



1 made by Ken Klemm to approve the January 24, 2020 minutes, as distributed. Said motion was  
2 seconded and carried.

3 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the NBA Membership Meeting  
4 of January 24, 2020, which minutes were previously distributed to the board. No changes were  
5 made. A motion was made by Chad Kremer to accept the January 24, 2020 minutes, as  
6 distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

7 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the Executive/Finance  
8 Committee on February 26, 2020 and March 24, 2020, which minutes were previously  
9 distributed to the board. No changes were made. A motion was made by Alan Douglass to  
10 accept the Executive/Finance Committee minutes as distributed. Said motion was seconded and  
11 carried.

12 Discussion was held regarding the current and potential impact on the COVID-19  
13 outbreak of the bison business. Mary Adams reported that she quadrupled her sales in the past  
14 week. Brian Grubb concurred that the small producers in his region were experiencing increased  
15 demand.

16 The Chair called on Alan Douglass, chair of the Finance Committee, and Dave Carter for  
17 a year-to-date financial report through February. Mr. Douglass reported that the financial  
18 performance exceeded the budgeted projections in nearly every category for the first three  
19 months of 2020. Year-to-date income of \$392,591 through February was \$67,865 above budget,  
20 primarily because of the Winter Conference attendance and fundraising activities. Year-to-date  
21 expenses of \$284,092 through February were \$4,625 above budget. After adjustments and  
22 designated reserves, net results of \$100,702 through February are \$61,937 above budget. There  
23 are outstanding Winter Conference and Gold Trophy expenses of roughly \$25,000, but nearly  
24 all other expenses have been recorded. On the statement of financial position, the National  
25 Bison Association has \$466,763 in net equity as of February 29, 2020. A motion was made by  
26 Ken Klemm to approve the YTD financial report, as presented. Said motion was seconded and  
27 carried.

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29 Mr. Carter reported that he and the staff are now developing the nine-month budget for  
30 the NBA. That budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee before being presented to the

1 full board. He said that the budget will reflect projected slow-down in activities resulting from  
2 the COVID-19 outbreak.

3 Mr. Gehring called upon Jim Matheson for a membership report. Mr. Matheson said that  
4 the NBA had 1,164 members as of March 24, 2020, compared to 1,147 members as of January  
5 17, 2020. Ten new active members have joined since January 17<sup>th</sup>. This is the highest level of  
6 membership in nearly two decades.

7 The Chair called on regional directors for their reports.

8 Robert Johnson provided a report of the International Director. He said that all of the  
9 regional conferences in Canada have concluded.

10 Mary Adams provided a report from Region I. She said that the Western Bison  
11 Association is still tentatively planning its summer conference for June 7-9. Northwest Bison  
12 Association had their spring meeting.

13 Mimi Hillenbrand provided a report from Region III. She reported that there is good  
14 moisture in Region III. Several live sales have been held and prices have been variable.

15 Ken Klemm provided a report from Region IV. He reported that the Illinois-Indiana  
16 association meeting has been postponed because of COVID-19.

17 Jeremy Allemann provided a report from Region V. He reported that the Wisconsin  
18 Bison Producers Association meeting in late February went very well. The Minnesota Bison  
19 Association spring meeting scheduled for April has been cancelled.

20 Campbell Burgess provided a report from Region VI. He reported that there has been  
21 extremely strong on-line and retail demand for meat.

22 Brian Grubb provided a report from Region VII. The Eastern Bison Association had a  
23 small sale, with relatively strong prices.

24 Kristopher Kelly provided a report from Region VIII. He concurred that foodservice  
25 demand for bison is dropping as restaurants are forced to close, and that this is creating a  
26 challenge for marketers.

27 Discussion was held regarding long-range strategic planning for the National Bison  
28 Association. During its meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Committee discussed  
29 alternatives for rescheduling the board strategic planning meeting, which was originally set for  
30 March 19 and 20. The Executive Committee expressed the consensus that the current economic

1 situation will make long-term planning very difficult for at least the next six months.  
2 Accordingly, the Executive Committee recommends that the strategic planning session be  
3 postponed until 2021. Discussion was held. The board expressed the consensus to postpone the  
4 planning session until 2021. Mr. Carter noted that the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses,  
5 Opportunities & Threats) analysis input provided by the board members in a recent online  
6 survey can provide useful direction during the next 12 months.

