



American Canoe Association (ACA) Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: 2/22/2020

Location: Fredericksburg, VA

Attendance:

Voting Board Members Present: Robin Pope, Lili Colby, Bill Micks, Marsh Jones, Stanton Collins, William Irving, Adam Joseph, John Traendly, Sam Fowlkes

Non-voting attendees: Scott Andrews, Anne Barry, Jerry Dunne

ACA Staff: Beth Spilman, Emma Walther, Amy Ellis, Michelle Flynn, LeighAnn Moore, Brett Mayer, Carrie Schlemmer, Kelsey Bracewell

Quorum is established

Open: [08:40]

Conflict of Interest:

Discussion on what qualifies a conflict and why it is important to disclose.

Board members discuss individual conflicts. Conflict of Interest forms were distributed to each board member, signed and returned.

Financial Report

Beth: 2018 was a difficult year for us with the addition of competition and loss of Subaru sponsorship. The financial results in 2019 showed great improvement. The Olympic endowment fund was drawn down by \$100,000 in 2018, but it had a good year in 2019 and added close to \$12,000. The bookkeeping processes were completely overhauled in the last year.

With the new membership structure membership revenue has fallen.
Olympic funding has doubled this year. Much for administrative work.
We are working on creating efficiencies in processes in all departments.
Discussion of net profits by division.

Sebago and Sugar Island:

Beth: Sebago is doing really well.

Emma: Sebago is not included in our financial audit, but we do provide services in administration. A lot of benefit is being given to these properties from the ACA, but little financial benefit is given back to the ACA.

LeighAnn provided an overview and update on insurance revenue and expenses which sparked a discussion regarding our success at converting event members to full members. LeighAnn also discussed how the ACA is improving the insurance processes.

Adam: Are there any other insurance products we could offer from our provider? Looking at travel insurance for trips.

LeighAnn: We should look into that.

Membership Report (Amy)

Amy: Membership structure was so complicated before the new structure and now we are much more simplified. Discusses the levels of membership, all starting at \$25. Stopped offering lifetime but will grant to people who have been a member for over 50 years if they ask.

Demographics are largely trended toward the 50-70 age range. We are growing in the 20-30 age group and the under 20 age.

International membership is growing, we have 1130 members in China. Chinese people have a hard time paying through our system so we have a different way of taking payments. Our website gets blocked because of Chinese censors. We should find an easier way to get money from China.

Streamlined memberships have reduced staff time spent on helping members and renewals.

New policy on processing refunds has reduced staff time.

Future - Provide an electronic only opt-in for members to reduce printing/ mailing costs. provide key tag member card rather than current laminated paper. Source a YM compatible app to help members join/renew.

Stewardship and Public Policy Report

Brett: Focus on stewardship and public policy. The ACA is a founding member of the Outdoor Alliance which works on public policy. Focus on policy initiatives that fall within clean water, climate solutions, and public lands protections.

Beth: We need to better demonstrate our value through these efforts.

Brett: We need to find a better way to communicate our policy positions. making a handbook for state directors can be helpful. Finding a way to build strong relationships between membership, ACA, and stewardship.

Sugar Island: we would like to invite you to Sugar so we can identify ways to improve the island and help get more paddlers at Sugar Island.

Brett: this is exactly how we can be good stewards.

Instruction Report (Kelsey and Trey)

Kelsey: discusses 2019 highlights

Process for getting grants - normally USCG gives about \$5 million for about 35 projects. Because of long term grants in progress the funding is lower for 2021 and are intending on funding around 20 projects.

We have 3 grants active: Paddlesport Statistical Analysis, Safety Minute Series Distribution, Geofencing.

Trey: Research shows banner ads and push notifications are the new way people want to be communicated with.

Kelsey: 4 grant proposals being made to the USCG.

2020 instructor trainer audit - 2,781 certifications

SEI works with social media, Paddle Mag, and SEIC issues
Working to expand Pro Deals to regular members, only for instructors now.

Competition report

Beth: We have Nevin who has already made a quota spot and will compete to fill it at trials. Sprint Trials will be held in conjunction with the Canadians. Pan Am will be in Brazil for Slalom and Sprint. Duisburg World Cup may 21-24. ICF Supercup in OKC in August.

Marsh: Nantahala slalom World Cups then in West Virginia
Trying to build a cup series in slalom.

Trey: What is our outreach for surfski and SUP competition. There is a lot of interest commercially. Surfski specifically we have a lot of growth potential in.

