

VASA Board of Director Minute
August 12, 2024
VASA HQ

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

Roll Call

BOD Present: Maureen & Steve Mosher, Ray Blakeney, Gordon Pirie, Ken Wetherell, Ian MacKenzie, Jim Dwinell, Chris Hill, Brian Benoit, Jay Potvin, Mike Coleman, Tom Nazzewski, Steve Bean, Russ Stone, Chris Putney, Doug Stone, Bill Huff, Melissa LaBounty, Doug Wheeler

BOD Present Online:

Kurt Girard, Joe Pelkey, Spencer Leggett, Bartholomew Howes, Scott Boyce, Laura Champagne, Mike Small, Matt Frechette

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

Secretary's Report:

- are there any additions or corrections to the report?
- Mike Small mentioned via email that I listed Craig Warner was present at June's BOD meeting when it was actually Mike Small present. Brian Benoit mentions that he was also present but not listed on Secretary's minutes.
- Motion made to accept the report with corrections mentioned by Chris Hill, seconded by Steve Mosher, all in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

Treasurer's report:

- Bill Huff mentions that to the "best of his knowledge" that we are all up to date with the work being done by the accountant. Jeremy adds that yes minus some small categories that need to be switched up. Tommy adds that any expense that is on the State does not get refunded until the next month.
- Jeremy mentions that the \$40.00 of late fees seen on the Visa statement presented in June will be refunded on next months bill
- Chris Hill makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Russ Stone, all in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

Staff Reports-

Office Manager - Erik Moreau:

TAD sales are currently up to 5344 which is 180 short from the final number sold in 2023. The new phone system is up and running well. He mentions the customer service and general questions selection numbers goes to him. He is working on a Fall Campaign flyer to boost sales

and increase numbers. If you have any awesome lookout / view photos, please send them to him for the flyer.

Trails Coordinator - Ethan Hill:

VTMP Updates;

Work is currently being done in Lowell on the Wind Tower RTP project with the help of several volunteers. He hopes that will be finished in the next few weeks. Once that is completed, they will be starting the next RTP project in Sutton VT for NEKW. A few small projects were completed for BTW in July. He also helped TCATV haul some material for a project they were working on. If you have any work that needs to be done (even if you have spoken to him already about it), please submit the paperwork (available on the VASA Website).

Equipment updates:

A set of new tracks and drive sprockets have been ordered for the Hitachi excavator and will be installed upon arrival. He hopes to pick them up on the Wednesday following the BOD meeting along with the attachment plate and window guard for the hydraulic hammer.

Grants:

RTP grants are being executed now. Once those are complete, he will be moving onto the VOREC Flood recovery grants. For the clubs that are waiting on an approved flood recovery grant, please make sure that all your landowner permission forms are in order and to reach out to Tommy to see if there is anything else that needs to be done to move forward with those. There may be an occasional day or two of availability to provide trail work to clubs that have submitted the paperwork and are ready for help while he waits for material to be delivered or weather conditions to be good at current jobs in progress. Please make sure that all paperwork is in order, which includes landowner permission forms and that the landowners are aware that VASA will be on their property to do the agreed upon maintenance.

-Jim Dwinell asks if there's a possibility for a status report of jobs to be made available on the VASA password protected website. Ethan does not think that is possible at this time, please just reach out to him if you have an application submitted to VASA. Jim asks if another staff member could assist with this request. Jeremy states that if there is something that can be worked out that he will assist with it. Erik is also willing to assist.

Executive Directors report:

He has been involved in a few VOREC and SCORP meetings that we're focused on the future outlook of recreation in Vermont. He went to an FPR presentation in Johnson that focused on community outlook. He had the opportunity to speak with Commissioner Fitzko of FPR about the concerns the ATV world has going forward. Their conversation concluded with her requesting to have another meeting soon so she could better wrap her head around the issues.

