



KEYSTONE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Saturday, January 7, 2017, 10:00 am

KTA Headquarters, Mechanicsburg, PA

Directors Attending: Paul Shaw, Ernie Werstler, Rob Altenburg, Katie Barker, Bob Best,

Dave Gantz, Bob Merrill, Wanda Shirk, Donna Thompson, Jim Foster

Also attending: Joe Neville, Jenn Ulmer

President Paul Shaw called the meeting to order at 10 am.

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- I. Opening Remarks.** President Shaw thanked Wanda for her three years of service as President.
- II. General Membership/Public Comments.** President Shaw asked if any visitor had any comments. There were no comments.
- III. Approval of the Minutes of the 10/15/2016 Board Meeting.** Katie moved approval, seconded by Rob. Motion approved. Bob Best asked about the item in the minutes about Sara's healthcare. Joe explained that we had been reimbursing Sara for the cost of her healthcare. Our auditor pointed out that this needed to be included in her salary. We have done this retroactively for 2016 and will do so going forward. Board members explained that the practical effect of this is that, as salary, the employer and employee share of all applicable taxes are paid.
- IV. Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Altenburg discussed his enclosed written report. Although contributions for the months of October and November are below budget, deposits made after then should close the gap. Many of the donations made in 2014 were in memory of Tom Thwaites. Donations for 2016 were the highest for any year other than 2014. Wholesale sales are below budget, but additional orders are expected soon.

Rob and Jim, as the Finance Committee are recommending that KTA open a brokerage account. This account would be primarily used to receive stock contributions. One contributor has expressed interest in contributing stock to KTA. Tax laws make this method beneficial for some donors. Joe obtained the pricing from Members First, where our deposit accounts are. We will also look at discount brokerage options. After discussion, Ernie moved and Donna seconded that the Finance Committee develop a proposed policy and recommend a broker. Motion carried.

The Board has been discussing whether we should save money by going from an audited financial statement to compilation or review. Although we do not legally need an audit, it carries some advantages. An audit probably gives our members and contributors more confidence in us. Certain large grant providers require an audited statement. Joe will look at accounting options for us. Ernie mentioned that it might also be beneficial for us to go to an accrual or modified accrual basis. Jim mentioned that doing so may result in higher accounting expenses.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, made by Ernie, seconded by Katie. Approved.

- V. Executive Director's Report.** Joe referred to his enclosed written report. KTA is pursuing a sponsorship from Jeep. Bob Best mentioned that some members may object, since some Jeep

owners do damage to trails. Joe said they will consider these concerns in any publicity materials. The new website is being developed, and is in beta testing. It can be found at www.keystonetrails.weebly.com Joe solicited comments from the Board. Sunday hunting legislation will probably be reintroduced in the new legislative session. Jim indicated he has heard there will be a big push for it. Joe said there is still significant political opposition to it, notably from the farming interests. The members discussed the various reasons why KTA and most of its membership remain opposed. The PA Game Commission has said there may be a new proposal to charge fees to non-hunters using State Game Lands. KTA has opposed this in the past. Jim said that although there were good reasons to oppose the previous proposal, the PGC is in a difficult position. It's revenue stream comes largely from hunting license fees and Pittman-Robertson excise taxes on guns and ammunition, and both are in decline. Dave and others mentioned several reasons why we should be opposed to a hiking fee. Dave noted one way hikers can support the PGC is to purchase a subscription to the PA Game News, an excellent publication. Jim agreed and said he buys a hunting license to support the PGC, though he only hikes on SGLs. KTA is applying for grants from DCNR, as further outlined in the written report. Rob mentioned that DCNR is concerned about losing staff due to the state funding shortfall. Perhaps KTA can support DCNR in some way. Jim asked about bounce back emails sent to KTA staff. Joe said they are working on it. We will change our email provider from Verizon. Rob mentioned Google's product is pretty good.