CMS

John Treandly: New CMS moving from paper to an automated system. The new system will give us a database that will allow us to see metrics. we are going from no metrics to a lot. we should be careful with how we use the information, specifically sensitive information like course evaluations. We will get information on course histories and evaluation histories that can be studied. The new system will track safesport as well. Alerts will be given for information on courses. It will be easier to evaluate instructors when they renew. We will have the ability to build new tools to offer functionality to members. CMS has a more broad ability and can be used as a technology platform.

CMS is enforcing policy so people are getting blocked because the system will not allow violations. even with this we are getting broad support for the system.

We are asking for disciplines to build templates for each course offered.

We will need to work with the board and SEIC to determine the amount of transparency with evaluation information. we can build a lot of systems that can utilize information but we need to set ground rules first?

We will get analytics that will allow instructors to see evaluation averages and distributions and compare it to other instructor evaluations.

we want to set up the system to only allow online payment and request immediate payments. if you close without paying it will give an alert that you haven't paid.

We are working on insurance automation. Liability waivers and payments will link automatically instead of needing to apply later.

Using google analytics to identify traffic patterns on our webpage. This will give us information on what people are looking at and where those people are. This will help identify underserved markets.

Statistics will give us insights into areas that are underserved and help to support instructors.

Robin: In our survey results we saw many complaints that it is difficult to find instructors in some areas.

John Treandly: We can work on cross-selling opportunities, targeted promotion, and make specialized events.

We are building credential auditing into the system and we can for safesport but we need information on what is required to build it.

What kind of international support should we build? China is a large market for us and there is a lot of whitewater in south america.

Review Member Survey results (Robin and Beth)

Robin: We see a lot of concern with a lack of information from the ACA. the vast majority of respondents plan to renew. We may be one of the only organizations in the world that provide the services that we do. Most responses claimed they were intermediate or advanced paddlers, this suggests that we can work on bringing in beginners. Most deaths happen with paddlers with under 100 hours of experience.

Our members are saying they want to hear more from us. Most respondents said they would like communication in monthly emails with links to articles.

Comments on ACA being too east coast oriented. We do not have enough outreach in middle states and west.

People really like our instruction program. We need to build on that strength. There were complaints about insurance, but people value the service, there aren't many places to secure that.

Five core values were proposed by Beth: Inclusion, Teamwork, Transparency, Service, Safety.

Beth: These values are a jumping off point to keep in mind as we approach the future of the ACA.

Small group work [14:23-15:00]

Discussion of core values and edits pondered to be applied later. Addition of: Communication, Stewardship, Excellence

Split into groups focusing on areas of ACA with staff focused on each objective [15:20]

Present membership ideas and goals, develop list of clear objectives

Insurance: Increase event membership fee, travel insurance

Competition: Increase competition fee for athletes, support and grow the club system, synergies between clubs and instructors, Races, Social Media, Lake Placid International, "Race in a box"

Properties: Newsletter for active properties, calendar of events, sell utilization of Sugar Island, 140th anniversary celebration at Sebago and Sugar.

Instructors: Use CMS to help retain instructors, help small organizations (IT's) cut down on costs where possible, Sell more camps, Prodeals is an easy way to provide a service, Sell the ACA with individual benefits, CMS can help identify market needs.

Stewardship: Road Tour to have visible stewardship, more merchandise, self-fund with corporate sponsors, show existing members that we are doing something.

Fredericksburg property:

Bill: 2005 Fredericksburg offered 4 acres for headquarters. surrounded by conservation easement. In 2016 value was dropped to \$430,000. New assessment coming out in August, will likely be higher. Fredericksburg is willing to swap for a ~18 acre tract to build a national paddle center.

When the land was given, we expected Virginia to help build a center there.

Recess - [2/22 17:00]

[2/23 08:40]

Voting Board Members Present: Robin Pope, Lili Colby, Bill Micks, Marsh Jones, Stanton Collins, Adam Joseph, John Traendly, Sam Fowlkes, Trey Knight

Non-voting attendees: Scott Andrews, Anne Barry, Jerry Dunne

ACA Staff: Beth Spilman, Emma Walther, Amy Ellis, Michelle Flynn, LeighAnn Moore, Brett Mayer, Carrie Schlemmer, Kelsey Bracewell

SEIC Report:

Trey: Discuss the SEIC meetings. Updates to the curriculum to match national standards. Mostly making language changes to level 1 but that had a domino effect on higher disciplines.

We are trying to bring consistency and simplicity to the documentation that we have to wade through on the website.

Safety awareness courses language change to make the course more user friendly for instructors with more direction.

We added in our policy to allow for Kelsey to start to push for CMS use and reduce the amount of paper documentation running through the office.

Sam: There is some contention in the fact that we do not have documents in Spanish and Chinese.

