

1 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
3 **OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION**
4 **November 17, 2020**
5 **Via Zoom Videoconference**
6

7 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison
8 Association was convened at 5 p.m. MDT, Thursday, November 17, 2020 via on-line video
9 conference pursuant to the bylaws and notification by the Executive Director.

10 Present were:

11 Donnis Baggett	Dick Gehring
12 Joe Graham	Robert Johnson
13 Kristopher Kelley	Chad Kremer
14 Jeremy Allemann	Mary Adams
15 Ken Klemm	Boyd Meyer
16 Kevin Leier	Campbell Burgess
17 Mike Faith (Advisory)	

18 Absent were Mimi Hillenbrand and Brian Grubb. Also present were Dave Carter, Jim
19 Matheson, Karen Conley, Carie Starr and Connor Elliott. Dick Gehring presided, and Dave
20 Carter served as recording secretary.

21 Donnis Baggett provided a report of the President. He said the association is managing a
22 high level of different activities. He added that he is optimistic about the association's request to
23 USDA for a Section 32 Surplus Removal purchase of bison meat.

24 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting for September 17,
25 2020, which were previously distributed to the board, and were presented for approval. No
26 changes were noted. Ken Klemm made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Said
27 motion was seconded and carried.

28 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting for October 10,
29 2020, which were previously distributed to the board, and were presented for approval. No
30 changes were noted. Ken Klemm made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Said
31 motion was seconded and carried.

1 The Chair called for a financial report of the NBA. Mr. Carter reviewed the financial
2 statement with the board. The October financial reports have not yet been completed, but the
3 September reports as reviewed by the Finance Committee continue to show strong financial
4 performance through the first nine months of the year. Total revenue in September of \$23,573
5 was \$526 ahead of budget, while Year-to-Date (YTD) gross income of \$607,435 was \$1,400
6 (0.23%) below budget. Total September expenses of \$36,422 were \$1,279 above budget while
7 YTD gross expenses of \$600,492 are \$29,689 (4.61%) below budget. After adjustments and
8 designated reserves, net results in September of (\$13,320) were \$764 below budget while the
9 YTD results of (\$5,170) were \$28,354 (15.42%) ahead of budget projections. A motion was
10 made by Mary Adams to approve the financial report. Said motion was seconded and carried.

11 Mr. Carter reported that he has been working with the staff to develop the proposed
12 2021 Three-Month Budget. They are still incorporating the Winter Conference and GTSS
13 projections into the forecast but will have a draft for the Executive/Finance Committee to
14 review next week. Ken Klemm noted that it will be helpful to have more year-round revenue.

15 Mr. Carter asked for board guidance on a staff travel policy for attending state/regional
16 meetings in 2021. He noted that NBA staff participation at state/regional meetings has been an
17 important element in forging a close working relationship among the NBA and the
18 state/regionals. In fact, most state/regional associations now regularly allocate part of their
19 agenda to a report from the NBA. President Baggett recommended that the NBA participate in
20 state-regional meetings virtually if possible. Campbell Burgess recommended that we encourage
21 state-regional associations to help cover any staff travel. No formal action was taken.

22 The Chair called on Jim Matheson for a membership report. The NBA membership
23 continues to hold relatively stable. Total membership on November 13, 2020 was 1,136, which
24 was a drop of five members since September 14th. The NBA has gained two new life members
25 but has dropped by seven active members.

26 Mr. Matheson reviewed the proposed membership adjustment plan with the board. That
27 proposed restructuring was presented to the board at the September meeting as a discussion
28 document. The key elements of the proposed new structure are:

- 29 1. Replace Friend of the Bison with a Supporter level and increase the fee from \$60 to
30 \$100.

- 1 2. Increase the First-Year Active Membership to \$300, but lower renewals to \$225.
- 2 3. Combine Junior and Student Group into one category and increase the annual level to
- 3 \$75.

4 Discussion was held. A motion was made by Ken Klemm to accept the proposal. Said motion
5 was seconded and carried.

6 The board agreed in October to try and schedule a one-day planning session for late
7 November or early December. Mr. Carter said he conducted two online polls to determine the
8 board availability but was unable to find a date that didn't exclude at least two board members.
9 Following discussion, the board expressed consensus for the staff to select the best available
10 date for a planning session.

11 Jim Matheson provided a report on the Winter Conference planning. As per the board's
12 vote on October 15, the staff has been working with the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association to
13 conduct a combined conference February 18-20 at the Ramkota Inn in Rapid City, SD with
14 livestreaming to allow for virtual attendance. Mr. Matheson has been working to secure a
15 company that can live-stream the event for members who want to participate virtually. Mr.
16 Matheson reported that he has developed disclaimer language that all registrants will be
17 required to sign upon registering.