VI. Committee Reports.

- a. **Trail Care.** Donna reported for Ed Lawrence. The 2017 Trail Care schedule is complete. Jim mentioned he has put all Trail Care events on the Meetup site. Dave is working on hats for attendees. Dave will also be contributing books to Trail Care. We may have raffles at Trail Care events. We are seeking cooks for some events, and we may have some potlucks.
- b. **Club Services.** Nothing to report.
- c. **Finance Committee.** See Treasurer's Report.
- d. **Executive Committee.** Hasn't met since last meeting.
- e. **Nominations Committee.** Nothing to report.
- f. **A.T. Section Committee.** We had a very successful work day in November. We've added signs, refreshed blazes, removed graffiti, added gravel to the Lehigh Gap East parking lot, and refreshed the content in the kiosks. DCNR has constructed a sign for the Lehigh Gap East parking lot and PennDOT will install it soon. Access has been blocked to the dangerous Devils Pulpit side trail.
- g. **Patch Committee.** Work continues on patches. No design received for Laurel Highlands Trail patch yet.
- h. **Publications Committee.** We've received a shipment of A.T. maps from ATC.

VII. Action Items.

By-Law Modification. Paul and Jim proposed a change to Article 6 of the By-Laws. The change would limit an individual to serving three consecutive years as President. If approved by the Board, this change would be recommended to Council at the spring meeting, since they must approve By-Law changes. Jim said they feel that turnover in the executive leadership positions is healthy for a non-profit. In response to a question about whether we should impose similar restrictions on the other officer positions, Paul said it is sometimes difficult to find qualified people to serve as Treasurer, so he isn't recommending such a provision for the other officer positions. Rob and Katie indicated that they support the proposal, and many non-profits have similar provisions. Wanda said there is merit in limiting the tenure of the President, but she wonders if this provision ties our hands too much. Jim said he understands this concern, but it would put the onus on the Board to find qualified candidates willing and able to serve in leadership. After extended discussion, Ernie

moved to call for the question. Jim seconded, and the motion passed. Rob moved that the Board recommend the By-Law change to Council. Katie seconded. Motion passed, with Wanda opposed.

VIII. Other Business.

- a. Certificate of Achievement.** Joe mentioned that we do not have a description for the Certificate of Achievement Award. Katie said the Awards Committee will work on this. Jim mentioned that he was very pleased that the Awards Committee gave the Citation Award to Tom Scully. Tom has made innumerable improvements to trails all over the state and few people know of the work he has done.
- b. Backpacking 101.** Paul mentioned that he and Jim had come up with this idea while on a recent backpacking trip. They developed a Concept Document, which is enclosed. Dave led the discussion on the proposal. He has led several events of this type, including a 2 credit course at Penn State. He welcomed the opportunity to work on this project for KTA. The other members expressed enthusiastic support. Paul, Dave and Jim will work as a committee and develop a detailed proposal. Paul said other KTA members were welcome to be a part. Jim mentioned that the committee particularly wished to include a woman, to cover issues of interest to women.
- c. Tracy Ridge.** Joe said the Allegheny National Forest is proposing to allow mountain biking in the Tracy Ridge area. Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness is opposed to the proposal. There was discussion on the pros and cons of the proposal. The comment period has now ended.
- d. Member Survey.** Paul suggested that KTA do a survey of its members. He noted that we did one more than ten years ago, while he was Executive Director. He noted that Penn State professor Nancy Ellen Kiernen is an expert in this area, and he recommends contacting her for assistance. Donna also has expertise in this area, and will work with Joe and Sara.

IX. Executive Session. The members held an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. The minutes of the executive session are separate from these public minutes.

Paul noted that the next monthly conference call with Joe will be on Feb 7 at 9 am.

X. Next Board Meeting: Saturday, April 8, 2017, Ligonier Camp and Conference Center, Ligonier, PA

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Foster
Board Secretary