

IDITAROD TRAIL COMMITTEE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Millennium Alaskan Hotel
May 30, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order by President Andy Baker at 9:12 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Andy Baker, Aaron Burmeister, Stan Foo, John Handeland (via phone), Mike Jonrowe, Danny Seybert, Rick Swenson

Members absent: Mike Owens and Aliy Zirkle

Others present: Stan Hooley, Executive Director; Mark Nordman, Race Director/Race Marshal; Greg Bill, Development Director; Don Patterson, Finance Director; Stuart Nelson, DVM, Chief Veterinarian, Joanne Potts, Recording Secretary, Paul Gebhardt, IOFC Board Member Elect, and Judy Bittner, President of the INHT

Baker introduced Gebhardt and invited him to sit with the Board during the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The President recognized Judy Bittner, President of the INHT.

Bittner thanked Greg Bill for being a wonderful representative of the Iditarod on their board for many years. She noted that the INHT has been working with Mark Nordman and Andy Willis on trail grants, which have been used to improve the trail. She noted that the INHT is proud to be a part of this endeavor.

She noted that the INHT is working on getting funding for future projects.

She thanked the ITC for their help with "Ice Bound", and explained that the grant request to the Rasmuson Foundation is on hold. Without that grant, the film will never be distributed.

She explained that that is just one more way the INHT has worked with the Iditarod and they look forward to continuing their involvement.

Bittner noted that the Board members of the INHT, in addition to herself are: Jules Mead , treasurer, Richard Burnham, representing the Yukon area, Mike Tierny, representing McGrath area, Leo Rasmussen, representing Northwest Alaska, Greg Bill, representing the ITC, Dan Seavey, representing the Seward area and one more lady who is with Wells Fargo. She said there is currently one vacant seat that belongs to Tom Jensen who resigned 2 years ago.

Baker thanks Bittner for being at the Board Meeting and for the work the INHT is doing to help with improvements on the Iditarod Trail.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Seybert/Swenson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17 TELECONFERENCE BOARD MEETING

Jonrowe/Burmeister moved to approve the minutes of the February 17 meeting as presented in the Board packet. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Stan Hooley presented a written report.

Hooley noted that we are currently forecasting net revenues for FY14 of 484K, a negative variance of \$112K from the \$194K called for in the budget plan. He explained that we continue to be well off our five year plan goals. While we have experienced five years in which revenues have exceeded expenses, we have not made progress on establishing reserves.

Baker suggested that we give Paul Gebhardt a snapshot of the five year plan.

Hooley explained that applicants for the COO position have been narrowed down to five. He has another interview to complete and said he anticipates hiring someone by the beginning of the new fiscal year. With Greg Bill's impending retirement, Hooley will transition more into sponsorship sales and fundraising.

He noted that this is the first year Iditarod has been involved with Pick, Click and Give. Iditarod was 249th in terms of contributions, 50 contributions totaling \$2,575. We used existing advertising inventory for other fundraising projects. We don't have available advertising money and says he welcomes any innovative ideas for advertising Pick, Click, and Give.

He explained that ballots went out and presented the schedule for June 28. He noted that the day will begin with the Annual Meeting, followed by the start of the Volunteer Picnic, and organization Board Meeting. Between 9:30 and 2:30, mushers will be signing up to enter the 2015 Iditarod.

He said he felt that we should forego the salmon this year so the spotlight for food can be on Golden Corral. All agreed that was a good idea.

Mike Jonrowe formally asked to be excused from the meetings on June 28 as he will be in Bristol Bay fishing.

There was discussion regarding the bios of candidates that go out with the ballots. Hooley explained that it is noted on the mailing that we do not edit, nor do we see to verify, anything in those bios. Hooley noted that if we had a self-perpetuating board, we would have this problem and suggested we move in that direction.

It was suggested that the disclaimer on future mailings be much larger, so as to make sure people notice it.

RACE DIRECTOR/RACE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Mark Nordman submitted a written report.

Nordman noted that the new dropped dog program worked well. He heard nothing but positive comments.

He explained that this year he was able to get into more checkpoints, most often with the front bunch of mushers.

He went to Nikolai last Saturday for the funeral of Phillip Esai, our original checker there. He said lots of people felt it was wonderful that Iditarod attended. He noted that he has a NAC trip coming up soon.

CHIEF VETERINARIAN'S REPORT

Dr. Nelson submitted a written report.

He noted that he had put together some insurance options in his report to help out mushers who had vet bills at PET. He explained that if the dog is not in a life threatening situation, it would be given to the handler to take to the musher's veterinarian, but if the situation is life threatening, they take it straight to PET. The rules state that the musher is responsible for bills at PET. He noted that six dogs were taken to PET this year and the bill was roughly \$10K. All but two mushers have paid their bills. It was noted that these bills will have to be paid before mushers are allowed to sign up for the 2015 race.

Nelson noted that he was pleased with the clinic held in Takotna after the mushers had gone through there. He explained that they had tried numerous times for an off season vet clinic in one of the villages, but there are always travel issues.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Greg Bill submitted a written report.

Bill explained that the Arch in Nome is not wired. The TV crews put temporary outlets on the back so they are not visible. He said he has contacted a log builder about making a covering for the arch so it can be protected from the weather in a way that the tourists can still get to it.

He noted that he'd been disappointed in the fact that the fund raising print hadn't sold more copies, but said they are still working on ways to sell them and also a way to see the original.

Bill noted that he has loved his work with the Iditarod and even though he is retiring, he will always be around to help wherever he can.