18 Mr. Carter reported that the NBA will provide masks and sanitizer, along with written
19 CDC guidelines, in all registration bags. The NBA will also provide Plexiglass shields for
20 everyone at the registration desk, will require all hotel staff interacting with NBA members to
21 wear masks, and is reserving all ballroom space so that meal functions can provide ample
22 spacing. He also said that the State of South Dakota has appointed a new state epidemiologist,
23 and that he will be in contact with that official in the coming weeks.

24 Karen Conley noted that, if conditions require cancellation of an in-person event—the
25 Gold Trophy Show and Sale should be able to proceed.

26 Ms. Conley provided a report on the Gold Trophy Show and Sale. Karen and Jim—in
27 consultation with GTSS Chair Boyd Meyer—have been finalizing the procedures for the 2021
28 Gold Trophy Show and Sale. As agreed, the show and sale will not include any yearling females
29 to avoid competition with DTBA's Girlz Going Wild event. However, the NBA is adding a Pen
30 of 2 Bred Heifers. Entry fees are being lowered to reflect current market conditions. Dr. John

1 Brown of Minnesota and Les Kroeger of Saskatchewan are scheduled as the GTSS judges.
2 David Lutt of North Dakota has agreed to stand by as an alternate judge. Robert Johnson made
3 a motion to approve David Lutt as an alternate judge. Said motion was seconded and carried.

4 Mr. Carter provided a report on legislative and regulatory issues. He told the board that
5 the NBA continues to await a decision from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service regarding
6 the NBA's request for a \$17 million purchase of bison meat under the Section 32 Surplus
7 Removal Program.

8 As reported in the October meeting, 12 U.S. Senators, led by John Hoeven (R-ND) and
9 Michael Bennet (D-CO) sent a letter to USDA Under Secretary Greg Ibach in support of the
10 NBA's request. Mr. Carter sent a follow-up overview on market conditions to USDA on
11 November 9th. He anticipates an announcement on the NBA request in the next two weeks.

12 Mr. Carter reported that bison producers have until December 11 to sign up for
13 reimbursement under the CFAP-2 program. Because some USDA Farm Service Agency offices
14 are unclear about the procedure for covering bison producers, the NBA contacted the agency's
15 Washington, D.C. office for a clarification. He reviewed the clarification with the board.

16 Mr. Carter and Kristopher Kelley reviewed the status of the various legislative proposals
17 to assist small meat processing plants. None of the bills recently introduced have advanced in
18 the House or Senate. However, several states have recently announced the release of CARES
19 Act funding to assist small meat plants in their states.

20 Mr. Carter reviewed with the board the leading candidates to be appointed as Secretary
21 of Agriculture under the incoming administration. He also noted that President-Elect Biden is
22 advocating a carbon bank program. Mr. Carter said that the NBA would work to be involved in
23 that initiative.

24 The USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) is developing its
25 second national study of the U.S. bison industry, which is planned for 2022. As an initial step, it
26 has launched a brief online survey to help NAHMS focus the research and build a study that is
27 the most beneficial to industry. He urged board members to participate in the survey being
28 conducted as a part of that assessment.

29 He reported that the House and Senate bills regarding Truth in Buffalo Labeling will
30 effectively need to be reintroduced next session.

1 Mr. Carter reported that The Center of Excellence for Bison Studies has conducted its
2 initial two board meetings since formally being chartered. He said that a family foundation has
3 committed to support the Center with \$250,000 in funding per year for the next five years. In
4 addition, the National Buffalo Foundation authorized \$150,000 to support the Center's activities
5 during its initial year of operation. Dr. Jeff Martin has joined the Center as a postdoctoral
6 fellow. Dr. Martin has served on the NBA's Science & Research Committee, and recently
7 completed his doctoral studies at Texas A&M University.

8 Mr. Carter said that the 300 applications for the Director of Development position have
9 been narrowed down to five finalists. The selection committee will hold online interview with
10 those candidates on November 18th. That committee is comprised of Dr. Kristi Cammack, John
11 Flocchini, Mimi Hillenbrand, Ace Ward, Jim Matheson, and Mr. Carter. The Director of
12 Development will be brought on board in January.

13 The chair called on directors for regional reports.

14 Robert Johnson provided a report of the International Director. He noted that the
15 Canadian Bison Association virtual conference is scheduled for December 5th. He said that there
16 haven't been any real sales to report. He noted that the increase in COVID is very concerning.

