Ski for Light, Inc.

Minutes of Summer Board Meeting

July 14, 2021

Meeting via Zoom

President McCorcle called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Central Daylight Time.

**Roll Call**

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

Absent: John Amundson and Nicole Haley

The minutes of the Annual Board meeting (January 21, 2021) were approved as distributed.

Fall 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Krista explained that she received a request to amend the Fall 2020 Board meeting minutes after those minutes were approved during the Annual Board meeting. John Elliott’s name was inadvertently omitted from the list of Board members present for the Fall 2020 meeting. Lynee moved and Brenda seconded a motion to amend the minutes of the fall 2020 Board meeting accordingly. The motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Brenda reported that SFL currently has $58,508.85 in checking and

$59,760.89 in savings for total operating funds of $118,269.74.

The current market value of the Endowment Fund is $666,161.00. A question was raised about where the Flatley donation is being kept. Brenda and Tim explained that the Flatley donation is in the Endowment Fund and included in the above-mentioned market value. The Flatley donation funds are not restricted and are available for use without being subject to Endowment Fund withdraw limits -- those funds will earn more invested with Banker’s Trust than held in another or separate account.

**Budget and Finance Committee Update**

Bob Hartt, Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee, reported:

* Budget. The budget for the new fiscal year will be sent out shortly.
* How to Best Use the Flatley Foundation Donation. As detailed in the June 2021 Executive Committee minutes, several possible uses for the donation were discussed. These possibilities include: adding to the Endowment Fund; lowering event fees; offsetting event fees for more expensive venues or for certain groups; funding a special project(s); replacing or upgrading ski equipment; and purchasing technology upgrades. Prior to the next Executive Committee meeting in September, the Committee wants Board input on priorities for how to best use that money. Please e-mail ideas to Tim by September 19th.

Other ideas raised included infrastructure needs such as our database that we’ve have put off updating due to funding and going to event venues we can’t otherwise afford. Wendy encouraged people to be descriptive if proposing a special project -- what would it mean to SFL, what would it look like? John asked about upgrading sit skis. Tim explained that we have budgeted money for sit ski upgrades, Bonnie said she believes that we could easily get a grant specifically for that purpose if needed.

Please send ideas to Krista by July 31st to be included in a combined list from the June Executive Committee meeting which will then be distributed to the Board.

* One-time Stipend Policy Waiver. Bob explained that the Budget and Finance Committee is recommending a one-time waiver to the stipend policy so that MIPs and VIPs returning for more than a second time to SFL could be eligible for a stipend. Bob explained that first year attendees receive fifty percent and second year attendees receive up to thirty percent off of a double occupancy event fee. There is no similar eligibility limit for guides. Bob moved and Betsy seconded a motion that the Board approve a waiver to the stipend policy for the 2022 event so that VIP and MIP skiers who have attended for more than two years will be eligible for stipends and the stipends will cover up to thirty percent of their event fee.

Cara asked if we have data about whether first and second year VIPs and MIPs who receive a stipend return. Larry explained that the numbers are small -- thirty percent of VIPs maybe fifty percent of guides return. We do not know if nonreturn is due to lack of interest or continued need for a stipend.

The Pandemic has caused some people financial hardships and also made travel more expensive – we are trying to encourage people to come. Melinda asked if offering stipends to more MIPs and VIPs might create uneven numbers of guides and skiers? We will manage numbers tightly this year and try to not have an imbalance. Bob restated his motion. There was a suggestion to delete the percentages from the motion as the stipend policy in the Policy Manual doesn’t list any percentages for stipend amounts so that the amended motion would state: the Board approve a waiver to the stipend policy for the 2022 event so that VIP and MIP skiers who have attended for more than two years will be eligible for stipends. Bob raised no objections to the amendment and the amended motion carried unanimously.

**2022 Event**

* Vaccination Requirement. Tim explained that during their June meeting, the Executive Committee approved proof of Covid-19 vaccination as a requirement for attendance at the 2022 event in order to minimize risk to participants. Tim has exchanged e-mails with our pro bono attorney who confirms that we can require proof of vaccination. Providing proof of vaccination will be part of the application process.
* Event Pricing. Double occupancy event fees will be slightly lower than 2019 at $875.00 for Indian Peaks and $775.00 for Aspenbrook and Silver Sage. There will be limited availability of single rooms in Indian Peaks (probably ten) first come, first served.

**2022 Event.**

Mike Evelo, 2022 Event Chair, provided an update on event planning. The Event Planning Committee is almost filled – coordinating the sales room remains open. Scott McCall is working with Dr. Carl on an event safety plan for Covid and there will be an article in the Summer Bulletin. The on-site planning meeting is scheduled for September 25th.

A suggestion was made to stream part of the 2022 event such as opening night, opening events on race/rally day, Norway night and the awards portion of the closing banquet. Judy cautioned that we need to be careful about publicizing streaming from the event until we’ve tested that capability so we don’t promise it and then find out it won’t work to live stream from SMR. If streaming doesn’t work, we could video some of the events. Julie offered to make an effort to capture more of the event than in the past -- we have an audience on YouTube. Julie will write an article about the available videos from the 2021 virtual event for the Summer Bulletin.

