

VASA Board of Director Minute  
December 9, 2024  
VASA HQ

Chris Putney calls the meeting to order at 6:07 pm

## **Roll Call**

**BOD Present:** Ray Blakeney, Brian Benoit, Tom Nazzewski, George Barton, Steve Bean, Vern Stone, Chris Putney, Doug Stone, Melissa LaBounty, Bill Huff

## **BOD Present Online:**

Ken Wetherell, Ian MacKenzie, Spencer Leggett, Chris Hill, Mark Carpenter, Matt Frechette, Fred Elliott, Doug Wheeler

Staff (Non-voting) present: Tommy O'Connor, Jeremy Sneed, Ethan Hill, Erik Moreau and Gordon Pirie

Chris mentions that we don't have enough people for a quorum so we will not be able to vote on anything tonight but we will still hold the meeting.

## **Secretary's Report:**

-are there any additions or corrections to the report?

-Bill Huff mentioned via email to me that he was not included on the present list for October, the report needs to be corrected to add him.

## **Treasurer's report:**

-Bill goes over the reports briefly, mentioning that there is a new one that shows activity to date and then a breakdown of state and non-state. However, including this info makes the report a little wider and when it prints it is smaller and hard to read.

**-Another BOD member joins online & Chris mentions that we now have enough people for a quorum.**

-A motion is made by George Barton to approve the Treasurer's report, seconded by Brian Benoit, approved by all, none opposed, motion carries.

Chris Putney mentions that we will need a motion to approve the Secretary's report as corrected to add Bill Huff as present, Tom Nazzewski makes a motion, seconded by George Barton, approved by all, none opposed, motion carries.

## **Staff Reports-**

Tommy starts by introducing an idea that came up in discussion with the office staff. They are trying to find ways to continually recognize Clubs for work that is done & recognize BOD members. Four categories of awards are presented: Best VASA Club Event (West Rutland),

Best Trail Overlook (Central Vt Quad), Largest growing Club (Stanford Ridge Riders) and Board Member of the Year (Tom Nazzewski).

### **Office Manager - Erik Moreau:**

-2024 ends with 5704 members, slightly lower than 2023's number of 5828. Averages are very similar, average age is 51, average age of machine is 2018. 73% from Vermont, 8% from Connecticut, 6% from Massachusetts, 5% from New Hampshire, 5% from New York and less than 1% from Maine. We collected \$17,000 in donations. The current system shows "field bottlenecks" which are an indication as to how many people logged and then quit or stopped the process, 75% of the attempts actually became members. The new Contact Relationship Manager (CRM) system is going to be money well spent that will eliminate some of the issues causing people to quit the process. The new stickers have arrived, they do not have any numbers other than having the year 2025 on it. The grace period on the temporary TAD will be 10 days and not 15 days. The discounts on multiple machines will be based on the machine registration so the TAD will have to be in the same person's name.

### **Trails Coordinator - Ethan Hill:**

**VTMP Updates;** The trails team has wrapped up maintenance for the season and all equipment is either back at the VASA office or being stored at David's house under cover. They finished the year up doing a small project for TVW. The RTP project in Hardwick was not finished due to weather conditions and the town's loader being broken and will hopefully be resumed in the spring. They will continue to work with the town to get some wood cut out of the ROW as well.

**Equipment:** All equipment will be going through the shop this winter for repairs and preventative maintenance. The C50R Track Truck is currently in for repairs on the hydraulic system. Ethan will continue to update BOD as repairs progress.

