

AMC Worcester Chapter
Executive Committee Meeting - Minutes: February 27, 2019

Boylston Historical Society: 7 Central Street, Boylston, Mass.

Attending:

Joe Massery	Kim Beauchemin	Jose Schroen	Sue Serra (minutes)
Shalin Desai	Neil Schutzman	Zenya Molnar	Alexandra Molnar
Bill Zahavi	Ingrid Molnar	Debi Garlick	Paul Glazebrook
Jean Langley	David Elliott	Dave Cole	Don Hoffses
Claudine Mapa	Fred Mezynski	Stephen Crowe	Mike Morin

Guest: Lisa Buckley

[6:30 PM]

Meeting was called to order

Joe Massery presiding

Opening remarks: (Joe)

- Thanks to Paul G. for food
- Food volunteer for March 27 EC Meeting is Dave Cole
- Welcome to our guest Lisa Buckley, she is an AMC member who has expressed interest in our social media position

REGULAR BUSINESS

[6:31PM]

January Meeting Minutes (Sue)

Following updates were made:

- Updated comment from Joe *"We are tapping into endowment \$979"* to read *"With the current draft budget, we are tapping into the endowment by almost \$10K"*
- Updated comment from Joe *"Assuming endowment will approve; this doesn't affect endowment any more than the \$979"* to read *"...and we approve this budget, we will ask the endowment fund for \$9702. This is the only effect on the endowment that our budget will have."*
- Clarified Jose's comment regarding WFA course to read *"In past they said they don't want to run course like this because attendees hadn't remembered enough from the basic WFA course"*
- Misc typos

January Minutes APPROVED with above changes

[6:32 PM]

January Treasurer's Report (Jose)

- Updated note section of line 93 it to read that \$10,000 (not \$1000) was taken out for 100th anniversary

January Treasury Report ACCEPTED with above changes.

[6:33 PM]

Volunteer of the Month (Kim B)

February Nominations (2):

- JIM WALSH nominated by Paul Glazebrook
For his most excellent assistants on the Welch-Dickey and the Tecumseh hikes.
- ED BAJAKIAN nominated by Joe Massery
For the great job he did helping Mike Foley corral the large group of hikers on his Sholan Farm hike. Ed volunteered to be the sweep for the entire hike, he helped a couple of hikers who had issues with gear and minor discomfort problems, and livened up the conversation with his patented fun stories about druids, etc.

February VOM winner: ANGELA SMITH

Nominated by Steve Ciras for being a volunteer Gala activity leader (yoga).

February VOM ACCEPTED

[7:10 PM]

NEW BUSINESS

Dog Policy Follow-up (Paul)

One question is should we tag all or any activities as not appropriate for dogs? Sounds more friendly than 'dogs not permitted'; or we can identify dog friendly trips.

(Bill) Can sound positive to state "service-dogs allowed"

(Neil) Paul's point is to say 'this is a hike that dogs are welcome on' not just service-dogs, but dogs

(David E.) Remind us what the City Square policy is?

(Paul) If it is a service-dog, we are required to allow that dog & person on the trip to the extent that the dogs presence does not fundamentally change trip;

Another question that has come up is "What is a service dog?" Not allowed to ask what the disability but you are allowed to ask what service the dog provides, and they have to provide a service; companion dogs are not covered under ADA

Paul described several scenarios he was considering to illustrate what the chapter's dog policy might entail. He will write these up and send to EC for review before we finalize a chapter policy.

(Bill) Can we include it as part of the screening form?

(Paul) Sure; screening considerations are safety participants and the dogs themselves; dogs and bears don't mix well; if someone is freaking out because of dog, that is a fundamental change in the trip; is the dog fit? dogs can cut feet badly on rock faces; consider water, gear, coat, LNT; must be on leash at all times; participant discomfort, advanced notice; ask what task/service dog provides ; dogs can change the pace of a group (are slower) and that is a fundamental change; is the success of trip compromised by dog?

(Joe) Two things that would be helpful; send us those scenarios so we can think about them – maybe come up with some others; I also see the need for Worcester Chapter policy on dogs that we can link within posting "for our dog policy click here" so they have access to all rules

(Neil) I think Janice would prefer to say as club policy, dogs are not allowed on trip except for service-dogs, otherwise leader will post it as 'friendly for dogs'; point to policy in stead of saying 'dogs not allowed'

(Joe) what about leaving up to leader... any leader may say 'dogs not allowed'

(Neil) She didn't want to come across as being the 'heavy' on it – refer to club policy

(Joe) So every trip, by default, all would be no dogs allowed by policy; unless a leader wanted to post as dog-friendly

(Mike) How would somebody know that no dogs are allowed by default?

(David E.) Is that the City Square policy?