John mentioned that he heard today that SMR has a new Nordic director -- Todd Lodwick who is a Nordic skiing champion. John is encouraged that SMR will have such an accomplished skier as their new Nordic Center Director. Larry asked John to write an article about this and why people should be excited to ski at SMR which John agreed to do after checking with SMR to be sure that information could be made public.

Julie asked if Mike has found a planning committee person to do supplemental virtual programming for people who can’t attend the in-person event. Bonnie volunteered to organize a few virtual sessions in the fall.

Karen asked about meals – in 2020, eight out of ten vegetarian dinners were pasta with few vegetables and no protein. Krista is coordinating meals and is aware of those concerns.

Melinda mentioned that a news release for the 2022 event is now available online. Tim thanked Melinda and Cara for their work on the news release.

**2023 Event**

Tim explained that the Executive Committee voted at their June meeting to recommend to the Board that the 2023 event be held in Rhinelander, Wisconsin from January 19-29, 2023. Cara has done a wonderful job of gathering data to help make this decision. The Committee chose between Rhinelander, Green Bay and Michigan. (See Site Selection Committee Report, Page 6 of these minutes) Cara explained that Rhinelander will have some unique challenges such as two hotels, two airports and all meals will need to be catered. The community wants to host our event. The trails will be different from the skiing trails in the west -- more characteristic of the Midwest, shorter but steeper hills.

Bonnie moved and Judy seconded a motion to support the Executive Committee’s recommendation to hold the 2023 event in Rhinelander.

Karen asked about needing to use two airports. Rhinelander’s airport is limited. Green Bay is 120 miles from Rhinelander (about two hours and twenty minutes) and has more flight options. Airfares directly to Rhinelander can be higher. Mike lives in Rhinelander which would be helpful for us. Wendy voiced a concern about having to use separate hotels which would split up the group. The 10k sounds challenging and may leave people out. Green Bay trails might be boring for advanced skiers but would be good for improving technique for less advanced skiers. Tim explained that we have lost out on prime dates at the preferred Green Bay hotel. Mike explained that the Rhinelander 10k is not as challenging as the one in Casper.

John asked about trail grooming. Mike explained that all of it is pull-behind drag but they are experienced groomers and Mike is developing contacts for Pisten-Bully equipment in case we need it. Trails would be groomed specifically for us, no roads to cross, no backyards and no snowmobiles. Seating for meals will be tight. Cara is working on that and we will have to plan carefully to ensure wheelchair accessibility. Cara estimates 215 people at registration to leave room for dignitaries. Most of the group should be able to stay at the Quality Inn so the second hotel would function more as a spill-over hotel. Past Midwest events had an attendance of about 215.

The motion carried unanimously.

Tim thanked Cara and her committee for their work. The Site Selection Committee will be visiting possible future sites this coming winter.

**Code of Conduct Policy**

Julie reported that an ad hoc working group composed of herself, Tim, Amy, Cara and Krista continues to work on rethinking the Policy. Deni Elliott has been helping, Deni teaches ethics and advises organizations on how to think about and draft codes of ethics. There will be training for the Board and likely a session or other opportunities during the event to ask for community input/discussion. We are close to having a statement to be included on applications as a checkbox. Final document(s) will be available online. If you have input or questions, please contact Julie. The current Code of Conduct Policy remains in place.

Tim reminded the Board that the Planning Committee will be meeting on September 25 and the Executive Committee will be meeting the day after that on September 26th. Please e-mail any thoughts or questions for either meeting to Tim.

The Fall Board meeting will be held sometime in October.

Larry moved and Bonnie seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m. Central Daylight Time.

**Ski for Light, Inc.**

**Site Selection Committee Report**

**June 7, 2021**

Covid related travel restrictions have made the work of the Site Selection Committee difficult this year. In January, February and March 2021 visitors to the state of Minnesota were required to quarantine upon arrival. Similar requirements were in place in New Hampshire until mid March and by then Great Glen Trails was planning to close before the end of March.

Three locations continue to be options for the 2023 event.

**Green Bay, Wisconsin**

In April 2020 the Radisson and the Hyatt Regency in Green Bay submitted proposals for 2023. The Radisson (where the group stayed previously) offers 391 rooms including 15 ADA rooms, four with roll in showers. Two of the four rooms with roll in showers are suites. The Radisson is across the street from the Green Bay airport and approximately 17 miles from the ski area. The Radisson has already booked other groups late in January and early in February 2023 so the only dates currently available are Thursday, February 23, 2023 through Saturday, March 4, 2023 or Monday, January 16 through Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

The Hyatt Regency is closer to downtown and approximately 14 miles from the ski area. It is an all-suite hotel originally built in 1989 as an Embassy Suites. There are approximately 158 rooms with two queen beds (including some executive suites) and 78 rooms with king beds. There are two ADA rooms, one with a king bed and the other with two queen beds, both with roll in showers.

