

IDITAROD TRAIL COMMITTEE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 2, 2004
Millennium Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President John Handeland at 9:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Richard Burmeister, John Handeland, Lee Larsen, Mark Moderow, Jim Palin and Dan Seavey

Members absent: Sam Maxwell, Mike Owens, Rick Swenson and Joe Redington, Sr.

Others present: Stan Hooley, Executive Director; Joanne Potts, Recording Secretary/Race Director; Greg Bill, Development Director; Don Patterson, Finance Director; Jack Niggemyer, Race Manager; Mark Nordman, Race Marshal and Stuart Nelson, Jr., DVM, Chief Veterinarian

The president noted that Joe Redington, Sr's absence was excused, that he is on the trail.

He also noted that Mike Owens' absence is excused.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Palin/Moderow moved to approve the agenda.

Seavey asked to add Iditarod's membership in the INHT as item 13, new trail markers, musher banquet tickets and finish line etiquette as items 11a, 11b and 11 c.

The agenda was approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15 MEETING

Larsen/Seavey moved to approve the minutes.

It was noted that on page 8, it appeared that Mark Nordman was stating that the village people were at fault for something, which was not what Nordman said. It was agreed to strike that sentence.

Palin noted that there is too much discussion in the minutes. He suggested that only action items be included in the minutes.

Handeland suggested that a summary of the action items could be released to the public and the minutes filed.

Moderow noted that exhaustive minutes tend to bite you more often than they help you.

Larsen commented that when a board member is not in attendance at a meeting or participating on the phone, he or she can get a better understanding of what was done at the meeting by reading the details in the minutes.

Handeland asked Potts to send him the minutes after the meeting and he will determine what will be published.

It was noted that Don Patterson and Greg Bill were left out of "others present" in the last minutes.

The minutes were approved with the changes mentioned.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Handeland noted that after the storm in Nome FEMA came to Nome and will be there until the end of January. He said they were there to return state or local properties or non-profit properties to pre-storm condition. He mentioned the trail markers that had been destroyed in the storm and noted that an organization can make a claim to FEMA for replacing them.

Handeland noted that he had received notification from the Executive Director that he requested the Board to renew his agreement. He said that has to be acted on within 30 days of the request.

Moderow/Palin moved to go into Executive Session. Motion passed.

The Board came out of Executive Session.

Moderow/Burmeister moved to provide notice to the Executive Director of intent to negotiate a successor agreement and authorizing the Executive Committee to serve as the negotiating committee, to return any recommended agreement to the full Board for final action.

Motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palin/Burmeister moved to accept the reports as presented and move on.

Moderow noted that he would like to give the staff a chance to supplement their reports and the Board a chance to ask questions.

Palin/Burmeister motion passed.

Hooley noted that we are in the process of redesigning the website. He said with the Idita-Rider auction on line, we have received about twice as much revenue as we had received by this time last year and there is 1 less bidder at this time this year. He noted that for the auction to succeed there must be more active bidders than mushers. He also noted that we now have three locked bids and we had none last year.

Seavey asked about the cost of the auction. Hooley noted that to get this new site, it cost roughly \$2,500.

Seavey asked about Greg Bill's helper that we have talked about hiring. Hooley noted that he would rather discuss that in more detail than just answer that question.

Hooley demonstrated the new things on the website and said it wouldn't be up and running until after the first of the year.

Handeland said he appreciated the hard work that went into the old site as well as what is now going into the new site.

RACE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Potts distributed copies of the draft Operations Manual that she and Niggemyer have been working on. She explained how it was set up and noted that there was more that could be included but wasn't in there at this time. She invited any comments or suggestions.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Greg Bill noted that he didn't have anything to add to his report.

RACE MANAGER'S REPORT

Niggemyer said there is a lot of snow out there but very little ice. He said he had met with the Rainy Pass owners and the cabin we'll be using this year is a different one. It has a kitchen, plenty of sleeping space and it's closer to the lake. They will provide weather ports on the lake and we have a wall tent to set up there.

