

Northern Lights Snowmobile Club
December 14, 2020
Board Meeting hosted on Zoom

The meeting was called to order by President Jay Schuette at 6:43 pm on Zoom.

Board Members Present: Linda Schuette, Karen and Reg Videgar, Ginny Gerlach, Eric Wick, John Zabel, Dave Wheeler, Jim Nykolayko, Scott Swendson. Not present: Sue Frank: Karl Gaffron.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: The November minutes were updated and resubmitted to Dave for posting on 12/14/2020. Minutes can be viewed on the club web site.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Reg Videgar presented the finance report as of 12/13/2020 as follows: Beginning balance \$10,383, Income \$5,995, Expenses \$8,703.13, resulting in an ending balance of \$7,674.87. We are about \$3,000 off from total income last year. Reg compared income categories season to date with totals from last season and reviewed the list of expenses, including Constant Contact monthly and annual fee, Class A State of Wisconsin Raffle license and donations to Trails and the Military Ride.

Fund raising raffles picked up \$575 raised by Bonnie's Lakeside. Sue reported that she picked up another \$350 in donations. Sue also picked up \$100 donations each from Tribute Brewing Company and from Erin's Pub & Grub \$100. It is important to let our members know so that we can encourage support of these businesses. Scott suggested giving a shout out on FaceBook.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

As of 12/13/2020 we have 390 members.

PayPal is now charging \$1.17 for the \$30 membership and \$1.03 for the \$25 membership as reported in separate email message by Karen Videgar to Ginny Gerlach

Jay noted that we need to form a nominating committee soon to replace for president and two co-secretaries. A notice was included in the newsletter. This topic will need to be added to the January membership meeting agenda. Linda is working on soliciting a backup to assist her with membership duties. Reg offered to assist Linda if she cannot find someone else.

GROOM TO RIDE: Jim Nykolayko working on recruiting for 12/26. John Zabel will try to find someone for this Saturday morning shift 9-12:00, Karen & Reg Videgar will do shift 12-3; Jim will leave cash from last week in bag for this Saturday for a bank. Linda and Jay will could take some Saturdays since they do not ride on Saturdays.

BADGER TORCH RIDE: See Jim's emails – torch bearers are lined up. Driver for sled has not been selected yet. Jim and Scott will get this covered. Scott reported that he is waiting for call from Chamber board meeting. The Chamber is considering donating and if they do, we might

need to change from stopping at groomer sled and come into town instead for a photo op. This would take place at approximately 3pm on Friday, 1/15/21. If members want to join the ride, they could either join the ride at Pitlik's or could join in town. Scott will verify and forward the information. Others are welcome to accompany the rider to track in Eagle River but will need to park their sled and pay to go in. John Zabel asked Jim how many riders we expect. Jim indicated that this is the first time the ride will be coming through Three Lakes in a long time and so we do not know what to expect.

MILITARY RIDE: The Club \$200 donated to military ride. Jim Nykolayko noted that people can sign up for the ride via the website. Stops will be posted prior to the ride.

WEEKLY TRAIL RIDE: Dave Wheeler indicated that we have leaders for the Wednesday and Thursday rides. We currently do not have a leader for Tuesday or Friday. Erick Wick will lead the Wednesday ride and Dave will lead the Thursday ride.

Reg asked if it was possible to post ride information on FaceBook. Dave could potentially forward/promote a comment to the page or potentially set up a ride 'group' to promote/provide venue for ride information however notes that we could expect be a lot of extraneous information.

Eric described how he handles his Wednesday group ride. He has a group of regular riders who have his email and phone number. They know he will be there if conditions are good or if they are unsure, individuals contact him via email or phone to verify they are riding. Dave says he could do the same for his Thursday ride.

After discussion, Nancy & John Zabel offered to lead a scenic ride on Tuesdays. Friday will be self-led at this time. Riders can pick a leader when they arrive.

Karen will add this information to newsletter. Riders should be gassed up and ready to ride at 9:30 at the Shell station in town.

MEMBERSHIP FEES/CATEGORIES: Dave shared a document comparing area snowmobile club annual dues. We are about \$5 under every other club. He raised the question as to if we need to have multiple membership categories. Dave suggested simplifying membership. Dave noted that some clubs offer pre-season discounted cost to encourage early renewal. Dave suggested that the board should discuss this option as well as raising the membership price.

Linda noted that AWSC has a "club membership" of \$12 per family. They do not have a specific membership for a single membership. AWSC also has "Associate" membership where individuals can join through AWSC directly for \$20 but then could not but could not get discounted trail pass. AWSC also has commercial sponsorship membership. Linda sees a "Youth" category membership of \$6 on the AWSC site but does not see details including age restrictions.

