Ski for Light, Inc.

Minutes of Summer Board Meeting

July 23, 2020

Meeting via Teleconference

President McCorcle called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

Roll Call

Present: Tim McCorcle; Julie Coppens; Krista Erickson; Brenda Seeger; Michael Evelo; Robert Hartt; Marion Elmquist; Renee Abernathy; John Amundson; Cara Barnes; Amy Brannan; Wendy David; Judith Dixon; Betsy Fischer; Lynee Forsyth; Andrea Goddard; Nicole Haley; Lauren Heine; Melinda Hollands; Bonnie O’Day; Laura Oftedahl; Sheri Richardson; Larry Showalter; and Karen Wood

Absent: John Elliott.

Tim explained that John Elliott contacted him prior to the meeting to advise that he would be unable to attend.

**Approval of Minutes from February Annual Board Meeting**

Krista proposed a correction to the minutes of the February, 2020, Board of Directors meeting. The text of the proposed correction was distributed via e-mail prior to this meeting. The minutes of the February 2020 Board of Directors meeting were approved as corrected. The corrected minutes will be distributed to the Board.

**Treasurer’s Update**

Brenda reported that SFL currently has $54,172.00 in checking and $64,755.00 in Savings for total operating funds of $118,927.00 (amounts rounded). The Endowment Fund currently has about $373,000.00. Brenda will re-send the June 30th I&E report to correct the amount which was incorrectly listed for ski rentals. Nicole, Brenda and Tim will work together to address an accounting difficulty currently making it hard to separate out income from the sales room and silent auction. Brenda reported that she is working on both the year end and #990 reports.

**Executive Committee Recommendation for 2021 Event**

Prior to the meeting, Tim e-mailed the Board several documents explaining the process used and Covid-19 Pandemic information relied upon for the Executive Committee’s recommendation. The primary document relied upon was the Considerations for 2021 SFL Event (see pages 6-13 for the text of this document). Bonnie O’Day, 2021 Event Chair, briefly summarized the document explaining the assumptions that the document was based on and the mitigating measures that would have to be implemented for various skiing and social aspects of a typical SFL event week. The document explains the risks and costs of canceling the event and those of holding a virtual event. Physicians familiar with SFL have all advised not to hold an in-person event.

Tim thanked Bonnie for her work preparing the document and for attending the June and July Executive Committee meetings. We will not know much more in a few weeks than we do now and can’t wait past September 1st to decide whether or not to hold an in-person event in 2021. Based on the above (as summarized), the Executive Committee recommends that, in lieu of having an in-person event at SMR next January, we stage a virtual event at the same time and direct the planning committee to begin planning for a virtual event.

A discussion ensued primarily about whether or not to hold a virtual event. The discussion continued around and between two (2) motions being adopted which are detailed immediately below this summary of the discussion.

Our community is engaged and is looking for something from us -- it would be an interesting and fun challenge for us to hold a virtual event rather than taking a year off and not hold an event at all. A virtual event could be an opportunity to introduce people who can’t afford to come to SFL or don’t know about SFL. Concerns were raised about people being tired of virtual events, having a virtual event potentially lasting a week and scheduling around international time zones and work schedules. We could offer a mix of live and archived sessions to at least partially address this concern. A virtual event could include webinars on guiding techniques, skiing techniques, special interest sessions and physical activity that participants can do on their own and then report back. An online auction may be possible. Marion and Renee have been in touch with several corporate sponsors who have previously supported SFL. We need to think about accessibility and possibly using other platforms other than or in addition to Zoom. It should be possible to have some virtual social activities.

We should detail our plans for a virtual event in the Fall Bulletin published in November and in the Annual Report published in January or February.

Bonnie moved and Marion seconded a motion that the Board of Directors adopt the Executive Committee’s recommendation not to hold an in-person event in 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

Marion moved and Julie seconded a motion that we commit to staging a virtual ski for light 2021 event. The motion carried with one (1) abstention.

Julie encouraged avoiding using the word “cancel” in explaining this decision – this is why the Executive Committee included a virtual event together with the recommendation to not hold an in-person event in 2021.

Bonnie will continue as 2021 event chair for a virtual event and shared some thoughts on organizing a committee to plan a virtual event. Bonnie is planning to have a program committee, technical committee and an auction committee. The existing recruitment committees will continue to work with the Event Planning Committee using different messaging. Please contact Bonnie if you are interested in serving on the planning committee for the 2021 virtual event.

