

Worcester Chapter Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: March 29, 2017

Boylston Historical Society, 7 Central St. Boylston, MA

Attending: Dave Cole, Joe Massery, Pat Flanagan (minutes), Kim Beauchemin, Ingrid Molnar, Jonathan Dirodi, Pat Lambert, John Grote, Michele Simoneau, Dave Elliott, Fred Mezynski, Jose Schroen, Steve Ciras, Steve Crowe, Deb Herlihy, Gina Shea, Alexandra Molnar, Barb Dyer, Don Hoffses (for Kim Simpson), Karen Maki, Christina Ferretti, Mike Foley

Guests: Faith Salter, Director of Volunteer Relations; AMC Karl Fries, AMC's Financial Planning and Analysis Manager; Stephanie Krzyzewski, 20's & 30's leadership committee; Bill Zahavi, member of 100th Anniversary Committee; Sharon Whalen, member of 100th Anniversary Committee

The meeting was called to order at 6:38pm

Dave Cole presiding

New Business

- Goes on with the 2017 100 year planning committee- (Steve Ciras, Bill Zahavi)
Bill noted they have come to ask what activity chairs might offer to the celebration. The committee would like to create an activities series called 100th Anniversary. Activity leaders will be able to contribute a few activities in their category as part of this special anniversary activities series. The series will be advertised in advance and Bill noted that more than usual attendance is anticipated for these. More leaders may be needed to lead them. Bill requested that if activity chairs who are planning meetings would let Bill and Steve know about them, that they will be available to attend to discuss this idea further.

Steve Ciras noted additional aspects: Michele is doing a great job of offering research about past milestones and events that can be integrated into the celebration. Deb suggested it would be great to plan some events based on the historic components – a repeat of a documented hike, for example. Pat L suggested swag that participants receive each time they complete one of these anniversary events.

The Gala event will be Sept. 28th - 30th of 2018 at Hill Top at Prindle Pond. AMC Worcester will be the only event taking place there, and John Judge will attend and speak on Saturday morning. SOLO representatives will attend to do some demonstrations.

- Guest Discussion: Our Chapter's financial situation; how AMC manages finances (Faith and Karl, executive committee)

Karl described his background in outdoor activities and financial management that led to his role in the AMC, and thanked the chapter for the invitation to attend. He discussed 2017 goals,

AMC Economics, AMC Reserves, Chapter Financial Observations, and other aspects. PowerPoint slides attached (to be linked or added when received).

Discussion/questions were raised around:

- Why does HQ keep a fixed inventory of chapter assets (anything capitalized, but also some non-capitalized). One purpose is for insurance claims, in the event of theft or destruction. Another reason is for large asset capital planning.
- Questions about margin and occupancy rates of the lodges (Karl responded that these are high) and how/what is hoped for in terms of growth. Answer: all areas described in the slides. He noted that reserves can be impacted by the unpredictability in philanthropy and unexpected events like poor weather that impact event participation. Reserve funds above the 5% floor for emergencies is spent strategically for other things (called Operating Surplus Funds or OSF). Examples: the club recently hired a VP for Education and also opened a NY office for youth education programming. The most variability of revenue generation was during the recession. Currently, there is a lot of cash in the chapters, which have their own reserve and operating surplus funds. Pat L asked if that OSF would be spent down specifically for chapter purposes; Karl says The AMC Board of Directors, based on input from the AMC Finance Committee, determines what it is spent for. The Worcester chapter currently has about \$40K in these funds. The Volunteer Camp and Chapter Invested Reserve fund are held separately from the OSF funds.
- Karl reported funding raising has been more challenging, in response to a question about the impact of the presidential election season, but overall fundraising revenues grew.
- Questions about how are funds used by the chapters. Answer: funds received from donors for AMC and its mission can't be redirected to other organizations and their missions. However, they might be used to help pay an expense for another organization that is in keeping with AMCs mission, such as conservation.

- Guest Discussion: Continuation of AMC recent land sale discussion & utilization of monies (Faith, Karl, executive committee, see 2/28 email)

Dave reviewed the circumstances and discussion at the February meeting and the chapter's wish to participate in decision making regarding how the newly realized funds are spent. Faith explained that the club's Leadership Giving Initiative (LGI), crafted by John Judge to move the club into the 21st century, is in need of unrestricted funds to make certain things happen. Camp Dodge is one area identified as in need; another is the IT infrastructure, which serves the membership, the club, and the public at large.