(Joe) No, the City Square policy is a set of federally mandated rules for service-dogs; all other cases involving dogs is at leader's discretion; we could still have a Worcester chapter policy and put a link in postings to policy

(Mike) So something has to go in the posting; if we have a policy that dogs are not allowed, or whatever the policy is, we have to include in the posting

(Bill) My concern is one of liability; what if I'm climbing up ledge and dog runs up behind and knocks me off, I can't sue?

(Neil) Bill's point is that if I'm the leader on the hike and this situation happens, have I just assumed the liability?

(Joe) As long as you are following club policy, the club protects you

(Neil) Ask for clarification

(David E) If you want to take your dog, you have to get permission; just like you can't show up with your friend, etc.

(Claudine) Instead of including a service dog statement, what if we left-off of posting, to match other chapters, and then we include it as part of the screening questions/conversation?

(Paul) Need to point to something on the website whether in posting or not.

(Joe) Point to policy in bylaws

(Paul) we will have policy for service-dogs & other dogs 'not allowed unless pre-approved'; will also modify screening questionnaire to include dogs

(Jean) Need to have mechanism so all leaders are on the same page

(Paul) Part of this is for the activity chair; they can ask submitter that they've asked participants about dogs, etc.

(Claudine) As a ski chair I would email whole leaders list once guidelines are finalized, and say every time you screen for trip from this day forward, add question 'will you be bringing an animal?'

(David E) If there's an unlimited list of things you have to ask, e.g. are you going to bring a fire arm, etc., you're not going to ask; they are going to have to volunteer this information

(Neil) If we have a policy on our website that says default is dogs not allowed, and leaders, at their discretion, can waive this policy—then the assumption is that people have to ask if they can bring dogs and you can point them to club policy

(Joe) If don't want to ask in screening, you don't have to, but be prepared to deal with it if a dog shows up

(Neil) That's grounds for being told no

(Zeny) To clarify, are we saying that Worcester Chapter policy by default is that dogs are not allowed, or is it up to leader's **discretion** and if you wanted to post you could?

(Neil) Default is dogs not allowed unless a service-dog and needs to be screened

(Joe) Not comfortable with saying dog not allowed yet

(Claudine) Once we have policy will be easy for leaders to say "this is our policy"

(Joe) That is the goal; I think we should let Paul take another stab

(Mike) Paul can you add list screening questions for dogs?

(Joe) Paul has ball to flesh this out a bit and give us the time to review off line

Action items:

- Leader notification and screening questions
- Need new language in trip postings?
- Other next steps?

[7:04]

LRG Update (Paul)

Received comments from 4 or 5 people; just talked to trails people and have gotten guidance on what they're looking for; need to draft/cleanup to finalize guidelines

[7:06]

Update on TrailsFest – aka Chapter Picnic (Kim)

At our last EComm meeting we decided on no chapter picnic for variety of reasons and now have gone full steam ahead with new idea to have a Worcester Chapter event that is bigger than just the picnic;

- Event will be called TrailsFest
- Held on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 1st at Wachusett Mountain
- The ask for tonight is that all activity charts start to think about who will be involved and how to represent your activity

(Neil) 90% of cyclers bike on the road so the bike community may say “next” if this is called TrailsFest; they'll assume it has nothing to do with them

(Steve) I've seen a lot of ways to spell 'trails fest'... should say 'TrailsFest' (one word with capital F)

(Neil) The other problem is that it is the same time as national cycle touring

(Shalin) Our idea is to split the day... last year there was a lot of milling about and no real focus

- 8AM-12PM: will have individual actives in the morning for each activity group
- 12PM: convene for lunch (food trucks)
- Afternoon: all groups come together
 - Explore partners/corporations (list of 60)
 - Collages (activity clubs)
 - Clinics: Lyme workshop, bike repair, etc.

Having a reason for people to show up beyond just their activity will create a draw; circulate via social media, and start spreading word; touching base with AMC to come up with posters, etc. and asking partners to advertise for us too

(Joe) What do we need to do right now to get word out that June 1st is date?

(Steve C) Haven't been able to confirm date with Wachusett; will send out date when confirmed

[7:14]

Finance Committee update (Joe, team)

Reaffirmed timeline for endowment process; beginning this year, we are going to accept requests for endowment money from today through July; then endowment committee will decide which grants to approve and Executive Committee will vote to approve, and payments will go out September; this will batch up the endowment requests in order to make decisions at one time during the year; the exception is the \$9,702 request made, and granted, for our EComm budget (chapter operations)

(Jean) I think it's ideal, but if there's a scenario where usual folks don't apply, or apply for less; or if a worthy project request comes in October, I'd ask that we not lock them out

(Joe) Nothing that prevents us from still contributing if we still have the money to do so

(Jean) All votes have to come to endowment committee; say we gave \$10k and if we have \$5K still there, I don't want it to go to EComm

(Joe) It doesn't, it goes back to Endowment

(Paul) This is the way most Endowment works – it's quite common; if a request didn't meet deadline, it's dead in the water; need to make sure that is communicated

(Joe) We have, and all recipients have been told and are in sync

(Joe) We have 2 big accounts; (1) A checking that Jose manages (local cash); (2) An account held and managed by the club (reserves); each of these 2 pots have been split between operations and endowment; in both pots, a certain amount is earmarked as endowment vs club money.