7 Discussion was held regarding the National Bison Association 2020 Summer  
8 Conference, which is scheduled June 21-24 in Cheyenne, WY. Jim Matheson reported that even  
9 though the association has signed a contract with Little America Hotel and Conference Center  
10 in Cheyenne, the hotel has reached out to express that there will not be any cancellation  
11 penalties if the NBA is not able to conduct the event. Mr. Carter added that the NBA bylaws  
12 require a semi-annual members meeting, but do not specify that the association must hold an  
13 actual conference. The semi-annual meeting could be conducted as an on-line event. The  
14 Executive Committee discussed this issue on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and adopted the following formal  
15 recommendation:

16 April 15 will be set as the go/no-go date for the Executive Committee to determine if a  
17 Summer Conference will be held in 2020, and that, if the conference is not held in June,  
18 the NBA will schedule a virtual mid-year membership meeting to be conducted later this  
19 year.

20 Discussion was held. Ken Klemm mentioned that there could be an opportunity to generate  
21 revenue from a virtual mid-year membership meeting. A motion was made by Brian Grubb to  
22 approve the recommendation from the Executive Committee. Said motion was seconded and  
23 carried.

24 Jim Matheson reported that he has been working with Conference Direct to solicit bids  
25 from Denver area hotels with the capacity to handle the NBA Winter Conference for 2022 and  
26 2023. He said that the two top options were submitted by Renaissance Denver Stapleton and the  
27 Westin Westminster. The Renaissance is offering a room rate of \$144/night with breakfast,  
28 while the Westin rate would be \$209/night, with breakfast. The Renaissance also has a \$20,000  
29 food and beverage minimum, while the Westin has an \$80,000 minimum. Mr. Matheson

1 recommended that no action be taken at this time because hotels may be willing to lower their  
2 bids in the coming months.

3 The board entered into a discussion on revising the regional boundaries for 2021 – 2026.  
4 Mr. Carter noted that the NBA bylaws require that the regional boundaries be revised every five  
5 years to maintain equal representation as “reasonably as possible.” He also noted that the new  
6 regional boundaries must be finalized before July 2020, so that the regional directors elected in  
7 September will be seated in the regions established for 2021 – 2026. Two options were  
8 presented to the board, based upon a count of the association’s roster of voting members in  
9 March 2020. Discussion was held. Brian Grubb recommended that the board receive input from  
10 state-regional associations regarding the redistricting. Additional discussion was held. The chair  
11 polled the board regarding the options presented. The results were:

12 Seven directors preferring Option II as included in the board packet; three directors  
13 preferring Option I; and one director withholding a vote until input was received by  
14 state/regional associations.

15 Discussion was held regarding the structure of committees within the National Bison  
16 Association. President Baggett reported that he has been reviewing the committees and  
17 contacting the committee chairs. He reported that he concurred with the recommendation of  
18 State/Regional Committee Chair Jud Seaman and Jim Matheson to inactivate that committee for  
19 the coming year. Mr. Seaman and Mr. Matheson said that the committee is not dealing with any  
20 current issues, so there is no reason to meet.

21 President Baggett noted that he has served as the chair of the Government Relations  
22 Committee for the past several years. He said that, even though this is structured as a standing  
23 committee, the needs for public policy input require input from individual members based on  
24 the policy issue. Thus, he recommended that it be formally dissolved. Ken Klemm made a  
25 motion to dissolve the Government Relations Committee. Said motion was seconded and  
26 carried.

27 The board turned to reports from the standing committees.

28 Dave Carter provided a report of the Science and Research Committee. The committee met  
29 by telephone on March 17<sup>th</sup> with SDSU officials and others involved in establishing the Center  
30 of Excellence for Bison Studies. He reported that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding

1 among the National Buffalo Foundation and South Dakota State University for establishing the  
2 Center is currently being reviewed by the university's legal officials. Kristi Cammack, the  
3 center director, has proposed establishing an 11-member board, with five members from SDSU,  
4 two from the NBA, two from the National Buffalo Foundation, one from a tribal university, and  
5 one from the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

6 Mr. Carter said that USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) has  
7 received approval from APHIS to conduct a follow-up study to the Bison 2014 epidemiological  
8 study. Members of the Science and Research Committee are reviewing Bison 2014 to provide  
9 recommendations on the scope and focus of the follow-up study.

10 The original printing of the *Bison Disease Field Guide* has been depleted, so an  
11 additional 2,500 copies have been printed. Roughly 750 copies will be sold to the Canadian  
12 Bison Association and the InterTribal Buffalo Council, with the remainder available for sale,  
13 and to be provided to new NBA members.

14 Mr. Carter also provided a report of the Commercial Marketers' Committee. As noted  
15 previously in the board's discussion, commercial marketers are scrambling to keep up with the  
16 exploding demand from retail customers, even as their foodservice accounts evaporate during  
17 the COVID-19 pandemic.