IOFC – AARON BURMEISTER

Aaron said he had nothing to report.

Nordman asked for clarification on the purpose of the Conex in Nome. Burmeister explained that that was set up for the dog lot volunteers, not for a place to work on dogs.

MUSHERS' REP

Paul Gebhardt asked to have the list of all mushers sent to him. Potts will do that.

RULES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Rules Committee meeting are included in the packet.

The need for stricter enforcement of the rules was discussed. The issue of loose dogs was noted as well as the fact that there were mushers using cell phones.

Nordman pointed out that it didn't do any good for him to find out some of this 2 ½ months after the Race. He explained that he needs to know about it when the infraction takes place. He said that anything out or the norm should be immediately reported to a race official.

Gebhardt brought up the use of necklines. He explained that his teams without necklines interfered with his race way more than cell phones did. After a lengthy discussion, staff was directed to send out a memo to the mushers explaining that we're looking at a possible rule change and asking for opinions on using or not using necklines.

There was discussion regarding the use of the 911 buttons on the spot trackers, and whether we should go with two Trace units and not have the ability to push the 911 button. Some suggested that mushers should get their own trackers and use them, but Nordman noted that in the end it would still come back to the ITC. He said that seven mushers were rescued off the trail this year.

Hooley noted that he is working on getting a sponsorship for the trackers and questioned whether they'd be interested if we asked them to deactivate the feature that they are promoting.

It was noted during discussion of sled size, mushers should be advised that to provide better safety than to use small racing sleds. Nordman said that would be pointed out at the Rookie Meeting.

Hooley explained that the Rule #8, regarding carrying recording and broadcasting equipment needs to stay in the rules. He doesn't want something a musher does to compete with our relationship with a broadcaster. It was suggested that a waiver be written for mushers using Go Pros.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Baker noted that members of the committee this year were Andy Baker, Wilson Hughes and Denise Michels.

Ballots will be counted the morning of the 28th and the new board will be seated that day at the Organizational Meeting.

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERNATIVES

Baker noted that the focus should be on how to make the trail better.

Nordman noted that in October they will start work from Rainy Pass to the Tatina. He said they have money from the INHT to do brushing and clearing in that area.

Nordman noted that the area of the Turquoise fire can be fixed with funding. Losing the ground cover has caused the trail to continue to erode. It says it's a matter of being on the ground out there and looking at conditions and figuring out what to do. They will need heavy equipment to do much of the work.

Baker said that we need to do everything we can within the next two months and then come back and say we failed, before we switch to starting from Fairbanks.

Nordman noted that we had considered the 156 mile Nenana to Lake Minchumina trail, and then to Nikolai. But a fire came through there and it now needs a lot of work. It's very rarely used. He said he isn't giving up on that if we can't get through the Alaska Range. He said the trail from Nikolai to Telida is open. He'll be flying that trail later in the season. It will still give us much of the regular race trail.

There was a lot of discussion on what needs to be done and alternatives. Baker asked Nordman to come up with a plan and we'll figure out how to go forward.

Nordman will come back with a plan at the Executive Committee meeting on July 9.

AMENDED BYLAWS

Jonrowe noted that he and Hooley will have some ideas for the next meeting on bylaw changes.

REQUESTS FOR EXEMPTION FROM QUALIFYING RULE

Jonrowe/Burmeister moved that the six people who had been signed up for the Northern Lights when it was cancelled be given the opportunity to sign up on June 28, but noted that they would have to complete their 2nd 300 mile qualifier and anything else the QRB directs them to do. Motion passed.

PURSE DISTRIBUTION

There was discussion about the distribution and whether the winner's purse should be considerably higher than the 2nd place.

Jonrowe/Seybert moved that the 1st place finisher receive a free entry fee for his/her own use the following year. Motion passed.

IDITAROD AIR FORCE

Seybert noted that there is not enough information to discuss this right now. He asked that he be allowed to work with Nordman and others to come back to the Executive Committee with a plan for what they think needs to be done. Baker appointed Danny Seybert as the chair of that committee with Mark Nordman and others he will appoint later.

2015 RACE RULES

The proposed Race Rules are included in the packet.

The question of Iditarod's paying P.R.I.D.E. membership for all the mushers came up. Hooley explained that that is part of our messaging to sponsors and others. It's a PR thing for Iditarod. He suggested we look for a way to get more out of the P.R. I.D.E. membership.

Nelson suggested that we get permission to copy their handbook and distribute it to the mushers.

It was noted that the only changes in the Rules were date changes and the fact that vaccinations can now be given up to March 4, the day of the vet check.

Jonrowe/Seybert move to accept the rules as amended. Motion passed.

BUDGET

The proposed Budget is included in the packet.

Don Patterson noted that Iditarod had used very little of its line of credit so far but will be using it at this time. It was paid off in February . We will also pay off the long term loan of \$32K with the Foundation.

Patterson explained that the cost of the tracker this year was because of the development which we didn't have in 2013 and we won't have in 2015.

Greg Bill explained that the cost of the trophy is down. He has met with a sculptor who will make a trophy like we have now with a few improvements for no more than \$3,500. We've been paying \$7,500. The best part is that we will then own it. Sticking with the previous way of purchasing, the Devine money would only have lasted about 16 years. This way it will carry us for more than 30 years.

It was suggested that we figure out a way to put Bill Devine's name on that trophy.

Burmeister explained that he will have a meeting with Leo Rasmussen soon and the belt buckles will be discussed.

Seybert/Foo moved to adopt the budget as proposed. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Seybert moved to go into Executive Session at 3:07.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned following the Executive Session.