Ski for Light, Inc.

Executive Committee Meeting

May 10-11, 2014

Bloomington, MN

Minutes

May 10

Scott McCall, President, called the meeting to order at 2:45 P.M.

Judy Dixon, Secretary, called the roll.

Present:

Scott McCall, President

Julie Coppens, Vice-President

Judy Dixon, Secretary

Brenda Seeger, Treasurer

Cara Barnes, Director-at-Large

Bob Civiak, Director-at-Large

Marion Elmquist, Immediate Past President

Minutes. Scott McCall distributed the draft minutes from our annual meeting in February. Judy will finalize them for distribution.

Treasurer's report. Brenda Seeger reported that Doug Boose is continuing to perform the day-to-day transactions. Brenda is continuing to learn the processes and procedures for managing the SFL Treasury. All major expenses have been paid for this year, except for this meeting. Income is continuing to arrive from the spring appeal. It is expected that our cash reserves at the end of the year will be about $80,000 down about $15,000 from last year. On July 6, Brenda will be going to Houghton, Michigan to work with Doug Boose.

Role and responsibilities of Executive Committee members. Scott reviewed the major responsibilities of the Executive Committee as outlined in Bylaw 4. He stressed that it is year-round work.

Review of 2014 event. The Executive Committee spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the 2014 event. Scott requested feedback about the event from the attendees and received over 50 responses. The vast majority were positive. People appreciated the hard work of the Board and the Planning Committee and felt that the event ran very smoothly.

Applications and Forms. There was difficulty for both the attendees and the applications coordinators with the online forms. Worker bee applications will be merged into one form. Cara will ask Tim McCorkle to look into how other organizations process applications. We can use paper this yearand work on making this better.

Ski Site and Trails. People were pleased with this year's ski site and the groomming of trails.

Guide Training. There is concern that the guide trainer training may not be as productive as it could be. The possibility of engaging an expert ski training consultant was discussed. The curriculum from the guide training manual is not being used to its fullest. It was decided that the guide training manual will be distributed to all guides this year. The Guide Training Coordinators will be asked to incorporate the curriculum in the guide training manual into their activities. The manual is about to be posted online and everyone, including blind skiers, will be encouraged to read and use it.

Sales Room. This year's reduced hours of the Sales Room seemed to work well. Marion and Scott will look at items sold in the Sales Room and Silent Auction to determine how much of our inventory is derived from corporate sponsors in an effort to determine the effectiveness of our attendance at the Outdoor Retail Show. Logo items are popular. Scott will inquire about the requirements of items that can be sold in the Sales Room.

Silent Auction. Cara agreed that the Silent Auction Coordinator will be someone who is available during the first few days of the week. There will be no entertainment on the night of the Silent Auction. Cara and Judy will come up with some guidelines for the conduct of the Silent Auction.

Raffle. Since we have several fund-raising activities, it was agreed that we would only have a raffle when there is a large item that lends itself well to a raffle such as the Iditarider. The Corporate Sponsor Committee will be asked to seek higher ticket items suitable for a live auction.

Special Activities Requiring an Additional Fee. It was agreed that special activities such as a sleigh ride will only be offered if they can be included as part of the program. We will not be charging a surcharge for activities.

Special Interest Sessions. They are going well but we need to be careful about audio-visual charges. We will distribute a schedule of special-interest sessions at registration.

Alternative Programming for Non-skiing Days. Cara will work with the Special Interest Coordinator to think about alternative programs so they can be switched on smoothly if needed. We will also develop a communication plan to let people know what is happening.

Early Bird Specials. It was decided not to have early bird specials this year.

First-time Attendees. Helping first-time attendees acclimate and the information they receive prior to the event needs to be re-invigorated. Ski for Light podcasts was suggested or we could post audio files to the web site. This will be explored at the planning meeting. A few years ago, we had each Board member meet up with a new person. Cara will communicate frequently with attendees prior to the event. One year we had first-timers come a half hour early to the reception. Dining room greeters are great. Judy and Cara will find a way for this to be facilitated through the alumni guide meeting.

Skiing. Since many potential blind skiers have heard of skate skiing and since it is so popular among younger skiers, ideas were discussed how the experience of skate skiing might be incorporated into SFL. Recognizing that it is something that is difficult for blind skiers to do, our guides are not trained to guide this technique, it was decided that this would not be pursued.

When enough guides are available, effort will be made to provide roving guides who can assist pairs with technique and other ski-related matters. Scott is exploring strategies to incorporate technique sessions into guide training.

2015 Event Update. Housing at the 2015 event at the Inn at Silver Creek will be a challenge. Room availability is limited and many room configurations have changed. Meal options were discussed. It was recognized that we may not have yet found the ideal strategy. The 2015 Event Chair was asked to look into this further and make a recommendation.