Seavey noted that there are checkpoints where the mushers have been badly treated by staff and he said he hopes that changes.

Nordman assured the Board that that issue is being worked on.

Moderow asked if we are coordinating the putting in of the trail with the Iron Dog. Niggemyer explained that Barry Stanley and Joe Beach will go up as soon as the Iron Dog gets through and work on the trail.

Handeland commented that Niggemyer mentioned in his report something about driftwood slamming up against the beach. Niggemyer explained that that is at the shelter cabin at Shaktoolik.

Handeland noted that FEMA does debris removal. Niggemyer said he thought this was such an insignificant job that we shouldn't trouble FEMA with it.

Hooley showed pictures of the outhouse that we are looking at to purchase to put into several checkpoints. The run \$400 to \$600 each and we're looking at getting six to eight this year.

CHIEF VETERINARIANS'S REPORT

Nelson noted that there is now \$2,000 committed to the parasite research from the State of Alaska. He said the proposal calls for \$7,000, so it is not fully funded yet.

He distributed the packets he planned to distribute at the rookie meeting. He explained to the Board of Directors that he spends time at the rookie meeting telling the mushers what they should be always looking for in their teams. He said he wants everyone to know that this is the same presentation he does every year, it is not a different presentation this year.

Moderow noted that one of the things he has heard from Nelson often is that the number one thing the musher is responsible for on the race is watching his or her dogs. He stated that we can't ever back off dog care. We have to emphasize the right thing.

RACE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Nordman asked for a motion to approve his judges.

Moderow/Burmeister moved to accept the race judges requested by the Race Marshal with the addition of Mark Lindstrom. Motion passed.

Palin/Burmeister moved to accept the recommendation of the Rules Committee regarding qualifiers. Motion passed.

Nordman noted that we aren't putting the big rules meeting together until the Board gives direction.

Moderow noted that rules usually prevent a problem or promote a goal. He asked if we are having a race or an event?

Handeland said we had talked about getting input from various constituencies so we would have more information to make decisions. He said we need a method of collecting input from various constituencies.

Nordman invited Board members to the rookie meeting. He said the speakers would be Jeff King, Stu Nelson, himself, Jack Niggemyer, Jon Little, Joe Pendergrass, Will Peterson and Mitch Seavey. He said that on Sunday the rookies would be going to Martin Buser's.

HONORARY MUSER

Burmeister suggested Bob Ernissee and said if he had known, he could have gotten a number of supporting letters.

Other names mentioned were Larry Thompson, Leroy Wands, Natalie Norris and Jirdes Winther-Baxter. Handeland explained that Winther-Baxter is the last remaining survivor of the diphtheria epidemic in Nome and this is the 80th anniversary of the Serum Run.

Palin suggested that we only honor one individual.

Larsen noted that no one has done more to promote this sport than Susan Butcher.

Greg Bill commented that he remembered previous discussion about having one honorary musher who was chosen for a historic reason and one who was chosen for a more current reason.

Palin/Moderow moved that Larry Thompson be the honorary musher.

Burmeister asked if there could be two.

Larsen noted that since we celebrate that 1925 serum run, he thinks it would be a great thing to honor Winther-Baxter.

Moderow said he would accept a friendly amendment to include Winther-Baxter in the nomination for honorary musher.

The original Palin/Moderow motion was voted on. Motion passed and Larry Thompson was selected.

Burmeister/Larsen moved to do a secret ballot for the second honorary musher. Motion failed.

Seavey/Moderow moved to make Winther-Baxter the second honorary musher. Motion passed unanimously.

Handeland appointed Burmeister and Larsen to a committee to come up with a plan for selecting the honorary musher in the future.

