

AMC Worcester Chapter

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: 1/31/24

To foster the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors.

WEBEX LINK: <https://outdoorsorg.webex.com/meet/wrchapterwebex2>

Attendees list (Virtual Only):

- Chris Pignatiello-Chatson, Chapter Chair
- Wendy Dziemian, Vice Chair
- Kim Beauchemin, Past Chair
- Donald Davies, Leadership Chair
- Ruth Legg, Secretary
- José Schroen, Treasurer
- Carol Warren, Social Media and Communications Co-Chair
- Eric Fung, Biking Chair
- Eric Harris, Conservation Chair
- Christine Crepeault, Finance Chair
- Walt Lazarz, Hiking Chair
- Alex Molnar, Membership Chair
- Mike Peckar, Midstate Trail
- David Elliott, Paddling Chair
- Ruth Langh, Skiing Co-Chair
- Rob Gonzalez, Skiing Co-Chair
- John Mangano, Trails Chair
- Zenya Molnar, 20s and 30s Chair
- Steve Ciras, Maine Woods Initiative Committee
- Ladda "Bug" Kosaketh, DEI Chair
- Charlie Arsenault, Regional Director
- Meighan Matthews, Volunteer Relations Manager

6:30 PM — Meeting called to order & Regular business (20 min)

- Welcome and Review working agreements (online etiquette)
 - This meeting will be recorded.
- Review/Accept minutes of previous EC Meeting – Nov 2023
 - Ruth needed 2 clarification on names provided by Chris P and Charlie A to add to the minutes. The minutes will be updated with this information and the final copy will be sent to Carol for “filing”.
 - Motion to accept - Wendy D; second - Chris P; Vote taken – AIF
- November Treasurer’s Report – José S
 - The updated version of the Treasurer’s Report was sent out for review. Christine C had supplied the cashflow rollover. Ruth Langh confirmed that the expenses for skiing were correct. There was no other feedback regarding the December reports.
 - Thanks to all who sent reimbursement requests
 - Midstate trail was rolled into Worcester budget
 - The Audit was completed and submitted
- Volunteer of the Month – Dec 2023 & Jan 2024 –Wendy D
 - For December - Stephanie Keimig – Nominated by Pat Lambert for “all of the work that she does for the Winter Workshop and winter hikes”
 - For January - Bill Zahavey – Nominated by Joe Massery for helping out with 3rd Wednesday
- Updates from AMC – Charlie/Meighan
 - Charlie A – Regarding the Planning meeting last Saturday – Nicole is asking for us to please send ideas on

how AMC staff can support you in achieving AMC priorities around creating joyous experiences in the outdoors and creating equitable access for the outdoors (2 big priorities that AMC has for 2024). Input is due by 2/8/2024. There were some

- Chris P will share the running list of items that they came up with during last Saturday's planning meeting to the ECOM group in the next couple of days. If you want to add anything to the list, please email Chris P directly so that it can be added to the list. David E said he will have something to contribute.
- Meighan M – Kudos to the Worcester Chapter. The planning meeting went very well. Brittany had nothing but good things to say about the budget and the audit coming from the Worcester Chapter. Many chapters are struggling to attract 20s & 30s to their activities but the Worcester Chapter is doing an excellent job with the 20s & 30s group. They are asking other chapters to schedule leadership training. Worcester is doing good with leadership training. The Annual Summit was a big success, videos of the presentations will be up on a publicly accessible library and that will come out in the next volunteer newsletter. The Worcester Chapter got 3 awards!!