The Finance Committee determined our chapter's current cash balances in the two accounts we manage. Jose plans to include updates to these amounts in her monthly Treasurer's report. Here is the breakdown as of January 31:

Operating Funds:

- Local account: \$9,738
- Club (reserve) account: \$15,811
- Total: \$25,549

Endowment Funds:

- Local account: \$2,869
- Club (reserve) account: \$23,139
- Total: \$26,008

(Mike) Can we make our endowment request for next year's budget due with all these requests, and when comes time we have a fixed income amount that we've been granted, and we balance our budget?

(Joe) We have to do budget at beginning of year, January-ish

(Neil) why?

(Joe) The club requires it; the other factor is endowment allocation comes mid-year, and we don't always know the exact amount

Other conclusion from finance meeting is what endowment is on the hook for – money that we promised to organizations:

- \$23,202 in grants
 - Bob and Leah Devine endowment (Camp Dodge lodge fundraiser): 5,000
 - Mega request for chapter operations: 9,702
 - YOP: 5,000
 - Mountain Classroom Ayer-Shirley 2019: 3,500

(Neil) What about organizations that we gave to last year that are not on list; they are coming, and budget will not balance

(Joe) Budget is ok for now if we don't grant new endowment requests; but will get more money in summer

(Neil) Budgeting from what we're getting in July or what we have in bank?

(Joe) Today we have \$25K in bank; endowment plus EComm have approved \$23K in endowment spending and we have enough in bank to cover; in addition, going forward will get income in July and will decide in August and September how to spend

(Neil) If budgeting based on what we have in the bank, we should be able to decide in Feb

(Joe) Will take off-line (how we run our fiscal cycle)

(Jose) \$2,800 left in endowment and \$23k committed

(Joe) also \$ in club that we decided belong to endow

(Jose) I know what we have committed to, and what we have coming in; treasury report shows we have \$2,800 left in endowment; and \$23k is committed

(Bill) If fundamentally, as chapter we have \$25k + \$10k, and continue to spend more than that, we will use up our savings

(Neil) We don't have fiscal year budget, it's a rolling budget; there's no point you can look and see if we are in balance

(Joe) We can fix that; Bill raises another point, we haven't established a rainy-day fund; we should decide how much we want in bank in case of emergency

(Bill) We had \$38K

(Joe) Never decided if that was just for emergency; club says we may have up to half of our annual operating expense budget in our local account, with anything over half going to the reserve account held by the Club.

(Neil) We should have one [rainy-day fund] and decide on amount; we are not a profit-making organization, so we shouldn't have it build up

(Joe) Neil proposed that we decide up front what percent is spent on internal/external/contingencies; finance committee likes this idea; we want to wait and see (this year is a done deal); we will track how spending goes this year and see how it would have worked and decide if the percentages need to change; and be prepared to put this in place for next year

(Steve C.) We talked about a 2-year rolling budget

(Joe) Yes, the Finance Committee looked at our two-year spending; last year we had 100th Anniversary so that affected 2-year budget, but in the coming two-year timeframe, we saw no unusual expenses or income.

(Steve) We have Fall Gathering to consider next year. It will be Worcester's turn to host it in 2022.

(Kim) We are also analyzing overhead compared to mission of the club; e.g. food and/or stuff that doesn't support what we're trying to achieve as a club

[7:35]

Search for Social Media Person/Chair? (Joe, Kim, Dave C.)

Was going to ask that we start the process of looking for social media chair; suggest we table until after this meeting; there is a position description, but it needs to be updated

(Shalin) We should come up with strategy around social before we create a job description; we shouldn't onboard without because they don't have a template to work from; e.g. goals, what it is for, advertise what you do, etc.; look at in multi-dimensional way

(Joe) Will you be willing to get process started?