18 With regard to marketers supplying foodservice accounts, and those engaged in farm-  
19 direct marketing, the NBA has revised and updated the Marketing Tools section on the website,  
20 and is launching a social media ad blitz to promote the *BuySome Bison* app.

21 Jim Matheson provided a report of the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. He  
22 noted that the committee met on March 18. John Bowron will be returning as a GTSS judge for  
23 2021. The committee recommended that Les Kroeger of Canada be asked to serve as a judge for  
24 2021 and 2022. Jim Matheson contacted Mr. Kroeger, who agreed to serve.

25 The GTSS Committee also held discussion regarding contingency plans for the 2021  
26 Sale in the event that the new sale arena at the National Western Stock Show will not be ready  
27 for use in time for the 2021 Gold Trophy Show and Sale. It is increasingly likely that the sale  
28 arena will not be ready, but that temporary pens will be available. The committee's contingency  
29 plan assumes that the animals will still be brought to the Stock Show, but that the auction will  
30 be conducted as a video sale.

1 Mr. Matheson reported that he has finalized the Request for Proposals for an auctioneer  
2 for the 2021 GTSS. That RFP will likely be distributed tomorrow.

3 Dave Carter reported that National Western Stock Show has informed the National  
4 Bison Association that the trailer utilized to store GTSS supplies would not be allowed to be  
5 used in the new facilities. With the approval of the Executive Committee, the NBA has  
6 purchased an enclosed 16-foot cargo trailer for \$4,800. Rocky Mountain Bison Association is  
7 covering half of that purchase price.

8 Connor Elliott, chair of the North American Bison Registry, joined the meeting to give a  
9 report of the Registry. He reported that NABR is continuing to move forward with its initiatives.

10 Ken Klemm provided a report of the Conservation Committee. He explained steps that  
11 the committee is taking to implement the new Conservation Management Plan. Jim Matheson  
12 reported that he has been working with HerdDogg, Inc. to incorporate the Conservation  
13 Management Plan into the new Producers' App.

14 Dave Carter provided a report on legislative and regulatory issues.

15 U.S. Reps. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) and Billy Long (R-MO) formally introduced H.R.  
16 5815, the Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act, in the House of Representatives in February. This is  
17 the companion legislation to the Senate bill being sponsored by Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and  
18 Michael Bennet (D-CO). Mr. Carter and President Baggett went to Washington, D.C. to lobby  
19 for the issue. U.S. Sen. John Tester (D-MT) has agreed to co-sponsor the Senate bill. In the  
20 House, U.S. Reps. Bill Flores (R-TX) and Roger Marshall (R-KS) have signed on as co-  
21 sponsors of the legislation.

22 Reps. Perlmutter and Long are preparing to circulate a dear colleague letter requesting  
23 additional co-sponsors, but issues relating to COVID-19 will likely delay that process. Mr.  
24 Carter is also working with the offices of Reps. Perlmutter and Long to plan on scheduling a  
25 hearing in the Energy & Commerce Committee.

26 Mr. Carter noted that, as per recommendations from the Commercial Marketers'  
27 Committee and the NBA Board of Directors, he has been working with Amber Wells of  
28 USDA's Grain and Livestock Market Reporting Service to propose development of an annual  
29 bison calf weaning report. Ms. Wells is working with other officials in her agency to discuss  
30 implementing that report.

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The National Bison Association is still waiting for the formal opening of Mexico for exports of bison meat. USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have submitted their recommendations to SENASICA (Mexico’s food import agency) for procedures for the export of bison meat from the US to Mexico. SENASICA has not yet responded.

At the request of USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service and the NBA, the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) has agreed to consider establishing specific HS (Harmonized System) Codes for bison meat when it conducts its next meeting in May. Bison meat is currently listed under the HS codes used for beef.

Mr. Carter reported that he was joined in Washington, D.C. by two representatives of the InterTribal Buffalo Council on February 12<sup>th</sup> to meet with officials from USDA’s Food and Nutritional Service and Agricultural Marketing Service to request that bison be added to the Food and Nutrition Service’s list of foods available for purchase in the nation’s school lunch program. Officials from FNS recommended that the NBA and ITBC work with state school nutrition associations to develop commercial sales of bison meat to local school districts as a means to demonstrate sufficient demand that would justify FNS adding bison to the foods available for purchase list.

Following Under Secretary Ibach’s appearance at our convention, the NBA has continued discussions with USDA APHIS regarding the NBA’s potential role in facilitating distribution of RFID tags for animal ID. Those discussions are on hold right now.