**Executive Committee Recommendation for 2022 Event**

Tim explained that most of the possible future event sites have not been skied or visited recently by SFL. We also do not know what travel will be like due to the Pandemic. Therefore, the Executive Committee is recommending to the Board that SFL start negotiations with Snow Mountain Ranch to hold the 2022 event.

Nicole moved and Melinda seconded a motion to begin negotiations with Snow Mountain Ranch to host the 2022 event. The motion carried unanimously.

A brief discussion ensued about possible locations for future events. Cara Barnes, Site Selection Committee Chair, summarized the options the Committee is currently considering. Provo, Utah is not available until 2023. Other options include: New Hampshire; Minneapolis; Michigan; and Green Bay or Rhinelander , Wisconsin. While we will focus on the 2021 event, it may be helpful for communicating and maintaining interest to announce the location for the 2022 event earlier than usual if possible.

**Communications with the SFL Community**

Julie explained that we need to be communicating consistently and to keep our community engaged with SFL. Julie is considering possibly beginning a podcast and making more use of SFL’s existing Twitter presence. Prior to the meeting, Tim sent the Board a recent article published in FasterSkier. The article, “Guiding to a New Outlook”, was written by New England Regional SFL guide, Clarence Feng. (see https://fasterskier.com/fsarticle/guiding-to-a-new-outlook-by-clarence-feng/) The editor of FasterSkier is interested in more stories. Clarence’s article got several people thinking that we need a platform for our community to talk about issues of equity and intersectionality. Please contact Julie with any ideas or thoughts.

**Plan for Addressing 2020 Event Guide-Skier Trios**

Tim explained that during the 2020 event in Casper, a shortage of guides created a situation in which eighteen (18) guides were matched with two skiers each for a total of fifty-four (54) people skiing as trios instead of pairs. The Executive Committee recognized that this caused a different experience at the event than expected and decided that the affected guides and skiers would be contacted to acknowledge what happened, be offered an apology and a discount of two hundred dollars ($200.00) off an event fee for a future event of their choosing. Tim and Julie will work on talking points and then Executive Committee members will divide up a list of names to contact all affected guides and skiers. Contacts should be completed by the end of September.

**Other Business**

Bonnie asked about the status of the coordinators and committee chairs list required by the Bylaws. Tim explained that he currently has nineteen (19) of the twenty-six (26) committee chair and coordinator positions filled -- the list will be completed and distributed soon.

Cara made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded but the seconder could not be identified before the motion was adopted and the meeting subsequently adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

DRAFT

**Considerations for SFL Event 2021**

1. **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to help the SFL executive committee and the board of directors decide whether to hold the 2021 SFL event. If we hold the event, what should the event consist of and how can we best protect the health and safety of attendees? If we do not hold the event, what can be done to promote SFL activities in our community? A committee consisting of Tim McCorcle, Bonnie O’Day and Krista Erickson worked on this document. Thanks also go to Carl Heine and Steve Vosler, both physicians, who reviewed and commented on it.

The considerations below are based on assumptions that may or may not be true in January 2021. We will need to evaluate the validity of these assumptions based on the latest medical advice and expectations for January at the time of our decision.

The assumptions used in this document are:

* A vaccine that mitigates COVID-19 has not been developed or is not widely available. (To prevent spread, 80 percent of the population must have received the vaccine.)
* Social distancing of 6 feet is highly recommended or required
* Wearing masks indoors is either highly recommended or required
* Gatherings of crowds up to 200 people is allowed in Colorado
* Outside activities are considered safer than indoor activities in terms of virus spread
* There is not a lock-down in most states, similar to the lockdown implemented by most states in March 2020
* Our attendees will come primarily from outside of Colorado
* Attendees will reflect our usual age and health status.

Median Age of Guides and Skiers

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 |
| Guides | 65 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 65 |
| VIPs | 59 | 58 | 57 | 58 | 55 |
| MIPs | 54 | 52 | 49 | 57 | 58 |

We used the US Olympic/Paralympic Committee Guidelines for Planning Events as a guide. Grand County COVID-19 Activity Specific Protective Measures recommends social distancing and masks for “the foreseeable future”. (See <https://www.co.grand.co.us/1303/9866/Activity-Specific-Protective-Measures>.) SFL should conduct a risk assessment mitigation plan based on these assumptions; we can alter the assessment if the assumptions change by the time we need to make the decision. The risk assessment should consist of two parts: (1) safety of attendees, and (2) costs to the organization. Both assessments should consider risk/cost of having the event versus risk/cost of not having the event. Answering the questions and considering the issues below can form the basis for the risk assessment.