(Shalin) Sure

(Zenya) I can also look at what we have and send you that

[7:40]

Read-out from Planning Meeting teams (Joe)

This month's read-out is Leadership (Paul)

Came up with a long list, much of it aspirational; theme for leadership will be engagement, active management, and process

Focused on engaging with 5 groups

- Activity participants: prospecting them to become leader; encourage activity leader to be on lookout and talk to people; get elevator pitch together for each activity; what are we looking for, what does good leader look like (social, confident, fit passion)?
- Leader in training pipeline: draw in and actively manage pipeline of leaders in training; someone expressed interest so how are they managed through process; what do you have to do? High touch high engagement; LRG will really help to be part of package
- Existing Leaders outside Worcester Chapter: prospect from other chapters
- Existing Worcester Chapter leaders: encourage to lead more, different categories and more types of trips; leadership skill is transferable (master leader)
- Inactive leaders: reactivate; clean up DB, find tool to communicate and manage database of leaders

Other initiatives:

- Reach out to partners (JUMP, etc.) and get them involved and join events; e.g. Families event
- We currently don't have a naturalist program and people are generally interested; would like to replicate what Berkshire chapter has
(David E.) Dave Miller (paddle leader) is quite the naturalist, he may be a likely partner

(Paul) For next 3 mos. (March, April, May) we are down to 28 events (normally 35-40)

- Bike is picking up; WFA oversubscribed; backpack workshop in April; cycle tour workshop; paddle picking up; leadership hike/gathering March 18th; cycle leader meeting March 13th; had backpack planning meeting
- 3 applicants to become leader; 5 new fully qualified

(Neil) Should talk to Janice because she has a process of bringing leaders on board; think about stats on who leads, how many trips, etc.; have numbers on who's doing what; can show you what I do off line; fundamental thing on what we're looking for (quantity vs quality); there are advantages, pros/cons to both; do you want a small core of extremely dedicated, active leaders, or have larger group that spreads the work out?; should discuss strategy

(Shalin) Want to question whether our leadership is open to all, based on monolithic demographic, so are we considering all the other things that make us welcoming and open to all? Our leadership requirements and ethics could be reviewed by younger, different people outside our community; different than LRG, it's more about leadership ethics

(Neil) Would like our activity chairs to hear if you have thoughts on how to engage a larger group of people

(Paul) want to reach out and be welcoming; others actively work with groups (other groups), and work with them, augment them, share experience

(Claudine) We talked about this in YM and I can share what we've come up with

(Neil) The reason I want you to do is because I would rather talk about [doing things to better club] than talk about money

(Claudine) We've outlined goals from YM annual planning meeting, so maybe we can have someone at next meeting give a summary

(Joe) Will put on agenda for next meeting

[7:55]

Update on Annual Meeting (Jean)

Annual Meeting is November 9th; date is confirmed, and deposit made; need people over summer to select menu because each have a financial implication; need help looking at menus and keeping track of expenses

Talked about handling publicity with mailing everyone; flyer with note that says you will not be receiving by mail; start in May by putting out 'save the date' on FB about and keep updates going out so people can start watching for announcements

(Neil) We use mailchimp (tells how many open docs) 60-70% is good; attachments don't work well

(Steve) I think you need a mailer

(Joe) We did not allocate for a mailer in budget; if plan doesn't make sense, need to get back to me right away

(Alex) We could incorporate the message in an email blast.

(Claudine) Maybe have a reminder countdown or calendar 'x days until...' and also have a button

(Joe) Jean needs Annual Meeting Committee; volunteers are Dave C., and Joe M.

(Jean) Last time we decided not to have raffle, but I have whole box of items; have we paid for a raffle permit – is one required?

(Joe) Will take offline

(David E.) I can help with setting up 'event' on FB

[8:00 PM]

OLD BUSINESS

Action Items (Joe)

- Reminder to regularly upload official Chapter documents to Summit; e.g. minutes, EC meeting agendas, treasurer reports, policies, workshop plans, etc. [All]
AMC has acknowledged this doesn't work and are working on solution; for now, keep all docs safe; upload if possible
- Enable Summit/SharePoint accounts for new EC members. [Joe]
Email from Suzanne says we won't have access right away; may be updating to something better in near future
- Planning Meeting Team Read-out Schedule
 - February: Leadership: Strengthen/Expand [DONE]
 - March: Comprehensive Communications Plan
 - April: Partnerships/Conservation Strengthen/Expand
 - May: 3rd Wednesday – Utilize/Expand/Promote

[8:05 PM]

Round table (All)

- (Sue) I attended leadership training and it was a great experience

- (David E.) I loved everything Paul said about maintaining open contact with leaders; for activity chairs it is a mysterious to know who their leaders are; maybe we can go to activities database, but we at least need to know enough to do it
- (Zenya) Send any submissions for newsletter by end of March; it will go out in April; I'll also send a notice and post on FB
- (Mike) The Inter-Chapter YM event in Whites a couple weekends ago went well; skiing, ice climbing; Mohawk-Hudson
- (Kim) We have 19 paid for backpacking workshop and 30 signed up; event is April 6th; \$10 for member, \$20 for non-members; free for activity leaders
- (Steve Crowe) People that worked TrailsFest last year and enjoyed what you did, let us know if you are interested in helping this year

[8:11 PM]

Meeting Adjourned