Mr. Carter reported there is a push from some sectors of the bison business to push for rulemaking to begin for bison to be designated as an amenable species. FSIS has proposed scheduling a roundtable meeting to discuss potential rulemaking. Mr. Carter has stressed that any roundtable has to include participation from all stakeholders, including state-inspected processors and tribal producers.

Mr. Carter reported that the \$2 trillion economic stimulus package approved by the U.S. Senate earlier in the day included \$9.5 billion for emergency agricultural assistance. The Senate language mentions “livestock producers, including dairy producers as eligible recipients.” However, the preliminary package being developed by USDA, with strong input from U.S. Sen.

1 John Hoeven (R-ND & Chair of the Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittee) has specifically  
2 targeted “beef” producers. Mr. Carter presented the following resolution to the board for  
3 consideration to be sent to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue:

4 The National Bison Association Board of Directors commends Congress and the Trump  
5 Administration for strong steps to protect agriculture and other vital sectors of the U.S.  
6 economy during this time of uncertainty related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Bison  
7 producers today face the same economic risks as do our neighboring producers in beef,  
8 dairy and other livestock sectors. Accordingly, we unanimously urge the Secretary of  
9 Agriculture and all other federal officials to assure that America’s bison producers are  
10 included as eligible recipients in any assistance program implemented for the livestock  
11 sector, and that any compensation for bison producers be based upon the prevailing  
12 market prices before March 2020.

13 A motion was made by Brian Grubb to approve the resolution, as presented. Said motion  
14 was seconded and carried.

15 Dave Carter provided a report on the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant. He  
16 noted that the association has \$15,000 in available grant funds to advertise the *BuySome*  
17 *Bison* app. The grant agreement called for those funds to be used with selected print  
18 publications. Mr. Carter has submitted a request to USDA allow digital advertising through  
19 these publications, and that the NBA be allowed to re-allocate some other grant funds for this  
20 advertising and promotion. The association will begin a digital marketing campaign with *Paleo*  
21 on-line magazine starting March 28<sup>th</sup>.

22 Mr. Carter reported that USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service has issued a Request  
23 for Applications through their Regional Food Systems Programs (RFSP) grant program. The  
24 grant program requires the applicant to partner with a state agency, a philanthropic corporation,  
25 institutions of higher learning, or Farm Credit System institutions. Mr. Carter and Mr.  
26 Matheson are coordinating with South Dakota State University and Sinte Gelska University  
27 through the Center of Excellence to develop a proposal for a planning and design grant of  
28 between \$100,000 and \$250,000. The program also requires a 25% match and allows for  
29 indirect costs of up to 10%.

1 Jim Matheson provided a report on the Producer app, developed through funding from  
2 the Risk Management Agency. The RMA grant concludes March 31<sup>st</sup>. All funds from that grant  
3 have been expended. Mr. Matheson has been working with HerdDogg, Inc. to finalize an  
4 agreement for HerdDogg to continue to allow NBA members to continue to access the app. The  
5 agreement also covers the ability to purchase HerdDogg ear tags, administer the Conservation  
6 Management Plan, and to support other NBA-selected products and services. The Letter of  
7 Intent attached with the board packet is presented for board approval. Mr. Matheson noted that  
8 attorney and NBA member Paul Lyman has reviewed the proposed Letter of Intent. Discussion  
9 was held. Several board members voiced concern regarding the \$1/month per animal  
10 subscription fee. Dave Carter noted that HerdDogg had indicated a willingness to implement a  
11 sliding scale, based on herd size. Mr. Klemm noted that the Conservation Management Plan  
12 intellectual property should remain the property of the National Bison Association. Consensus  
13 was expressed to have the NBA communicate to HerdDogg the concern about the \$1/month per  
14 animal fee, and that the Conservation Management Plan and any other content developed by the  
15 National Bison Association be maintained as intellectual property of the National Bison  
16 Association.

17 Mr. Carter reviewed with the board the proposed Memorandum of Understanding  
18 among the National Bison Association, the National Buffalo Foundation and the Throlson  
19 American Bison Foundation regarding working collaboratively on issues of mutual concern.  
20 The current draft of the MOU is included for board consideration. A motion was made by Ken  
21 Klemm to endorse the concepts in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. Said motion  
22 was seconded and carried.

23 Karen Conley joined the meeting to provide a communications report. She reported that  
24 the spring issue of *Bison World* is just wrapping up. She noted that the NBA staff is exploring  
25 developing a periodic podcast.

26 There being no further business to come before the board, and upon motion made,  
27 seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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29 Respectfully Submitted,

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Joe Graham, Secretary

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Dave Carter, Recording Secretary