1. **Safety of Attendees**
2. Accepting attendees
* Can we restrict attendees with certain conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or other high-risk groups, or those over a certain age? Those deemed to be at high risk include: those 65 years of age and older, or those with moderate to severe asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, serious heart conditions, immune compromise, severe obesity, liver disease, living in a nursing home or long term care facility. Note that Grand County, Colorado lists age 60 and older among those deemed to be at high risk, although most advice lists age 65.
	+ 1. This includes the majority of our group. Restricting attendees by age or health condition would be extremely difficult and would infringe upon attendees’ personal decision-making
	+ Can we restrict travelers who are coming from a highly active transmission area of COVID-19? This would also be difficult since areas of highly active transmission keep changing.
	+ Should we consider limiting or restricting foreign delegations, particularly from countries with high transmission rates?
		1. Olympic guidelines suggest quarantine of all attendees for 14 days after travel, which is not practical for SFL
	+ All attendees should sign a waiver that specifically addresses Corona Virus/Covid-19 along with our usual other provisions. There are many examples of waivers that might relieve SFL of responsibility should someone become ill with the virus. We could ask attendees to sign the waiver prior to their attendance.
		1. The waivers may or may not stand up in court, but we should have one. We have an example from the YMCA, which is a good start but we should add that SFL would have permission to share attendee personal/contact information with health authorities for contact tracing and that attendees agree to follow all SFL and SMR distancing/safety protocols.
1. Travel to the Event
	* What are airport and airlines current policies to promote safe air travel; (requiring masks, temperature checks, empty middle seat, etc.?)
		1. We may not be able to obtain assistance from the Sons of Norway at the Denver Airport. Will other assistance in airports be available?
	* How can we promote social distancing on the bus from the airport to SMR?
		1. Each bus has about 65 seats, so a half-full bus would accommodate about 32 people. Some participants are couples and could sit together. There is also guidance on transportation from Grand County we could consult. We would need someone to assist riders in choosing seats, etc. Cost would need to be considered.
2. Arrival/Registration
	* Can we limit the number of people in any one place, such as the lobby? As of July, Colorado allows up to 500 people in one setting, if they are wearing masks and doing social distancing.
	* Are there separate entrance and exit doors from the lobby? (We believe there are in Indian Peaks and the dining room but not in the other buildings.
	* Can we assign someone to manage the registration line to ensure social distancing?
	* Can or should we test for the virus at registration?
		1. Our medical advice says probably not. At this writing it requires trained medical personnel and PPE. Testing equipment and PPE is difficult to obtain. Reliable test results take several days to receive. The other question is whether SFL wants to take this on, as it is far afield from our mission. (See comments from doctors at the end of this document.)
		2. Do we need daily temperature checks? If so, how do we sort out Covid from altitude illness and the usual SFL cold/flu?
	* Can we provide high quality masks for all attendees? How often do they need to be replaced? (Some guidance is saying daily.)
		1. We could include masks, hand sanitizer and other related items in the welcome bags.
	* Some people may need assistance to their rooms. How can this be safely handled?
	* Can we suggest that VIPs navigate independently in most situations rather than relying on a sighted guide? This may be particularly difficult at SMR, particularly between buildings and in the dining room.
	* We could consider limiting the number of participants to a group number we anticipate is low risk, for example, 50 guides, 50 skiers and a few others.
3. Meals
	* SMR is not currently serving meals but this will hopefully change by January. How can we promote distancing at dinner?
	* Does SMR have sufficient kitchen and housekeeping staff to provide meals, either box lunches or otherwise? We may need to limit meal choices to standard and vegetarian, depending upon staff capabilities.
	* Should we consider a box breakfast and lunch?
		1. If so, what to do about morning announcements? Could we handle via mobile app or podcast?
		2. We could allow only a certain number of people in the lodge for lunch at any one time and could provide a large tent for the overflow.
		3. We would need monitors to keep track of how many people were in the lodge at any one time.
	* Again, we could limit the number of participants to promote social distancing at meals.
	* Need to provide adequate hand washing/sanitation provisions. SMR will make arrangements for this.
4. Assigning sleeping rooms
	* Assign roommates only with people who request a certain roommate. Assign all others a single room. This has cost implications.
	* We could have all attendees stay in Indian Peaks, minimizing travel between buildings.
		1. We would probably need to subsidize participants who would have opted to stay in Aspenbrook to save costs