6:50 PM — Old business (20 min)

- Annual Summit – Worcester Chapter Awards – Chris P-C
 - Bug and Alex – Received the Volunteer Leadership Award!!
 - Steve Crowe – Received the Warren Hart Award – 224 Hours of Service!!
 - Chris – Attendance for the Annual Summit was great. The above two received awards. Bug also qualified for the Warren Hart award. Thank you for all of the hours and dedication you have put in to help the chapter and congratulations.
 - There was a brief discussion around the reporting of service hours. Some people put in a lot of hours but don't report them, possibly because they do not know how. Christine C will research the process and send out an email to remind people and explain the process. Charlie provided a link in the chat regarding the subject. Link from Charlie:
<https://www.outdoors.org/resources/amc-outdoors/news/amc-annual-volunteer-awards/>
- Chapters Committee update – Wendy
 - Nicole shared what will become the bones of our strategic plan going forward and the 2 things we are focusing on immediately are 1) focusing and sustaining a diverse and robust community and 2) leading with joy. Other good news is that they are investigating rebranding and there is a potential for a new logo. The question was brought up by Chris P to clarify whether there may not be a new logo and Charlie A confirmed that there will be a new logo but asked that we not share that with everyone for a while since it won't be until the fall, but don't spend money on ordering items with the old logo since it will be changing. Don't share this news on social media yet, this is insider information.
 - There are so many new team members at the AMC club level; there is a lot to look forward to; it is very exciting.
- Annual Mtg & Social Update: 11/9/24 – Alex
 - Alex is gathering a subcommittee so if you are interested in planning the annual meeting and dinner for next November let her know. Chris P asked to be put on the list for that committee.
- Park Spirit of Worcester Endowment Fund Application: Status Update – Mike P
 - Mike submitted the grant application; today was the deadline.
 - There was a discussion between Mike P, Meighan M and Chris P in regards to the MOU process. The process was frustrating for the chapter and it seems that a heightened level of scrutiny/requirements now exists, so it has been a bit challenging with the 2 grant applications before us and one has pulled out until such time that they decide to reapply. So for the MOU for Park Spirit, we are going to re-do the grant application and not involve Park Spirit; it will be a grant requested by the chapter. The work will get done and Park Spirit may be involved in volunteering, but the chapter will be the subject of the grant and will purchase the materials. The grant will not be to the Park Spirit of Worcester charity. Meighan asked for clarification and it was explained by Chris P and Mike P that that we have done this in the past when it was not an operational item and it was not going to be an ongoing annual request, we would take the money from the pocket we have for grant allocations to fund a special project.



Meighan said that from the MOU it was unclear where the funding was actually going to go and that the previous iteration of the MOU was only missing a couple of activities that showed that the project was going to involve AMC Worcester members and Mike said that he rewrote the MOU to mention that the Chapter Trails Committee and Midstate Trails Committee would lead trips in general but the disconnect was that they were required to be specific and after consideration, it was easier to handle it by taking them out of the equation and re-doing the request. So the grant application now is very specific—it's asking for funding for materials associated with improvements to be made to the steep sections of trails in very specific places on the East West trail in the Gods Acre property which is owned by the Greater Worcester Land Trust.

Meighan then asked if she correctly understood that with these changes there now is no partnership and the request is a whole new concept that the chapter wants money from the endowment to spend money for trail maintenance on someone else's property and Mike answered that it is not a new concept for this chapter. It's been done many times before on the Pine Hills Trail by Steve Crowe on other trails, on the Greater Worcester Land Trust property. Meighan then agreed and stated that whatever has happened before for transferring money from the endowment to the chapter is the process to follow for this grant but that she needs to be brought in when there is to be a transfer of money to outside organizations and in those cases, there needs to be a commitment by both parties in an ongoing relationship and this was acknowledged by Mike and Chris P.

Mike then asked that since there will be more grants in the future, he would like for there to be clear guidance in what is expected in the MOU process for future grants and would particularly like to eliminate the requirement that volunteers be required to set up specific events in partnership with the particular organization involved in the MOU but rather define the partnership in other ways. Chris C added that she would be happy to have another conversation outside of this meeting to go over how we've done this in the past with other organizations and how it's been looked at when it stays within and it's not just an ongoing operating expense of our chapter but it is a special project. Meighan said that the big take away is the we shouldn't be seeing ourselves as a non profit organization that gives donations. We're not a passthru of money from our organization to other non profits. It needs to be beneficial for both our members and other organizations' members that needs to be seen in some expression of commitment on both sides and some expression of some sort of ongoing sustainable relationship with participation from both sides.

