

IDITAROD TRAIL COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING, BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
August 14, 2014  
Teleconference Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Andy Baker at 3:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Andy Baker, Aaron Burmeister, Stan Foo, Paul Gebhardt, John Handeland, Mike Jonrowe and Danny Seybert

Members absent: Mike Owens and Rick Swenson

Others present: Stan Hooley, Executive Director; Mark Nordman, Race Director/Race Marshal; and Joanne Potts, Recording Secretary

A quorum was present.

TRAIL WORK PROJECT

Hooley noted that the Executive Committee, at their last meeting, had had an extensive conversation about the trail improvement project and they felt the full board needed to be engaged in the discussion, thus, this special meeting.

He explained that the total cost of the project will be \$260K. So far, we haven't found funding for the full blown project. He noted that Baker had reached out to the DNR Commissioner and they have people working on this. The plan currently is to pull DNR, BLM, Iditarod and INHT together to discuss this in more detail. The Executive Committee discussed prioritizing sections of the trail that could be fixed to improve it.

He further explained that at this time we believe there is a hard \$30K available from the INHT to do some of the trail work. The question is how much can be done with this and how much more needs to be done.

Nordman noted that there was \$10K left in a grant from the INHT from last year. He explained that that is dedicated for work in the upper Dalzell and that work is scheduled to begin October 1. He also said that if we don't spent all of that \$10K on the specified project, the rest can be spent on this bigger project.

He explained that there is a 19 mile section from Rohn to Tim Creek that really needs work.

Baker noted that we need to figure out how to get this done. Do we need to borrow the money we need to make this happen, because if it isn't done the trail will not be safe. He noted that he thinks the State will kick in something.

Hooley suggested that we let the process in place not proceed and learn what we need to do to supplement what we will get from Cruz and others. If we need to supplement, we want to keep that number as low as possible.

Nordman noted that when this was originally looked at, we were talking about a five man crew working long days. He noted that Dave Cruz wants to continue talking to Hooley about this. He said it can't be done in the winter.

Hooley asked how much would the funding requirement change if we only worked on part of the 30 miles that needs work. And he asked if we can get the worst part done with the heavy equipment and the rest done without that equipment. Nordman noted that if we can get the equipment in and go from Tim Creek back to Rhone, it would be a huge improvement.

Hooley explained that we think we can make the majority of the \$260K go away with contributions. The number that won't go away is the cost of labor, and he added that we haven't been successful in convincing Lynden to haul the equipment to Farewell and back. The lowest number we're looking at for the 30 day project is \$175K.

Nordman pointed out that the fuel, oil and gas, costs is minimal on this project compared to the other expenses.

Nordman noted that he was making contact with the director of the Iron Dog but thought we might get some support from them but expects no real money.

Baker suggested that there is a good chance we could convince the military to do an exercise and drop in what we need to get there. Hooley noted that he has a call into the general of the National Guard to discuss this.

Nordman noted that we could get in what we need in one Herc load.

He noted that when he gets back, he wants to get hold of Dave Cruz and discuss a time line.

Seybert noted that it is important to him and he feels important to the mushers and the fans that this race go through the Iditarod Trail. He said it is important that we do what we have to do to make it safe. Everyone agreed with that thought.

Handlehand noted that unless the ITRF has funds for loan, Wells Fargo isn't going to give us a loan.

The question was raised of polling the mushers to see if they'd be willing to give up a percent of their purse to help this project happen. It was decided that that was not a good idea. Baker pointed out that doing something like that would only hurt us in the end.

Baker noted that the National Guard is prohibited to do work of this sort without charging and they would have to charge more than we would normally pay.

Nordman noted that there isn't a lot that can be done with handtools. If the funding doesn't come through, he wants to get out and get as much done as we can with the crew we have. With their experience we can do a lot.

Baker noted that Plan A would be to do the entire job. Plan B would be just doing part of the job. Nordman commented that we need to see what's happening with funding but we do need to have options for moving north.

Nordman noted that there are two places to get through the Alaska Range, Rainy Pass and Tarmigan Pass. We can't go Tarmagain Pass so that means we're looking at Rainy Pass.

Handeland asked if there is another route we could take that would take less money to make usable.

Nordman noted that the intent is to get the whole project done.

Burmeister suggested that we need a drop dead date for choosing an alternate trail.

Gebhardt noted that unless something drastic happens we aren't going to get the needed funding. Shortly after Nordman gets the timeline from Dave Cruz, we should be talking different routes.

Baker noted that yesterday he thought there would be some good solid money from the State but after some political announcements today, he isn't so sure.

Hooley noted that he would have a conversation with the Rasmuson Foundation but thinks this project is outside of what they usually fund.

There was discussion about what type of planes could land at Farewell and the question of whether NAC, Everts or Lynden might be going out empty so that we could split the cost of have them carry equipment out.

Baker noted that we'll wait to hear more from Hooley but will need a plan within the next few weeks.

The board went into Executive Session to discuss the CEO employment agreement.