

VASA Board of Director Minutes  
September 11, 2023  
VASA HQ

Chris Putney calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

## **Roll Call**

**BOD Present:** Ray Blakeney, Gordon Prie, Ken Wetherell, Robbie Perdue, Chris Hill, Tim Joyal, Tom Nazzewski, Steve Bean, Mike Small, Lloyd MacCormack, Fred Elliot, Bill Huff, Chris Putney, Lloyd Church, Judy MacCormack, Melissa LaBounty & Doug Stone

**BOD Present Online:** Bart Howes, Laura Champagne, Cathay Keller, George Barton, Mike Coleman & Spencer Leggett

Staff (Non-voting) present: Tommy O'Connor, Carson Anderson, Ethan Hill & Jim Dwinell

**Secretary's Report:** It is asked if there are any additions or corrections to the report; Tom Nazzewski states that under other business, the second line in reference to Jess Tatro should be corrected to say, "She is a certified school teacher in Massachusetts and now a VASA safety instructor in Vermont.". Chris Hill made a motion to accept the Secretary's report with the correction, seconded by Ken Wetherell. All in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

**Treasurer's report:** It is asked if there are any questions. Ken Wetherell asked if these reports have changed any since the new Executive Board has been elected or if it is too soon to notice a change. Question asked - why are credit card statements not included? Chris states that Carson has them available for all to look at, just trying to reduce the number of pages in the packet (cut down on expenses). Chris has personally reviewed them and states there was nothing out of the ordinary for transactions. The plan is to have them available in a book for all board members to review prior to meeting. Second question - do they all get a back-up receipt for their expenses? Yes, they do. Fred Elliot makes a motion to accept the report, seconded by Ken Wetherell, All in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

## **Staff Reports-**

**Directors Consultant:** TAD sales have not changed a lot since the report was submitted, however, they do continue to come in. The club only numbers have changed but that is due to a manual input correction that Jim missed doing all the way to the end last time so the numbers moved more than they normally would to get shoved around. Tommy & Jim had a zoom call to get more info about a software that VAST uses to do all their background stuff & reporting. Jim met with Beth who uses it for VAST and learned that as a non-profit that there is a way, we could potentially get it for free. He is hoping to receive more demo stuff to review it. Jim is looking to update the tools that VASA uses.

**Trails Coordinator:** BTW was finished with 3 jobs completed (all work put out since flooding). TVW was finished with 3 jobs complete, NEKW has 1 job completed with more work to do when he gets back there which was today. We will have started the NFF (National Forest Foundation) grant project for SRR when this report is out. His plan is to finish off the year by completing SRR, finish up with SVTR and TCATV trails which will probably put him into February of 2024 (all is weather permitting). Included in this report is a copy of last year's closing dates, please review your clubs for accuracy and update if necessary for 2024 riding season. If I did not get to your application for trail work (I'm sorry). Your application will be moved into next year's folder. Please submit the work you need done for 2024 ASAP while you still have time to evaluate your trail condition so that I can plan for 2024. **Grant updates:** NFF is currently being executed. I did hear back from the RTP grant for the Wright Farm Project in Hardwick, just need to find the time to do that at some point. **Equipment updates:** I will be installing a new windshield in the ASV, a new track needs to be put on the excavator and seeking funds to order a replacement trailer for David. The box trailer is for sale with a asking price of \$9,000. Since this report was released, he received word that the RTP grant may not get rid of but be more lenient on the "Buy America first act" so that equipment can be purchased with RTP grant money again. The trailer that he is looking to purchase would be a custom order one that could take up to 6 to 8 months to get after ordering. He is hoping to get that ordered soon and hopefully try to pay with RTP funds this winter but with the delays with RTP funds, we should have the money ready in case we have to buy it with our own money. The need for the trailer is now. They currently have to make additional trips to get equipment to jobs causing time delays in getting work done & additional costs in fuel, etc. Currently looking at a trailer from Lucky trailers, 30 ft, tri axle, galvanized, bumper tow hitch rated for heavier equipment, has a potential cost of \$18,000 to \$20,000. Lloyd asked about the longevity of this trailer that he is looking to purchase. Will the new trailer be one we have for many years to come? Yes, that is the plan. Ethan also is looking for potential options for winter storage of equipment if anyone knows of any local availability.

Ken Wetherell made a motion to order the trailer with a maximum cost of \$20,000, seconded by Tim Joyal. All in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

**Executive Directors report:** Since we last met, I have attended a few virtual webinars to grasp new ways that VASA and our landowners could potentially grow. The USDA is working on sending out these opportunities with the next round of funding (expecting late fall). The second webinar is later in September & will be focused on how to promote trails systems & their intrinsic benefits. Part 2 will be more geared towards Parks & Rec, and I will not be attending that one.

I participated in the Big E meeting and will be heading to the VT tourism booth on Sept 25th for the day.

Frank Stanley & I met with a part of the DMV team on the 28th of August. The conversation was a meet and greet as priority. We also worked on how we can build our relationship to work together in harmony. A lot of changes are going to be happening with the DMV going digital with the Registration process. They mentioned that ATV / UTV's will be the last to be changed,

hopefully by next summer. This will be something that we need to keep an eye on as it will affect how TADs are processed.

