please let Patty know.

Continue to do a weekly review and approval of Expenses - expenses questioned as warranted for clarification.

Long Range Planning & Organizational Committee – Mark Reaves, Chair

Met a few weeks ago, next meeting March 28.

Working on building an agenda for the July BOD meeting day on the topic of resiliency: trail, organizational, and improving better trail access.

Resource Committee

Not active.

Trails Committee

Covered earlier in the meeting.

Safety Committee – Stan Choiniere

Met in March.

Working on continuing the Ride Right safety message and expanding on the awareness of e911 calling.

In the meeting discussed limited LE patrols due to weather, Safety: 3 words, and upcoming changes for the VAST sign shop.

Safety features have been included in the VAST eNews.

A snowmobile accident today in Lewis, LE was on the scene.

Governor's Council – Pat Poulin

Met on March 6.

DMV shared that as of March 1, there were 18,165 registrations which is down 500-600 from last year. Will discuss the online Snowmobile Safety Course at the April meeting.

Discussion on the definition of a snowmobile and on if an ATV/SXS would qualify for a TMA. The definition was clarified as requiring skis, track, an exhaust system with a snowmobile exhaust system, and a width restriction of 48".

Discussion on liability protection and SOV statutes.

Discussion on the prior 20-mile pilot in the Derby area years ago, open to revisiting a new pilot program in the future.

Discussion-tracked ATV/SXS can be used on the VAST trails for trail work purposes only if used on Class 3 roads and is permitted by the landowner.

Discussion that tracked ATV/SXS can operate on limited snow and may create issues on keeping the machines off trails when closed, as well as concerns on speed.

Discussion on guardrail bridges, and how they may be a viable option for some situations, there are guardrail bridges located throughout VT.

David Nerf may be relocating and stepping away from work with guardrail bridges.

Michael Garber shared that Deerfield Valley Stump Jumpers has had success with guardrail bridges on bridges 35' or smaller. Can have difficulty finding guardrails, but has had some luck finding them in CT.

Motion to adjourn Windsor County moved to approve; Chittenden County seconded to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Halpin, Secretary

*Addendum to Meeting Minutes: The Waterbury Suspension Bridge is 233', that doesn't include the access ramps on either end.