He has begun doing research on CRM software. A CRM is a membership management platform that would change VASA's internal operating procedures. After a few presentations and some research Erik jumped in and is also looking at a few that Tommy could not get to. A CRM will help streamline our TAD processing capabilities, marketing strategies along with improving our communication strategies.

On August 1st, Ethan & Tommy took a former member of the VT House and current Senate candidate Katherine Sims for a ride-along in Albany. Ms. Sims requested the ride to learn more about our ATV network and how our trail program works, particularly through the RTP grant cycles.

Frank and Tommy will be meeting this month to begin strategizing the outlook for the 2025 legislative session. They will also be working on updates about the races around the state. He passes on a message from Frank encouraging everybody to get out and vote on VT primary day (August 13th). He also shared that if anyone wants more information about candidates to reach out to Frank. They will be working to get some information prepared and made available after Primary day votes have been finalized. Tom Nazzewski asks if there is a way to extend a questionnaire to potential candidates to get more info from them. Bill Huff states that is a very good idea but to limit it to a max of 12 questions. A good way to get to know the candidates. Tommy asks if there are specific questions that you would like asked to send to him and he will compile a questionnaire for review to then send out to potential candidates.

Russ Stone asks about marketing and a way to partner with local campgrounds to get info provided on our website etc. Jeremy has been in contact with some and is working on that, also, Ethan states that clubs can provide info to add to Ride Command.

Tommy mentions that we are heading back to the Big E. The office is working on a brochure that will be on display there. There will be a few others made that will be available on the club level, a trail maintenance one, an informational one & then a flashy picture one. He reminds us that he will be returning to the Camper show.

Additional Business:

- **Annual Meeting Recap (by Chris Putney):**
 - New E-board members - Doug Stone as VP, Bill Huff as Treasurer & Doug Wheeler as Member At Large. Transparency is a continuing goal and open communication is encouraged along with timely responses to emails received
- **Annual Meeting 2025- Host?** Anybody interested in hosting? Chris is hoping that we have a volunteer by September's meeting. Hoping to be able to start planning it whether it be a club hosting or VASA office planning it.
 - **Central location?** In by-laws it states central location. Should the wording be removed or updated? 2 things required at Annual meeting are Officer Elections & TAD pricing review. Ideas discussed to figure out how to make Annual Meetings work in the future.
 - Jim Dwinell makes a motion for Tommy to create a proposal to update the Annual Meeting info which will include details like permanent dates to be scheduled etc., seconded by Steve Mosher,
-Tommy states that it will be presented in September to review & vote on in October. - approved by all, opposed by none, motion carries.

- **VASA Stance on ATV classification of Go-Carts / VW Bugs / KEI Trucks**
 - Tommy states that we have received a TAD request for a VW Chassis vehicle ... response from Mike @ DMV was that it is technically not street legal, it did not receive a red ATV plate, a green plate was issued. "If it does meet street standards but regardless if it meets all the ATV standards, they are going to issue an ATV registration". Which then brings up the question around KEI trucks (technically they meet ATV standards) and if they are looking to register but will not be used on roads, DMV will take their \$ and issue an ATV plate. However, many VASA landowners would not approve of a KEI truck on the trails. Therefore, the decision to approve / deny a TAD falls in VASA's lap. There was a previous discussion about revising the by-law to change the wording to cover VASA's right to approve / reject a TAD request for non-ATV vehicles.
 - A motion was made by Ian MacKenzie to amend the previous by-law proposal motion to also include the updating of the by-law in reference to TAD requests for non-ATV vehicles, seconded by Tom Nazzewski, approved by all, opposed by none, motion carries.
- **Website** - Jeremy says that he is updating and hoping to have it ready by October / early November. The link is available & is still in progress.
- **Hiring a new Trail Tech-**
 - Ethan needs help, inundated with work and does not foresee being caught up anytime soon. Chris mentions that funds are available in the budget and should be available for the foreseeable future to hire a Trail Tech. Hopefully to be hired ASAP to finish out this season training with David & Ethan to be on their own hopefully for next season. Tommy has drafted a job description to list on Indeed hopefully tomorrow (a Full time position). Plus the potential for PT seasonal position(s) for next year also. Tommy states that we have the ability to hire a FT tech at \$50,000 per year plus PT positions at between \$32,000 to \$35,000 per year. VASA could also potentially include covering the cost of a CDL course.
- **New VASA T-shirts-** Jeremy has been designing a new VASA t-shirt and potentially Chris could create the T-shirts at a cost, shipped to your house around \$27.00 a piece. Jeremy will work on having a picture available for the next meeting.
- **VASA Club Communications-** Chris reminds us of the importance of updating Jeremy with your Clubs contact info. for officers along with Club mailing address etc. Please take some time to update Jeremy with all of your Club info.
- **IRS / Secretary of State standing-** 5 out of 24 VASA Clubs are in good standings with the IRS and State of VT. TAD Sale deposits have not been made for August because of this. Some Clubs have revoked or terminated statuses! Very important as Clubs are getting \$ from VASA and raising \$ via fundraisers. Tommy will provide step by step instructions to assist Clubs in the process. (501 C/7 filing with IRS which includes EIN issue). Jeremy will be sending emails in late November / December to Clubs looking for updates in Club