On February 11, 2021 Jeff Pagels toured the Hyatt and noted that only one of the beds in the ADA room with two queen beds was an appropriate height. Each of the ADA rooms adjoins another room. The connecting passage between the two rooms is narrow but a wheelchair will fit. It might be possible to use these rooms if the beds were lowered and the occupants agreed to share the bathroom in the ADA room. The ADA rooms are good sized and it might also be possible to put a roll-away bed in these rooms.

In addition, there are 17 rooms with wider doors. These rooms have 36 inch wide bathroom doors, 36 inch wide doors into the corridor and a 30 Inch door between the sitting area and the bedroom. Jeff was able to move about in these rooms but noted that beds would need to be lowered. This could be accomplished by removing the platform and putting the box spring and mattress on the floor. Shower chairs/benches would also need to be added to the bath tubs. Both the swimming pool and hot tub have lifts. The Hyatt has also booked a number of groups since submitting a proposal in April 2020 and the dates currently available are Thursday, January 19 through Saturday, January 28, 2023.

While both hotels have adequate meeting space, the Radisson has been recently renovated and has more up-to-date ADA rooms.

The Brown County Reforestation Camp would again be the ski area. They do not have snow making equipment but reported a good snow year in 2019-2020. On March 11, 2021 a letter was sent to Brown County requesting fee waivers for the use of the trails and lodge building. On May 19, 2021 the Brown County Board of Supervisors issued a resolution allowing fee waivers for the use of the Reforestation Camp trails and lodge building for six days (the two pre-event training days are included in the waiver but not the resolution). The fee waivers are contingent on the Greater Green Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau donating/granting $5,000 towards the cost. The Greater Green Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau can apply for a state grant but will need to begin the application process by June 2021.

Lunches would be under a separate contract and Brown County staff can provide a list of approved caterers.

**Rhinelander, Wisconsin**

The Quality Inn has expressed interest but typically provides contracts rather than written proposals. The Quality Inn has 98 rooms including 5 ADA rooms with roll in showers. The facility does not have an elevator to the second floor. The size of the event would be limited by the size of the banquet space. Hotel staff have indicated that the banquet area will hold 20 rounds of 8 (with SFL’s required 36 inch minimum between tables), but when questioned, agreed to explore further. Meals would be prepared off site by a caterer who has indicated that 30 rounds of 8 will fit in the banquet area (with less than 36 inches between tables). There is a room equipped with a bar which can be locked off so the room can be used for other activities during the day. There are rental fees for banquet and meeting space which we do not typically encounter at other hotels where the hotel is providing meals.

The pool has a lift but the hot tub does not as it is on an area above the pool with steps. It is unknown whether a temporary ramp could be installed.

There is an AmericInn with 51 rooms including 2 ADA rooms with roll in showers next to the Quality Inn. The General Manager at the AmericInn has expressed interest but could provide only approximate room rates as this will depend on when a contract is signed. The AmericInn is a Wyndham property and Wyndham sets rates for 18 month periods. The room rates at the AmericInn are generally higher than the Quality Inn. The AmericInn has a pool and hot tub with lifts for each. There is also an elevator to the second floor. Both the Quality Inn and AmericInn are ten to fifteen minutes from the ski area. The dates currently available at both hotels are Thursday, January 19 through Saturday, January 28, 2023

Site visits were made to Rhinelander in 2017 and 2019. Both site visit reports

Indicate that a short, direct walk is possible from one to the other via the lawn of the AmericInn which in the winter is typically packed snow. While the Event Coordinator at the Quality Inn and the General Manager at the AmericInn expressed concern about participants walking between the two hotels, this concern was not shared by those who made the site visits.

Lynn’s Catering has expressed interest in providing meals and has provided preliminary pricing information. The ski trails would be located on and around the grounds of the Northwood Golf Club and the club house would serve as a warming and lunch area. The Northwood Nordic Ski Club previously provided a proposal for grooming for a 2022 event and has expressed interest in assisting with a 2023 event but has not provided an updated proposal. While the club does not have a pistenbully groomer or snow making capability, Michael Evelo reports that the club has groomed for a number of races and done a fine job. The 2017 site visit report indicates that the 10 km course would be challenging.

Ski for Light has an existing tax-exempt certificate for Wisconsin.

**Bellaire, Michigan**

Shanty Creek Resorts has submitted a proposal for 2023. The group would again stay at the Lakeview Hotel and Conference Center and ski on the resort property. The hotel has 7 ADA rooms, 4 with roll-in showers. There is a fitness center and indoor pool although the pool is not accessible. There is an outdoor pool at Cedar River Village which MIPS will have permission to use. There is some snowmaking capability at the downhill area but not on the cross-country trails. The hotel is approximately 49 minutes (35.8 miles) from the airport.

It is difficult to make a detailed price comparison of these venues as some charge for things others do not. Each venue has pros and cons and transportation needs vary among the three venues.

The Committee hopes the Executive Committee and Board will move forward on selecting one of these sites for 2023. We are hoping to visit North Conway and a couple of sites in Minnesota next ski season, and if appropriate, consider them for 2024. In addition, RFPs (Request for Proposal) have been sent to the Vermont tourism office, the Lake Placid tourism office and Gunstock mountain resort in New Hampshire.

Respectfully submitted by Cara Barnes

Cara Barnes

Site Selection Committee