	* Or, we could split people evenly between the buildings, attempting to maximize social distancing and allowing for more single occupancy rooms.
		1. SFL would probably need to subsidize attendees who do not request a certain roommate
5. Special Interest Groups and Evening Activities
	* Are the rooms for special interest groups large enough to allow some social distancing for attendees? Depending upon number of participants, some of them are but others are not. Stretching, some special interest sessions and evening programs would have to be run very differently if at all. The number of people in the sales room may also need to be monitored.
	* Evening activities and bar may need to be curtailed or restructured in some way.
		1. SFL must commit to paying for all sleeping rooms in Indian Peaks if we want to have a bar. The bar is often crowded and social distancing and wearing masks would be difficult.
		2. The social aspect of SFL is as important to many of us as the skiing. Although alcoholic beverages are allowed in the sleeping rooms, not having a communal gathering place would be very isolating for attendees that do not have an established social network.
6. Cross Country Skiing
	* Cross Country Skiing is a sport that is classified by the Olympic/;Paralympic Committee as a Level Two Classification, which includes sports that require close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particulate transmission between participants or intermittent, close contact. This guidance may not be applicable to us, since we ski very close to our guides. Our situation may be similar to Classification One, which covers sustained, close and prolonged contact. The guidance suggests, “Having two negative COVID-19 tests 24 hours apart within a few days of the competition and ensuring the athletes are isolated from the time of the tests until the competition. This level of isolation would be impractical for SFL.
	* Can we require masks while skiing?
		1. For those who ski hard, masks may make it difficult to breathe, particularly considering the altitude.
	* Should we have the race/rally or conduct it in some other way? We could not have the usual opening ceremony and lining up if we maintain social distance.
		1. People could time themselves and let leaders know they are doing the race independently
	* Would we need to limit the number of passengers on the van from lodging to the ski site?
7. If someone becomes infected
	* If someone tests positive, can we isolate them quickly?
	* Would we need to isolate those with whom they have been in close contact?
	* Do we have medical personnel who are willing to be responsible for treating people with the virus? (See doctors’ comments at the end of this document.)
	* Can we obtain sufficient PPE for medical staff, who may be asked to treat or transport anyone with the virus?
	* What is the nearest medical facility with ability to handle a COVID case? How will infected people get there?
		1. If someone becomes infected, they will need to be transferred to the nearest hospital, and probably on to Denver for treatment.)
		2. We will need to develop a medical plan as to what will occur if someone tests positive and contact local medical officials to let them know about SFL. We should defer to our medical doctors/experts on this.
8. Planning Meeting
	* What are the risks of traveling to SMR in October for the planning meeting?
	* Can we limit the number of people who travel to SMR to a very few and do the rest of the meeting remotely?
		1. Are there compelling reasons to hold an in-person planning meeting, considering how often we have been to SMR? We have been there so often we probably could do the meeting remotely.
9. Risks of cancelling the event
	* The situation may change for the better between the time we make the decision and the time for the cancelled event.
		1. SFL supporters become very disappointed.
		2. We need to explain clearly why we made whatever decision we make about holding an event including our timeframe limitations forcing us to decide months in advance.
		3. May not return to SFL in future years
	* Our supporters/funders lose interest and do not support SFL in the future
	* SFL expends significant cost/energy planning the event, only to have it cancelled.
	* Virtual events not considered interesting or valuable by participants
10. **Cost to SFL**
11. Financial Considerations of holding the event
* Costs to SFL of holding the event with a limited number of participants
	+ Where is the break-even point, or what amount of financial loss could we withstand?
* Costs of allowing single room occupancy for all those who do not have a specified roommate
* Costs of extra buses from airport to SMR and potentially extra vans from sleeping rooms to ski and dining area.
* Costs of extra materials and supplies
	+ Tent for lunch, face masks and hand sanitizer for attendees, PPE for any medical staff
* The risk mitigation measures we implement may be viewed as over-reach by participants. People may resent mask wearing, social distancing and other mitigation measures.
* Potential savings by holding a remote, or mostly remote, planning meeting
1. Costs of cancellation
* Loss of financial support from contributors
	+ We could keep them engaged through virtual events
* Potential down payment followed by a cancellation
* What are the costs of any virtual events we may consider?
	+ Do we have the technical expertise to conduct virtual sessions or can we obtain it?
* What are SFL’s technical ability to hold virtual events including online sales and other events.
1. **Comments from Doctors**