status and contact information (officer info). Jim asks that in the future there be an email updating Clubs when there is a delay in TAD sales email, etc. What are we going to do with this info in regards to funding August TAD sales? Do we fund them because Clubs did not know this was an issue? We will go ahead and fund Augusts with the expectation that Clubs will deal with this ASAP.

- **Dump Truck-** Ethan has expressed a need for the replacement of the dump truck that left VASA previously. Bill Huff has been working on a spreadsheet to determine replacement and aging of current equipment along with future costs (Ethan has been working on a similar report also). Bill also expresses that maybe we should be focusing on hiring the staff to be able to operate the equipment / vehicles available. Ethan expresses that it has been a challenge to get material hauled. The 1 tons are not adequate to haul the new trailer with the upgraded heavy equipment without being overweight and potentially risking fines and safety. He also states that having the Trail Tech hired and having a new truck available would be ideal this year so that Ethan could haul material while the new Trail Tech is being trained by David with the hopes of getting more work done in a timely fashion. He has been speaking with a reputable dealer regarding a 2016 Freightliner 6 wheel Dump Truck at \$58,000 cost. There is a local diesel mechanic that is ready to pick up the truck and go through it to make sure it is mechanically sound and a good investment. Jim asks where the \$ would be coming from & do we have the ability to purchase outright? Tommy says there is the potential to purchase it outright or finance at a rate of possibly 8%. Finances would be coming from the Flood Recovery Grant which will cover a significant amount of work (\$317,000). This could cover the Trail Tech position salary and buying the dump truck outright. It would have to be a VASA purchase with the potential for the future reimbursement from the grant. With this purchase will we still need to keep both of the 1 ton trucks? Ethan suggests keeping them as they are almost paid in full and replacement costs down the road could be very high.
-Mike Coleman made a motion to purchase the 2016 Freightliner outright, seconded by Kurt Girard,
-Russ Stone asks if the 6 wheeler is the best option or should we be looking at a 10 wheeler? Ethan expresses that the 6 wheeler will be the best option. Pro's and cons were discussed regarding the decision to get the dump truck asap to start saving time and money for future jobs to be done.
Approved by most, with the exception of 1 opposed, motion carries.
- **Most recent flood discussion-** NEK was hit very hard recently. It was not considered a federal disaster so there is no grant support currently available. VASA and the local clubs have been out there offering assistance / support and being noticed and acknowledged. If there is work being done, let Tommy know so it can be put out there on social media. Thank you!

A motion was made to adjourn by Steve Mosher, seconded by Tom Nazzewski, meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.