On Sept 7th, members of Fish & Game were at our office to meet with staff to discuss the work being done by the wardens. We voiced our concerns over warnings / ticketing to create a clearer plan & direction. We were told that this is not going to change. They are stretched so thin with half the capacity of employees that they need to function properly. They suggest calling your local game warden when you see issues.

Ethan expressed that he is not sure what we want to do at this point as he is frustrated with the response he got from Fish & Game at that meeting. However, we were still charged for 120 hours of service at \$8,000 last month. It is understood that they are short staffed, but it would be more effective if more tickets and less warnings were issued. It is giving violators the impression that it is not a big deal as they will just get a warning, which will eventually affect how our landowners feel. Ethan suggests that you introduce yourself to your local game warden and law enforcement. Get to know them, make a plan, and let them where the best spots are to set up law enforcement.

Ken Wetherell asked what the feasibility of VASA having their law enforcement would be. Ethan stated that the cost would outweigh the benefit.

**Tommy has submitted Trade Show Proposals that were included in the packet for the following:**

- The Yankee Sportsman's Classic from January 19th to 21st, 2024 (they reached out to us)
- New Hampshire Outdoor Expo from March 8th to 10th, 2024
- Springfield RV / Camping Outdoor Show from February 16th to 19th, 2024 (they reached out to us also)

Motion made by Chris Hill that we attend the Yankee Sportsman's classic, seconded by Steve Bean. All in favor, opposed none, motion carries.

Motion made by Chris Hill to attend the NH Outdoor Expo, seconded by Fred Elliot. Discussion opened... Can we afford this & is there a way to reduce mileage by using Bronco? Ethan says yes we can afford as he will not be attending the Utah event this year. What is our goal for attending these? Bill Huff suggests Yankee Classic, also that we come up with a plan on what we want to accomplish then branch out and go to more in the future. Jim expresses that going to these events is crucial to get out there and tell our story. All in favor - 3 votes, opposed 5, motion does not carry.

Motion made by Chris Hill that we attend the Springfield RV/Camping outdoor show, seconded by Ken Wetherell. Discussion opened... Mileage was questioned, asking if it was correct.

Tommy will look at it again & correct the numbers. All in favor -1, opposed 7. Motion does not carry. Lloyd MacCormack makes a motion to table the vote on the Springfield event so that a plan can be made to make it a worthwhile trip, seconded by Ken Wetherell. All in favor, opposed none, motion carries.

**Trail Access Decal (TAD) change proposal:**

The executive director and executive board have been working on a project to decide whether or not to outsource the TAD system process. The main objective was to either change the TAD

system and keep in house or to outsource the project based on the expenses. There is a continuous shift in the world to digitize everything and VASA needs to work on doing that whenever possible. The TAD process can be shifted to a fully digital process which will increase the speed of delivery of riding documents, decrease the spending to ship out TADs, cut the man hours worked during the TAD season, all while decreasing expenses. As mentioned earlier, the VT DMV is in the process of going fully digital.

Our 2023 TAD estimated cost will be \$24,487.25. We have contacted Rydin for outsourcing the project with them which will cost \$21,645.00 a year.

We then looked into changing the current TAD system and decided if the paper document was sent digitally, we use ride command (eliminating the paper map) and only mail the assigned TAD by mail, we could possibly reduce the cost of this project to approximately \$10,300.77 per year. The new process would reduce the number of man hours needed on the TAD end and eliminate all hours of work involved by the Trails Coordinator on the map end.

The Executive Board voted on 8/31/2023 to enhance the VASA TAD system to move to a digital process and to keep it in house.

We ask at this time for the approval of the Board of Directors to approve the same.

Ethan asked how many people actually use their paper maps? A few hands were raised. Fred Elliot stated that he used them for trailhead locations as he did not (until recently) know they were on Ride Command. Ethan expressed the importance that all clubs use the app and verify the accuracy of the info on it. Lloyd expressed the importance of having directions to get to trail heads. Fred Elliot proposed to have a certain amount printed and then have a check yes or no to get one when signing up in the TAD process. VASA currently has a good supply of maps from previous years.

Motion made by Bartholomew Hewes to do away with the paper map and go all digital with maps on Ride Command, Seconded by Chris Hill. All in favor, opposed none, motion carries.

Fred Elliot made a motion to move away from the current TAD process, seconded by Ken Wetherell. All in favor, opposed none, motion carries.

Bartholomew Hewes made a motion to go with the in-house, all digital option, seconded by Lloyd MacCormack. Fred Elliot asked if the cost would be higher because labor is not included. All would be different based on that aspect. All in favor, opposed none, motion carries.

#### **Ethan would like updates on all Club trails:**

Corrections made to the list. NWVW should be Oct 31st closing, SRR should be Oct 31st closing, TOW should be May 1st opening to Nov 1st closing, WATV should be closing Nov 30th, all other clubs acknowledged dates are accurate except for 6 clubs not in attendance.

#### **New Business:**

Tim Joyal of NWVW states that their officers have changed. Brian Benoit is the new President, Tim Cardy is Vice President and Secretary is Jay Potman. Cathy Keller will remain as their Treasurer.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Chris Hill, seconded by Fred Elliot, all in favor, none opposed, meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.