40th Anniversary Celebration. Marion reported that an invitation has been extended to the Crown Prince. We also expect other involvement from the Embassy.

A number of ideas were discussed to commemorate SFL’s 40th anniversary. They included: historical minutes during announcements; 40k skiing over a certain amount of time; regional competitions; on-ski scavenger hunt; 40-yard three-legged ski; and having everyone wear a Ski for Light shirt. The planning committee will work on this further. A possible ski tour was discussed. This will also be refined by the planning committee.

May 11

Stipends for VIPS and MIPS. Judy chaired a committee that was asked to look at stipends for vip’s and mips. The committee consisted of Judy, Scott McCall, Bob Civiak, and Bonnie O’Day. They developed a draft statement which is attached. Since we also have triple-room occupancy, “double-occupancy” was changed to “shared-occupancy.” It was moved by Marion and seconded by Judy that the tenets of this statement as presented be tested this year. The motion passed unanimously. It was agreed that we need a similar statement that covers stipends for guides. Bob will draft a statement covering the same topics.

Gibney Foundation Proposal. Scott will explore where things stand with the Gibney Foundation. Bob suggested that the Gibney funding could be used to subsidize guides and skiers nominated by the regionals.

Ski for Light as a Tax-Deductible Activity. It was agreed that all persons attending Ski for Light shall receive a written receipt for the amount of money paid to participate. Brenda will explore a mechanism to do this incorporating language from the letter supplied by our accountants.

2014-15 Budgeting Process. Bob Civiak has outlined a budgeting structure to give all those working on the SFL event specific guidelines on the amount of money that can be spent on particular items. The amounts will be based on prior years’ spending levels. Any expenditure resulting in 20% or more over the budgeted amount will require approval by the Executive Committee. The 2015 budget will be approved by the Executive Committee in late July after the end-of-years totals are known. It was agreed that event fees would be set in June based on known costs.

Analysis of Recent Donor Trends. Marion reported on an analysis conducted by larry on trends in donations. The number of persons donating is remaining relatively constant but they are donating less. Donations this year are expected to be down by about $5,000. We will continue to explore untapped foundations and other sources of potential donations.

The responsibility of all Board members to actively participate in the organization’s fund-raising efforts was discussed. Julie will work on creating some sort of Board orientation strategy.

Donor thank you letters. Cara has been sending the donor thank-you letters for many years. Thanks much to CARA for this. Judy will take over this function in June.

Future sites. The Site Selection Committee is looking at possible 2016 sites in Michigan (Shanty Creek) and California (Squaw Valley). The concensus was that if Shanty Creek could make the agreed-upon trail modifications, it would be a good choice for 2016. It was agreed that Jeanne MacKenzie’s article on site selection should be reprinted in the SFL Bulletin.

Scott proposed that the Executive Committee meet at least four times a year. Sunday, July 27 at 8 P.M. Eastern time was selected as the day for our summer conference call.

Old business

Status of posting guide handbook on the website. The guide handbook is ready for posting on the website. Julie will send the pdf to Judy to be sure of its accessibility.

Status of direct link to new video. The new video is now linked on the SFL website.

Ethical conduct policy statement. Scott has reviewed other ethical conduct policies. He, Dave Fisk, and Renee will look at them and bring a recommendation to the fall Board meeting.

New business

We are no longer able to get jackets for the Ridderenn team from Jansport. Marion will explore options to obtain jackets from other corporate sponsors.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 P.M.

Stipends for Visually- and mobility-impaired Participants

All first- and second-time visually-impaired and mobility-impaired participants who reside in the United States are eligible for a stipend to partially defray the cost of attending the annual SFL event. Applicants will indicate their need for a stipend by responding positively to the stipend question on the event application. Applicants requesting a single room are not eligible for stipends. Participants who are receiving a stipend may arrive early at the event hotel only if they are doing so on official SFL business or with the approval of his/her applications coordinator. Failure to comply with this provision will result in forfeiture of the stipend.

The maximum amount of each stipend for first-time participants

shall not exceed two-thirds of the shared-occupancy event fee and

the maximum for second-time participants shall not exceed half of

the shared-occupancy event fee. The specific amount of each

individual's stipend shall be determined by the Visually and

Mobility Impaired Applications Coordinators with consultation and

approval of the Event Chair and the SFL President. This amount

shall be based on information provided by the participant on

his/her application, the mode of transportation that the

individual must use to reach the event site, the amount of funds

allocated for stipends in the annual SFL budget, and any other relevant considerations.

Stipends for first-time participants can be awarded at any time

during the application process as acceptances are made. Second-time participants may be accepted at any time but their stipends

shall not be awarded until two weeks after the application

deadline.