**GRANTS: RTP-** The office staff is working to close out the Lowell Windtower and Sutton Powerline projects. An extension was received on the Wright Farm Rd in Hardwick RTP to the 2025 season. This year's round of RTP's will be for the purchase of a new equipment trailer, NOHVCC Great Trails Workshop (hopefully to be scheduled in August of 2025) and a ROW project with Mike Smith from SRR. Ethan has opted to not submit trail maintenance projects though RTP this year due to our commitments with VOREC grants in the 2025 season. Clubs should take some time this winter to get in any trail maintenance applications they will need for the 2025 season. The sooner they are received the better the plan will be for 2025. Landowner permission forms should be a part of this process too. **VASA POLICY STATES THAT LANDOWNER PERMISSION FORMS MUST BE UPDATED AT LEAST EVERY 3 YEARS.** This helps to maintain a good line of communication between clubs and landowners. There is a new version of the landowner permission form that covers easements on the landowners property that we need to be aware of. Please use the new form found on the VASA website. He is willing to send the form via email if necessary. He thinks that Clubs should look into purchasing a Laptop to organize and keep track of all the stuff they are required to track.

### **Executive Directors report:**

Tommy mentions that Ethan was nominated to the VOREC board, Private Lands Rep.

There were many meetings in the past months.

-He met with Ken from CATT at the VASA office to begin working on the SOS and IRS filing work for their club. His offer is still available to clubs to meet at the office and work through this process to update your clubs IRS & SOS standings.

-On the 19th, he was at the Statehouse meeting with VTGC chair Nick Bennette, VTGC lobbyist Jill Sudhoff-Guerin, Kingdom Trail Exec, Director Abby Long and Representative Mnarcoette to discuss a few items:

- Landowner Recognition opportunities
- Ways to support people that allow publicly accessible trails on private land

This stems from a couple of places, a court battle in Tunbridge that is stirring the pot and a call from several recreational associations wanting to better support their landowners. The discussions were a beginning to look at what opportunities are out there and how they can be implemented in the future.

Other discussions were looking over a new Outdoor Recreation Bill that focuses on the Economic impact of recreation in Vermont. The recent GDP statistics place Vermont 2nd in the nation behind Hawaii in how much recreation feeds its GDP. The issue at hand is that the statistics and exact numbers are not known and the legislature is looking to break down the numbers by recreational opportunity. The other set of numbers of interest is the “unknown” numbers. Those include the hotel / air bnb reservations, families that move to Vermont, as well as families that choose to engage in other recreational activities etc. Tommy feels that these discussions are important and will likely lead to improving the capabilities of outdoor recreation, even though the legislature may have different priorities in 2025 and they may not be dealt with until 2026.

-Vasa just secured funding (\$10,000) from Polaris from their trails program. The funding is going towards improving signage on our systems to improve rider accessibility, the safety of our riders, and updating networks that need support.

-The office has been working on submitting RTP grants for 2025 / 2026. All updates will be made after the new year.

-For 2025, the office staff have been working on several campaigns and projects to improve the riding capabilities across VASA. The campaigns & programs will focus on growing memberships and partnering with industry professionals across the country. The goal is to be the ideal spot for ATV and SXS riding in the region. Some of the growth areas include partnerships with a few clubs out of Canada and joining up for some common riding events.

-Another potential event in 2025 is a New England regional meeting of Off-Highway clubs. We are working with a team from Maine to begin conversations to bring our regional associations, leaders and industry specialists together for a mini-conference to work out regional based issues and work to build better networking opportunities when we need to reach out to associations like ours.

### **Additional Business:**

- **Mileage checks** - Chris mentions that VASA is currently paying the Fed rate for mileage reimbursement and not the non-profit rate (67 cents vs 14 cents). We

are essentially overpaying for mileage. Something we should be thinking about, do we want to change it?

- **Annual meeting discussion** - Westshire and Northwest VT Wheelers have shown an interest in hosting. Do we want to set Westshire as the 2025 host and Northwest as the host in 2026?
  - Motion made to set 2025 & 2026 annual meeting hosts (as stated above) by Vern Stone, seconded by George Barton, approved by all, motion carries.
- **Meeting RSVP discussion / winter meetings** - Still struggling with getting people to RSVP & meeting quorum. Do we want to make them virtual? Only requiring E-board & office staff to be in person? How do we get people to attend meetings? RSVP's for the meeting need to be done!
  - It was decided to continue meeting in person

A motion was made to adjourn by Steve Bean, seconded by Brian Benoit, meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.