EAGLE ISLAND

Niggemyer explained that originally we used the Canatzer's cabin at Eagle Island, before Helmi Canatzer died. Shortly after her death, their cabin burned. There is a small cabin there now but the only people who use it are Ralph and the two people who come to help him during the race. He said the eventually that will no longer be available to the Iditarod. And it is not an optimum set-up.

He said Ken Chase has offered us land that would be a better location for the checkpoint. There is a cabin package at Birchwood that we'd like to put up on Chase's property.

Burmeister/Palin moved to accept Chase's offer of a checkpoint location. Motion passed.

Burmeister/Palin moved to approve Niggemyer's recommendation on the placement of the checkpoint this year. Motion passed.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Niggemyer noted that in thinking about alternate routes, you assume that the problem is getting across the Alaska Range. He said he had come up with three possible routes.

Option one would be Fairbanks to Nenana to Lake Minchumina to Nikolai and then on the usual way. He said the only safe way to find out about this route is to travel it on the ground and it is still too early and too unsafe to do that.

He noted that we would have to figure out a drop dead date, and said this would be going into unexplored country.

He also noted that we have to look at these options seriously but that this is his first choice.

Larsen asked if we are all right with Fort Richardson. Niggemyer said he'd be meeting with people there soon. He did say that with regard to access we are o.k.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE INHT

Seavey explained that there is a permanent seat on the INHT board for Iditarod but Iditarod is not a member of INHT.

Palin commented that the INHT should also be a member of the Iditarod. He said they have just had their annual meeting. He said he is not sure what the roll of the INHT is or what it should be doing.

Moderow asked if there is any corporate reason that Iditarod wouldn't want to support INHT. Hooley explained that many groups use this race to request funds. We need to develop a clear focus on who the INHT is and make sure everyone understands that. He said the other issue is how people are using the Iditarod name and the INHT name to raise funds. He said when the Iditarod is out there competing for funds, we are very clear as to who we are. He said he has heard people reference the INHT as the Iditarod Race. He noted that in a perfect world we eliminate the confusion and the INHT would become a committee of the ITC.

Moderow stated that as of now, we have a mutual mission and we aren't at loggerheads with the INHT. He said he would like the INHT to discuss merging into the Iditarod.

Palin said the Forest Service is getting money for the southern end of the trail. From Seward to Girdwood. He said that everything the INHT could do could also be done by the Seward Trail Blazers of the ITC.

Moderow suggested that the problem is that everyone has the same goals and so a competition is set up and the funding then often goes to someone else.

Seavey commented that one of the problems that INHT has is separating from the dog race. He said he can see the INHT eventually evolved into the historic arm of the ITC.

Moderow/Larsen moved we by a \$500 membership in the INHT and strongly encourage them to do the same. Motion passed. Palin abstained because he is on the board of INHT.

Moderow/Burmeister moved that the president of designee establish initial discussion with the INHT on the possibility of merger. Motion passed. Palin abstained.

NOME TRAIL MARKERS

It was noted that FEMA is handing out money for storm damage but if no one claims it, it goes back to the government. Palin said the INHT did not buy those trail markers.

Seavey suggested that this is a Nome issue.

Handeland noted that they had been financed by the DOT, the DOT can give some group the right to put them back.

NEW TRAIL MARKERS

Seavey noted that he can tell it's too late for there to be new trail markers this year. He said he would propose something new and distinctive for lath next year. He suggested Niggemyer consider blue lath.

BANQUET TICKETS

Seavey said it seems like the mushers could get more for their \$1850 than one banquet ticket.

Moderow asked where the extra money would come from.

Patterson commented that we're looking at \$9,000 for each musher to have a ticket at each banquet.

Seavey asked about budgeting it for next year.

Handeland noted that there are always variances in the budget. He said we aren't at budget yet on the auction and asked if can end up exceeding budget, could we put the excess revenue toward extra tickets for the mushers.

Greg Bill pointed out the sponsors who give us close to \$1,000,000 still buy their tickets. He said we have to look at the big picture and see where else we can spread the wealth.

Seavey stated that this event is about the mushers.