17 Mary Adams provided a report from Region I. She reported that the Western Bison
18 Association has cancelled both its Show and Sale and winter meeting. Antelope Island had a
19 strong sale. The Northwest Bison Association has had nothing to report.

20 Boyd Meyer provide a report from Region II. He noted that there are a lot of animals
21 being offered for sale. He said he was encouraged by the calf prices. He is concerned by the cull
22 cow situation.

23 Kevin Leier provided a report from Region III. He reported that he has not received any
24 update from the Montana Bison Association regarding plans for a winter meeting. Dakota
25 Territory is working with the NBA on the Winter Conference. The North Dakota Bison
26 Association has voted to postpone their meeting to 2022. He noted the Young Guns Yearling
27 Bull category has been cancelled because of Mycoplasma. Mr. Matheson added that the
28 Montana Bison Association has tentatively scheduled a January conference.

1 Ken Klemm provided a report from Region IV. He reported that the Missouri Bison
2 Association expressed appreciation on the work that the NBA did on securing CFAP-2. The
3 Kansas Buffalo Association will be having its sale on December 5th.

4 Jeremy Allemann provided a report from Region V. He said that the Minnesota Bison
5 Association Show and sale is being held next week. He reported that the MnBA has discussed
6 the concept paper from Rocky Mountain Bison Association President John Graves regarding a
7 formal merger of state/regional associations and the NBA. He said that there was positive
8 feedback. The Wisconsin Bison Association has also provided positive feedback on that
9 concept.

10 Campbell Burgess provided a report from Region VI. He said that there are a couple of
11 liquidations occurring from long-time producers, but there is some interest from prospective
12 ranchers.

13 Carie Starr, director-elect from Region VII, provided a report of that region. The
14 Eastern Bison Association is planning a conference in March. The EBA is planning a webinar in
15 January. She noted that there has been an increase in availability for processing in small meat
16 plants.

17 Kristopher Kelley provided a report from Region VIII. He reported that there has been
18 an increase in interest in the bison business among prospective producers.

19 Karen Conley provided a report from the Communications Director. She is starting to
20 work on the winter issue of *Bison World*. There is an increase in advertising. She reviewed with
21 the board the new policy regarding the placement of banner ads in *Weekly Update*. Discussion
22 was held. Consensus was expressed that the staff continue to look at alternatives for the
23 advertising policy. Kevin Leier recommended that Karen Conley be recused from being
24 involved in developing the policy because of a potential conflict of interest. Ms. Conley agreed
25 to be recused.

26 Mike Faith, vice chair of the InterTribal Buffalo Council, joined the meeting to provide
27 a report of the ITBC. He reported that the Standing Rock Reservation was scheduled to receive
28 three Yellowstone bulls that had been quarantined at Fort Peck. They were part of a group of 40
29 bulls that were distributed to tribes. However, the North Dakota Board of Animal Control voted
30 6-3 to not allow the permit for Standing Rock. The InterTribal Buffalo Council legal counsel is

1 intervening to overturn the Board of Animal Health decision. He also reported that the ITBC
2 wants to cooperate in sponsoring the NBA Winter Conference and Gold Trophy sale. Kevin
3 Leier offered to help facilitate resolution of the Yellowstone Bull issue.

4 Ken Klemm provided a report of the Conservation Committee. He reported that the audit
5 committee for the Conservation Management Plan held its first meeting to review applications.
6 There have been three applications submitted to date.

7 Connor Elliott, chair of the North American Bison Registry, joined the meeting to
8 provide a report of the NABR. He noted that he was available to discuss the letter that had been
9 sent to the membership from Ozark Mountain Bison regarding the NABR procedures. Mr.
10 Elliott said that he will be reviewing the letter with the NABR Board of Advisors.

11 Mr. Carter reported that the NBA staff and President Baggett held a Zoom meeting with
12 leaders of state/regional bison associations on October 24th. Participation was excellent, with
13 nearly all state/regionals represented. The first half of the meeting covered the steps that all
14 associations are taking to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic and the downturn in
15 market prices. The second half of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of a concept
16 paper that has been developed by John Graves, president of the Rocky Mountain Bison
17 Association, proposing a formal merger among the NBA and state/regional associations. The
18 discussion was open-ended, with no formal recommendation. State/regional associations agreed
19 to discuss this concept within their individual boards of directors.

20 There being no additional business to come before the board, and upon motion made,
21 seconded, and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

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23 Respectfully Submitted,

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26 _____
27 Joe Graham, Secretary
28
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30 _____

1 Dave Carter, Recording Secretary