Steve Ciras commented that the chapter has done well with its funds and has funded club and other chapter initiatives for many years, and did these things when the club requested assistance. But in contrast, in the case of the \$35,000 funds from the sale of the Worcester property, the chapter has been given no voice in how the funds are spent. Faith said the club's perspective is that this was a windfall and they are trying to look at the areas of greatest need across the organization that the funds can help address. At HQ they discussed the points Steve made, but as HQ does not consider Worcester a chapter in need they felt the funds are best used as part of the LGI. She noted that influxes of funds over \$10,000 trigger decisions made by

club leadership. Pat L commented that the leadership team hasn't mentioned any consideration of adding the funds to the overall endowment funds we all draw from, which might be a more appropriate use. Faith notes this is not a need right now. It was noted that the burning of the lodge and its aftermath is a sensitive subject that hasn't been acknowledged in this situation. Faith feels there is sensitivity to it, but they reserve the right to determine where the funds are most needed. Alex asked whether the chapter could restructure the gift we give to the LGI, but Faith feels that won't fly. Steve Crowe recounted the series of events that caused the problem, noting that local groups had worked for years petitioning with the city of Worcester to have the land reserved for trailheads, conservation and such things that are in keeping with the club's mission. He noted the irony that it was the AMC club that nixed the plans. Deb described a lengthy disconnect between the run up of the funds arrival and any communication about the situation with the Worcester chapter and noted that it's wrong that there was no inclusion of the chapter except a thank you that we "gave" the funds to the club. There was general agreement that this amounted to a bad process. Deb also felt the decision makers should have attended rather than sending Faith. Pat L agreed that the discussion should have happened long before any funds appeared. It was respectfully requested that the chapter have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Dave E read the list of possible uses of the funds by the LGI. Faith pointed out that the LGI funds of 17million include extensive restrictive donations. \$35K unrestricted funds is more than what it sounds like, because as unrestricted funds it can be directed where the club has particular needs, like the IT infrastructure, which is unlikely to be chosen by someone donating restricted funds. Karen asked what the IT plan is, specifically the web site. Faith reported that the CMS is almost unusable because of its platform and the web site is in need of redesign, though somewhat improved from past. They are also looking to acquire a CRM systems to support marketing. The activities database is also not running properly. IT receives funding from the OSF, but it takes a great deal of funding for some of the overhaul needed.

Continued comments detailed a variety of issues with regard to need for improved coordination with HQ and more opportunities for local chapters to provide information in support of decision making.

To resolve the conversation, Dave E moved that we not restrict the funds in question. It was approved with the following vote: Ayes=15, Nays=5, no abstentions

- Speaker for Annual Meeting in November (or dance?) - (Group)

Not discussed due to time

- Creation of sub-committee to review chapter bylaws and report in - (Steve Ciras)

Not discussed due to time

- Open House planning

Not discussed due to time

- Spring Hiking Workshop & progressive hiking series updates (Jon Dirodi & Gina Shea)
Not discussed due to time

Normal Business

- Approve Secretaries Report February Meeting (Pat Flanagan)
Moved to the April meeting

- Approve Treasurers Report January & February (Jose)
Moved to the April meeting

- Endowment Proposals review and Approval (Pat Lambert)
None

- A Club request to augment funding for InterChapter YM (20's and 30's) Leadership Training. This club-wide training for young member leaders costs \$5000. The chapter YM group was asked to subsidize expenses so registration for each attendee will be only \$40. The request is to fund \$250. Christina reported that Susanna and Dave suggested she bring the question to the Young Members committee to see how much their group can participate. \$400 of their \$600 budget of is already committed to another activity, and their aggressive outreach activity leaves them with few funds to offer. The committee ultimately voted to provide \$50 as an act of good faith.

Pat L had a number of questions about the total costs of the event moreso than the \$250, which is not a great amount of funding to identify. Deb H suggested that the costs for this event seem high and that the trainings she has organized for years are coming in much lower. The AMC doesn't discount its accommodations for these AMC events, but many sites do for this type of accommodation and the Worcester chapter has offered reasonably priced leadership training by using the latter. This year it's a done deal, but in future it's recommended that AMC training not be at AMC locations or that AMC locations discount for AMC trainings.

Steve Ciras moved that we donate \$300 to the effort from the leadership budget. The motion approved, but we would like to have a report of how many attend and how the funds are used.

- Volunteer of the Month: (Joe)

Joe reported we missed December's VOM so will pick winners for both December and March.

Nominee	Nominator	Reason
Joe Young	Mike Foley	For helping with the NQTA hike series and the disabled vets fly fishing group.

Neil Schutzman	Gina Shea	For organizing the Peak Bagging series.
Bob Gilchrest	Pat Lambert	For volunteering for the 100th Anniversary Committee, and for his wealth of knowledge, passion, and exuberance.
Debi Garlick	Annemarie Langhan	For leading the Winter Hiking Program and organizing many of the winter hikes.
Ed Bajakian	Walt Lazarz	For his stellar and above-the-top excellent support as co-lead on the Quabbin Park hike.

December winner: **Emerson Grant**

March winner: **Debi Garlick**

- Facebook and email blast
Not discussed due to time

Old Business

- Action Item (date created) Deb, Mike, Steve (4/16):
Not discussed due to time

- Photo workshop -open - sometime in 2017
Not discussed due to time

- Camp Dodge Challenge
Not discussed due to time

- Update New member postcard - (Karen)
Not discussed due to time

Round table (All)

- Food and Planning for APRIL EC meeting(?)
Not discussed due to time

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35