Chris P then stated that she hoped that since this particular item has been in the system for some time now and has not moved forward that we can move forward here with this application. Mike P and Christine C can have a conversation aside from this meeting about how it was done in the past and going forward, we all need to understand how we might handle future applications differently. Also, Mike P asked if MOUs will be required in the future for The Greater Worcester Land Trust and the answer came back that MOUs are only required for organizations that do not already have partnerships with the chapter.

A question was brought up asking if this was going to impact our ability to give funds to JUMP? We do have Bug with us now but that's highly unusual. If Bug wasn't here, are we slamming the brakes on JUMP because we don't run JUMP; JUMP is independent. Meighan asked for clarification on whether we were doing activities with JUMP that involve AMC members? Bug said not exactly. The grant that we did get was for us to go on AMC properties in leadership programs. She wasn't sure if that counts? She said it was just a reimbursing grant and we didn't do anything with it yet so we could drop it if that's the case. Meighan said that we could check with Faith because she must have approved that one in the past. Dave E stated that we like JUMP and we don't want to lose them. Christine C said that the finance department at the club had shared a list of partnerships they have established with different groups and JUMP was one of them so because of that, we did not have to go through this MOU process. So where we got caught with Park Spirit is now we had some new people approach us and then there was this heightened review process that we were weren't prepared for on top of doing the additional budget

process so we were just caught off guard and it did not work well. Wendy D also mentioned that there is a person we can contact for guidance at the AMC Club level that handles MOUs.

7:10 PM — New business (45 min)

- General Updates – Chris P (5 min)
 - Welcome – John Mangano, Trails Chair! Happy to have you!
 - TrailsFest Update
 - We are still in need of someone to take the Project Chair role for this event.
 - If you know of someone, let Chris P and/or Wendy D know.
 - Worcester Chapter Planning Meeting 1/27/24 –
 - It was a good meeting; there were lots of ideas; especially on increasing membership.
 - Chris P is going to send out a recap email with a summary of action items and a list of doable things to tackle.
 - Carol – MEETUP update (10 min)
 - AMC Worcester initiated a Meetup group to enhance chapter visibility.
 - We had a Meetup group previously, but it fell apart during the pandemic and no longer exists.
 - Membership currently stands at 67; all you need to do is set up a Meetup account and join the group.
 - We can have up to 5 groups within our Meetup. One is already set up for 3rd Wednesday.
 - Meetup offers a better notification system compared to ACTDB.
 - Participant and Meetup guidelines crucial; we do not want events that need to be screened or require leader interaction to become "show and go" events.
 - Events from ACTDB can be selectively added to Meetup.
 - Carol available for event addition assistance; leaders can add events.
 - Discussion on potential inclusion of leaderless activities in the future.
 - Organizers Joe M, Wendy D, Kim B, and Alex M are already set up.
 - Queries and concerns directed to Carol W.
 - Additional Input by David E:
 - Highlighted Meetup's outreach potential to individuals unfamiliar with AMC.
 - Emphasized the need for careful event scheduling to avoid "show and go" scenarios.
 - Suggested Activity Chairs to have permissions on Meetup.
 - Chris P suggested initiating an email chain for queries with Carol.
 - Walt - Hiking Related Forms (10 min):
 - Walt proposed improvements to the Worcester Chapter website's leadership page for easier form access.
 - He shared a few examples of the difficulty of locating the appropriate forms on Outdoors.org.
 - Agreement on collaboration between Walt L and Carol W to streamline form access.
 - There were some concerns raised regarding form updates and link management.
 - Suggestion to create a dedicated page for essential form links.
 - Rob highlighted the need to update the leaders' page.
 - Acknowledgment of Carol's invaluable contribution to form management.
 - From the chat, a link for forms: <https://www.outdoors.org/community/center-for-outdoor-learning-and-leadership/volunteer-resources/>
 - Wolf Oak Privy Purchase overage: \$4085.43 v \$4000 - Mike P (5 min)
 - Mike provided an explanation of a \$85 overage in the Wolf Oak Privy purchase.
 - Previous privy project was \$1000 under budget due to in-house lumber milling.
 - Mike P - Motion to accept the overage; seconded by David E - AIF and approved.
 - Chapter Funds/Budgeting - Christine C (15 min)
 - YTD Budget Review:
 - Discussion on income and expenses.
 - Christine explained the budget format.
 - First four columns represent incoming expenses for operations distribution for any grants that we award as well as endowment fund activities.

