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2 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**
3 **OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
4 **OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION**
5 **March 21, 2019**
6 **Via Telephone Conference Call**
7
8

9 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison
10 Association was convened at 5 p.m., Thursday, March 21, 2019 via telephone conference call
11 pursuant to the bylaws and notification by the Executive Director.

12 Present were:

13 Roy Liedtke	Dick Gehring
14 Tom Barthel	Robert Johnson
15 Brian Grubb	Mimi Hillenbrand
16 Boyd Meyer	Jeremy Allemann
17 Debbie Thieman	Keith Yearout
18 Donnis Baggett	Alan Douglass

19
20 Absent were Kristopher Kelley, Gerald Parsons and Mike Faith (advisory). Also
21 attending were Dave Carter, Jim Matheson, and Karen Conley. Roy Liedtke presided, and Dave
22 Carter served as recording secretary.

23 Dick Gehring provided a report of the President. He said that he is planning to attend
24 the Texas Bison Association spring conference and the Western Bison Association summer
25 meeting.

26 The chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of January 22,
27 2019. Brian Grubb noted a typographical error. A motion was made by Mimi Hillenbrand to
28 approve the minutes, as corrected. Said motion was seconded and carried.

29 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of January 25, 2019, which
30 minutes were previously circulated to the board. No corrections were noted. A motion was
31 made by Robert Johnson to approve the minutes, as distributed. Said motion was seconded and
32 carried.

1 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the Membership Meeting of
2 January 25, 2019. No changes were noted. A motion was made by Debbie Thieman to accept
3 the minutes as distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

4 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the Finance Committee
5 meeting of February 27, 2019. A motion was made by Debbie Thieman to accept the minutes as
6 distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

7 Donnis Baggett provided the Financial Report. The Finance Committee met earlier in
8 the day to review the year-to-date financial performance through February. The year-to-date
9 gross income through February was \$333,993, which is \$29,978 above budgeted levels. Gross
10 expenses of \$277,548 were \$3,985 above budget. After adjustments, including designated
11 reserves and restricted Growth Fund accounting, year-to-date net results of \$40,580 were
12 \$16,244 ahead of budget. In two key categories, Winter Conference (plus benefit auction) net
13 results of \$58,981 were \$8,529 ahead of budget, and GTSS net results of \$36,368 were \$26,425
14 ahead of budget. There are still roughly \$2,000 in Winter Conference expenses to be recorded.
15 A motion was made by Mimi Hillenbrand to approve the financial report as presented. Said
16 motion was seconded and carried.

17 Dave Carter reported that he has been waiting for a full reconciliation of Winter
18 Conference and GTSS results before beginning to develop the nine-month budget. He and the
19 staff will now begin developing the nine-month budget. This will likely require a special board
20 meeting in April to adopt that budget.

21 Jim Matheson provided a membership report, which report is included with the board
22 packet as Attachment F. The NBA membership as of March 19th was 1,151, which is the
23 highest level since the early 2000's.

24 Mr. Matheson reported that the NBA has installed the Apricot Social Solutions
25 membership management software. Mr. Matheson reported that the system will require some
26 training. He said that the software can be used for membership recruitment.

27 As per previous board action, Tom Barthel, Jim Matheson, Barb Dowdy, and Teresa
28 Amos conducted an analysis of our Life Member and Multi-Year Membership levels. The
29 results of that membership analysis are included with the board packet as Attachment G. With

1 the current dues level, a lifetime membership equates to 12 years of annual membership dues or
2 17 years if the funds are invested at 4% interest.

3 Based on the analysis the group developed the following recommendations.

- 4 1. Leave the multi years dues unchanged.
 - 5 a. Three-year = \$695, Lifetime = \$3,000.
 - 6 b. These fees should of course be reconsidered whenever the one-year membership
 - 7 dues are changed.
- 8 2. Target older members for life membership sales.
- 9 3. Recognize life members in low cost but meaningful ways. Perhaps special badges at
- 10 conferences etc.
- 11 4. Use life members as a resource group for fund raising or other leader roles.