Area Snowmobile Club Annual Membership Dues Comparison
12/11/2020

Club Name	Family	Single	Associate
Sno-Eagles. Inc.	35	35	25
Conover Sno-Buddies Inc.	35		35
Sugar Camp SC	32	27	
Minocqua Forest Riders	37		25
St. Germain Bo-Boen SC	35	30	
Cross Country Cruisers	32.25	27	
Mercer Area Sno Goers	30	30	
Average	33.75	29.8	28.33333
Median	35	30	25
Northern Lights SC	30	25	

There was much discussion related to potentially modifying membership categories and raising the cost of membership for next season. Linda recommended that the board think about options over the next month or two. Dave noted that changes of this nature do not require membership approval per the bylaws and can be approved by the board who can declare an effective date and notify the membership of change.

Concerns were raised over membership dropping if we raise the cost however this does not appear to be an issue as St. Germain, for example, has one of the highest membership rates but also has a higher membership cost.

Scott made a comment about the lack of membership we have in our town asking why so few memberships. This would indicate that local people are getting trail pass without joining club. Approximately only 1/3 of members are from Three Lakes. Jim thinks that some people may not know about the club and discounted trail pass and others may just want to keep their independence. Scott suggests using signage, placing ads in paper, and trying to get dealers like Trakside and Sportman's to provide a membership with purchase of snowmobile as a way of boosting membership.

Ginny suggested posting a link to newsletter on the club FaceBook page where we could all share it with our 'friends' to promote club. Linda mentioned that newspaper photo-ops are great for promoting as well as coming up with articles for the local paper. Linda is willing to write something up.

John Zabel asked if Scott knows what trails' budget is to manage the trails and stated that people may not know or realize how much it costs to support the trails. Dave heard that from another state group a report of approximately \$10-15 per mile. Dave asked if Scott could come up with cost per mile to groom and support trails. Scott agreed to trying to figure this out.

Jim noted that in the past he put together a letter and passed it out to local people trying to promote the club, but he did not have much success in recruiting members.

John Z suggested eliminating the single membership. Jim N said the single membership was initially intended to attract young/single people. Linda will call AWSC to delineate youth membership age criteria. Scott S believes that we are missing the boat on corporate memberships. We currently only have 1 or 2 business involved and included in the magazine. A suggestion was made for a joint effort between Northern Lights and Trails to attract business membership. Reg suggested a committee to promote the club and trails locally so that we can grow both members and business memberships. After discussion, Reg will lead the initiative with Dave, Jim and Scott assisting in the effort. This committee will operate independently and will report back to the board.

BASKET RAFFLE: Sue was not on call but sent email to Karen with updates.

Reg reported that he has received \$575 from Bonnie for deposit per and that she had received another \$350 today. Scott mentioned that Bonnie has a donated weber grill and jacket that will also be raffled off.

WEENIE ROAST: John Zabel indicated proceeding with the Weenie Roast will be tabled until the next meeting but likely move forward with holding it on Maple Lake. He needs a few days' notice to pull it together

John noted that he is scheduled to call Evan Miller to see if anything has changed with charges and restriction as to number of people allowed at Sheltered Valley location. Scott suggested that we move forward with Maple Lake. A final decision will be made at the January member meeting.

TRAILS REPORT: Scott Swendson indicated that he had just had the Trails meeting and reported that the swamps are freezing well, he's finishing up on trails and has a few signs to put up and now we are just waiting for snow.

Reg asked if Scott could describe process of determining when trails are ready and provide pictures and a short story for Karen to publish in the newsletter. Scott indicated that he follows the trails and measures ice thickness – need 6 inches to deem safe – drills holes and checks when placing barrels. Scott knows where weaker spots tend to be, but this past year found weird currents and found thin ice areas that were not expected. Barrels are places approximately 200 feet apart. Scott reported that the barrels are prepped and ready to go but he will not mark the lakes until he knows that trails will be opened. The Tavern League is responsible for marking the lakes. Scott volunteers on their behalf and tries to recruit assistance from the bars.

John asked if Scott knows what trails' budget is to manage the trails. Scott is unsure of exact budget but estimates approximately \$15,000 just to fuel the groomers.

OPEN ITEMS:

- Linda reflected on the December live membership meeting being cancelled due to COVID and asked how many board members would attend a live meeting in January. The board members on the call are not willing to attend live meeting therefore we cannot have a live meeting. The January membership meeting will take place over Zoom.
- Ginny asked if we could post a link to newsletter on the club's FaceBook page. This would be an easy way to promote the club by sharing the information with our circle of 'friends'. Dave mentioned that the reach on FaceBook has been great. We have around 1500 follower and a recent message reached over 6500 people. It would be ideal if even have of our followers joined the club. Scott also suggested putting the newsletter on the club website and adding a link on FaceBook. Dave will explore what he needs to possibly make this work.
- Scott revisited topic of people who have not renewed their membership and asked if we can get list of people who haven't renewed to board members and have us reach out to those we know to remind them. Joyce Nykolayko joined the call and noted that in the past she would sort the spreadsheet and send email to those people as reminder to renew. Linda indicated that she could sort the file by renewal date.

Meeting adjourned – 8:11pm

NEXT BOARD MEETING

January 18, 2021, 6:30

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING

January 25, 2021 – 7:00

John Zabel made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Reg seconded the motion to adjourn at 7:53p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ginny Gerlach