- Funds are managed in two buckets: one by Jose, listed under Chapter and the other by the club where money is held for us and invested and we get interest back.
- The revised cash balance for operations discussed and as of the end of December, for operations, we have about \$48,000.
- Endowment allocation highlighted; \$25,000 still available as of Dec.
- Additional allocation expected in June.
- Reminder to be aware of committed funds from previous grants – one for \$1,000 for Greater Worcester Land Trust (from 2022) and one for JUMP for \$5,000 (approved in September, 2023) for a total of \$6,000, so we have \$19,000.
- Future recommendations to be made based on available funds.
- Worksheet to be provided monthly by Jose.

- **Treasurer's Report 2023:**

- Jose's monthly report details activities charged to accounts.
- Review and confirmation of accuracy requested.
- YTD spending compared to budget discussed.
- Questions addressed; none raised.

- **Budget Explanation**

- Budget form for various committees explained.
- Budgeting process outlined for July.
- Previous year's budget available for reference.
- Changes in budget requests explained.
- Finance committee's role in reviewing requests clarified.
- Future review and clarification session planned for summer.
- Questions directed to Christine.

- **Next Steps**

- Confirmation of accuracy of Jose's monthly worksheet.
- Review and potential adjustments to budget requests.
- Clarification of budget process and guidelines with Christine.

7:55PM – General Announcements

- Charlie – Introduced Steve Ciras. Steve has held several positions including past Chair on the Worcester EC. He currently sits on the Maine Woods Initiative committee to be a voice in the projects and future planning of what goes on in the Maine Woods which Worcester Chapter has, since 2007, provided substantial financial support and sweat equity every year. So the purpose of his attending this meeting and future meetings is to listen, understand and communicate those interests of both organizations. Happy to be here.
- Zenya M – Thanks Meighan for the kudos given at the beginning of the meeting for the Worcester Chapter's 20's & 30's groups' success and feel free to pass on her info for anyone from other chapters that may want to chat.
- Charlie – Steve Crowe called today; he mentioned the need for a chair for Trailsfest (also already mentioned earlier in this meeting. Steve would be happy if somebody would step up and help coordinate hikes, paddles, biking events—so basically somebody to be the go between for Trailsfest and all the activity chairs to get people to run activities on National Trails Day. He's starting a planning meeting next week and if you are interested get in touch with Steve. He would be fine to have someone that is just willing to help coordinate some activities.


8:00 PM – Adjourn

Action Item Review

Action Item	Owner	Status
Migrate outdated SharePoint documents into archive folder	Chairs	OPEN

AMC WORCESTER CHAPTER **Executive Committee Calendar: 2023- 2024**

All mtgs are hybrid unless otherwise stated

Date	Day	Meeting
November 29, 2023	Wednesday	EC Meeting
1/20/24	Saturday	AMC Annual Summit, Norwood
1/27/24 9A – 1P	Saturday	EC Planning Meeting
1/31/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting REMOTE ONLY
2/28/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
3/27/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
4/24/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
5/29/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
5/17/24 – 5/19/24	Fri - Sun	AMC Chapters Retreat @ CHOC
6/26/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
Summer Break		
9/25/24 Welcome back!	Wednesday	EC Meeting
TBD (Sept 2024)	TBD	Fall Fest
10/30/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting
11/9/24	Saturday	Annual Meeting & Social
11/27/24	Wednesday	EC Meeting REMOTE ONLY