Marsh: Many governing orgs have written into the by-laws that national language documentation is what should be referred to.

Motion to pass proposed changes from SEIC

Unanimous

Closed Robin; Sam moved[08:55]

Unanimous.

Open session resume s[09:07]

Properties:

Bill: We need to make decisions on what we are going to do with the property here. No timeline.

Robin: The problem is that the property they would swap us is flood plain and only about a half acre of buildable land.

Beth: We have formed an informal relationship with the local trail people so we could build trails on the land. Our lease at the current office is up in December so we do need to move on making a decision.

Marsh: What are the other commercial options for us?

Bill: I can start looking in the area. We should meet with Tommy and discuss with him.

Adam: Have we discussed property with a real estate advisor?

Beth: I have been told to hold on to the lot we have now as an investment.

Robin: We need to decide if we want to swap and build or hold on to what we have and wait.

Bill: I am being told that there is electricity out there and we think sewer in the next year.

Beth: We are looking for a new place in the area. We are spending a decent amount of money for not much benefit at our current location.

Sugar:

Scott: We had an assessment of the property and we see some issues. We are going to hire a vendor to install 5 greywater systems. At today's exchange rate it will cost about \$15,000. Money will come from our accounts. We are going to need to add self-closing doors and toilet seats to restrooms. We are adding online reservations for the island. We have someone who will donate her time to build it. We are going to start marking trails as well. We are trying to get more interest from new visitors.

Beth: How many unique members?

Scott: We get about 150 members returning and not many new visitors. We want the new visitors and we have been reaching out to colleges and clubs to try to bring new people in. We are seeing more cabin rentals, but we still do not see those filled as often as we would like.

Lili: Could we start pushing out events at the Island to our members.

Scott: Yes, I have spoken to Beth and Emma about doing that.

Robin: We need to make sure that we are helping Sugar Island is fulfilling the ACA mission and ACA is helping Sugar do that.

Sebago:

Jerry: We are doing a lot of infrastructure repair now. we are having to pay to get a lot of things done that the park should be doing like cutting down trees. We are updating our reservation system and that has helped to bring ACA members.

Beth: How long is our lease?

Jerry: We have a 5 year lease that is up next year so we need to negotiate the price and length of the lease.

Strategic Plan:

Robin: I want to come up with clear guidelines for the ACA to accomplish over the next 6 months.

[Groups split and work on tangible goals 10:00-10:15]

Trey: group came up with following goal: Mini - Grants for beginner outreach, Instructor updates, Pro Deals, IT/ITE annual COI at bulk discount.

We can give IT annual COI at a bulk discount instead of making them file for certification every time they teach a course. It seems like a small thing, but it will improve attitude toward ACA

John Traendly: We will have information we can help with giving metric information to ITs to help make them more successful.

Adam: Group 2 goal Renewal campaign that uses Tokyo as a way to incentivize donations and renewals. Email blast to ask for donation.

Trey: What have we learned from past efforts?

Adam: Transparency was an issue.

Lili: We need people to see the Olympic rings.

Trey: We will have people upset with the fact that the office time is focused on competition instead of IT.

Beth: We need to do a better job of engaging our membership.

Debate on how to improve engagement. Web design and content discussed.

Beth: Group 3: Make sure to market to Event members, make sure all communication is warm and friendly, use more engaging content.

Trey: We want to help clubs talk to each other to help improve joint usage. If a club is holding a class, nearby clubs should know.

Board Election:

Robin: We need to elect a new vice-chair and secretary.

Lili: Explains her role as vice-chair.

Stanton: Explains role of secretary.

Stanton nominated

Robin opens election unanimous

Trey: Resign as Treasurer

Trey Knight nominated for Vic Chair.

Robin moves for Vice Chair to be Trey

Unanimous

John Traendly nominated as Treasurer

Moved - Elected - unanimous

Finance Committee discussed. Request for a more active finance committee. Scott Mann, Adam Joseph, Trey Knight, John Traendly appointed to the finance committee.

Grievance Committee discussed and suggested for athletes to be on. Marsh, William, Dave Heap

Ethics Committee discussed. Suggested to keep all members off of the board.

Competition Council elections are about to be held. Marsh explains Competition Council structure.

ACA Mission:

Robin discusses the ACA mission statement and suggests a modification.

ED discussion:

Beth had agreed previously to stay until December.

Robin: We need to discuss our future.

Closed Session [11:30]

Open Session resumes [12:]

Adjournment:

Sam Fowlkes moved that the meeting be adjourned. Marsh Jones seconded the motion. All are in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at [12:00]

Submitted by,

Stanton Collins

Secretary

ACA Board of Directors