Moderow noted that one reason Fur Rondy doesn't have support is because they weren't even inviting their sponsors to their banquet. He said we could do without one less musher but we couldn't do without one less sponsor.

Palin said he thought one ticket is light. He said we could give them an extra ticket but they'd have to understand it would come out of the purse.

Handeland said we should make quick emotional decisions and suggested that we consider two tickets for the Anchorage banquet.

Palin/Seavey moved to provide two tickets to mushers for the '05 banquet in Anchorage.

Larsen commented that the easiest thing would be to raise the entry fee to \$2,000 and give them two tickets.

Palin/Seavey motion failed for a tie vote.

**Larsen/Burmeister moved to refer this to the budget committee.
Motion passed.**

FINISH LINE IN NOME

Seavey commented that last year's champion got mauled. He said he doesn't get a chance to hug his wife or say hello to a sponsor. Can there be a five minute reprieve, perhaps while his sled is being checked.

Hooley noted that the finish line is always a struggle and apologized for what happened last year. He noted that we need a quality TV product and something

good for the people in Nome to see. He said the script, if followed, should protect the musher from what happened last year and we will work on that.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mark Moderow: Thanked the staff for the good preparation for this meeting and said he thinks we're moving in the right direction.

Jim Palin: He commented that the comments that come from the IOFC at the meeting in Nome after the race should be provided in writing. He said he'd like to get written comments on issues they'd like to have the board address.

Hooley suggested that the person who is the IOFC rep and the president of the IOFC be one and the same. He said he'd consider changing the bylaws to have the president be the board member.

Dan Seavey: He said it took him awhile to realize the implications of everything the Board deals with. For example, he said, now he can explain about the \$20,000 from the Outdoor Channel.

Richard Burmeister: He thanked the staff for the good work.

Lee Larsen: He commented that last year turned out better than we dared to hope for. He said he is excited about Chas St. George coming in. He also noted that you never have too much of a reserve. He said a half million, is not enough to run this race on.

John Handeland: Said he appreciated everyone here and he appreciated everyone's effort to stick with the agenda.

The board recessed into executive session to reconvene to discuss strategic planning with no plan for action items.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Hooley noted that the First Goal was to enhance the financial stability of the Organization. He noted that under that in sub-goal #1, GCI will test some of the equipment for the pay website this year.

For sub-goal #2, he said he still thinks we can get to \$1,500,000 in sponsors by March.

Sub-Goal #4: Moderow noted that it will be a monumental task to rename the board and there would have to be a new section inserted in the bylaws about board members with honorary duties.

Moderow said if we go to a committee, he could change the bylaws by Monday. It would be that simple. He agreed to come up with a proposal and then the Board can kick around what to call it.

Hooley said he'd rather proceed with this concept. He noted that what we provide for these people has to be pretty extravagant.

Moderow will come up with the proposal on the Board of Directors and suggested Hooley come up with the term sheet, which will get out to the Board in the next few weeks.

Hooley said nothing has happened on sub-goal #5.

He said sub-goal #6 had been addressed at the June 4 meeting. He said we aren't going to achieve our goal.

Lee Larsen asked to take Rick Koch's place on this committee. Handeland appointed him chair.

Hooley noted that goal #2 has been accomplished.

Goal #3: Moderow noted that we need to know what these people want but we have to find out what they want in an organized way.

Handeland appointed Burmeister to this committee.

Moderow noted that we could send out a member survey. He said we should try and identify the fans or focus groups. He said he isn't going to keep writing something on this if he doesn't know what is going to work.

Hooley noted that we could do an on line survey but don't have time between now and race time to put questions together.

Seavey suggested a couple of times a year when mushers and volunteers and others could get together and talk.

Moderow said he'll send a reminder to the Board to get topics in for the next time we get together.

Larsen commented that it would be logical that the P.R. person could help with this.

ADJOURNMENT

Moderow/Burmeister moved to adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.