Carl Hein: This is a very tough call at the moment as there is still so much in flux. My suspicion is that we will likely not be able to hold our event this year especially in light of the current level of spread and the reluctance of Americans to make the behavior changes needed to get control of the virus. We might be in this current state until a vaccine is delivered in enough quantity to generate herd immunity.

With so many large events being canceled I do think our attendees would understand if we need to skip a year and not abandon the program in the following years, once it becomes safe to do these types of things again. The 1918 flu pandemic took two years for the country to get back to normal. Do we have a drop-dead deadline for making a decision? I would recommend scheduling a SFL board meeting just before such a deadline and invite a few others to join such as folks from SMR, myself and another one or two of the other physicians to participate in the decision.

Steve Vosler: I have already given this considerable thought and like most of us have listened to the expert opinions of numerous epidemiologists and infectious disease experts. It is my opinion that barring a sudden and unexpected change in the course of this disease or the development of a safe and effective vaccine we should not plan on having an event this January. Even if attendees could have single rooms, our meals and social events all involve the types of settings that we know contribute to the spread of the virus. Maybe sleeping one to a room, skiing with SFL participant and guide only, eating meals in our rooms and having all social events done virtually online could be done but certainly isn't very appealing and would lack the close interactions that keep us coming back to SFL.

I do not think that the testing mentioned is adequate. Having testing done on arrival may be possible, but certainly could not be done in our facilities where I live at this time. We still have inadequate supplies. Many of the machines and kits available were rushed in as EUA (emergency use authorization) by the FDA and have not documented accuracy. Some are better but can be difficult to get as they are in great demand. Perhaps an arrangement could be made with the local hospital in Granby.

At the present time N95 masks are in short supply and adequate PPE would be expensive and difficult to procure. I do not think any of our physicians would be able to care for an infected individual at Snow Mountain Ranch. Many small and medium sized hospitals are attempting to remain virus free and are therefore sending infected individuals to larger facilities. I do not know if Granby is seeing or admitting any coronavirus patients but would wager that they are transferring any they see or screen positive and need hospitalization to Denver.

In summary, if it is anticipated that SFL medical personnel need to be able to screen and treat coronavirus patients then I recommend that the event not be held.

That sums up what I think. Unfortunately, I don't think things look very promising. Bonnie and her group will have tough decisions to make. We all need to hope that a vaccine becomes available.

1. **Conclusion**

We tried to think of what we might need to consider if we hold the event, given the current situation and the likelihood that things will not change very much by January. These measures and issues may or may not need to be implemented but should at least be considered as we move forward. We should continue to involve our medical experts to help us think this through. We should try to make this decision as close to the event as possible, perhaps in August or even early September if SMR will allow us to postpone signing the contract. They may be more willing to work with us if we promise to hold our 2022 event at SMR.

Skiing is the most important event activity for many of us, but for others, the social experience is of equal or more value. Implementing these measures will dramatically change the SFL event and the experience of attendees. We need to consider whether people would be happy with would likely be a wonderful skiing but very limited social experience.

We faced significant obstacles at the 2020 event, most beyond our control. Things did not run as smoothly as we would have liked. Those who have attended SFL for many years will not lose interest, but first or second-year attendees may feel differently if we experience major difficulties at the 2021 event. It is very important that we hold an event that runs as smoothly as possible in 2021, as two difficult events in a row might reflect negatively on SFL and limit future attendance.

If we end up cancelling the event, we need to explain very carefully how and why we made the decision. The language posted on our website is a good start. The Summer newsletter would be a good place to describe the issues and the process, if the decision has been made by the time it comes out. We could also use the newsletter as a platform to describe any virtual events, should we decide to go that route. The newsletter would also be a good place to describe some of the mitigation measures we are taking, should we opt to hold the event.