12
13 At Brian Grubb's request, the board reviewed the bylaw provisions regarding ownership
14 of bison as a requirement for regular member. He noted that the Eastern Bison Association has a
15 requirement for owning bison as a part of eligibility. That requirement became a point of
16 contention at the recent EBA meeting.

17 The board reviewed the NBA bylaws language regarding eligibility to join as a regular
18 member. The bylaws specify:

- 19 a. **Active Membership.** Any person, partnership, corporation, firm or association engaged
20 in breeding, raising, feeding or handling of bison and who owns at least one (1) bison
21 shall be eligible to be an active member of the Corporation. Any person, partnership,
22 corporation, firm or association engaged in the distribution and/or sale of bison meat,
23 bison by-products, and/or otherwise involved in the bison industry shall also be eligible
24 to be an active member of the Corporation.

25 Following discussion, the board expressed the consensus that the current bylaw language
26 allows individuals to be active members even if they do not own any bison.

27 Mr. Liedtke called upon Dave Carter to update the board with issues surrounding water
28 buffalo in both human food and pet food channels.

29 Mr. Carter reported that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in February provided
30 the National Bison Association with a formal response to the association's complaint regarding
31 mislabeled water buffalo. The FDA letter stated, "FDA has not established a specific regulation
32 regarding the marketing of either water buffalo or bison. However, we do agree that water

1 buffalo should be labeled as water buffalo and that bison should be labeled as “bison” or
2 Buffalo (bison).”

3 Mr. Carter said that the FDA response underscores the importance of pursuing
4 legislative and/or regulatory action to require proper labeling.

5 Mr. Carter reported that the Ingredient Definitions Committee (IDC) of the Association
6 of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) is continuing to work on language to clarify the
7 mislabeled products in pet food. The IDC is scheduled to have a teleconference meeting on
8 April 4th, and this issue is on the agenda.

9 Mr. Carter reported that the NBA has launched a website to help consumers select pet
10 food brands made with bison, and to avoid those brands using water buffalo. He has also been
11 in contact with officials at those pet food companies to access their receptiveness to utilizing
12 some type of NBA-Approved Seal on their products. The response has been very positive. The
13 NBA will be working to develop a definitive proposal on this in the coming weeks. Robert
14 Johnson recommended that we use social media to push out the web page.

15 Jim Matheson reported that the NBA is hiring a graphic design intern who will be working
16 remotely on a bison-specific infographic series to educate consumers and bison enthusiasts on
17 an array of pertinent topics. The intern hired is Elizabeth Sugg, a 2018 graduate of the graphic
18 design program at Auburn University.

19 The Chair called for a report of NBA Committees.

20 Dave Carter provided a report of the Science and Research Committee, which met on
21 March 20th. Karen Conley will be developing an article on the work of the committee for *Bison*
22 *World*. The committee is also coordinating with South Dakota State University to establish
23 SDSU as a Center of Excellence of Bison. The National Buffalo Foundation has more than
24 \$300,000 to be utilized to support SDSU’s work to become a Center of Excellence.

25 Boyd Meyer provided a report of the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. He
26 reported that the committee will be issuing a bid for proposals for an auctioneer for the GTSS
27 2020 Auction.

28 Jim Matheson provided a report of the Conservation Committee. That committee, with
29 the assistance of their consultant, conducted a survey of the NBA membership regarding their

1 interest and support for conservation programs. Mr. Matheson said there were more than 300
2 responses to that survey. He will distribute the results to the board.

3 Beverly Brown, chair of the Winter Conference Committee, joined the call to provide a
4 report on Winter Conference. She provided a brief recap of the 2019 Winter Conference. She
5 also discussed the plans for the 2020 Winter Conference. Veryl Goodnight has agreed to do a
6 special bison sculpture for the 25th Anniversary Winter Conference in 2020.

7 Dave Carter provided a legislative and regulatory report. He reported that USDA's
8 Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) has formally initiated the process of opening Mexico for
9 U.S. bison meat. The FAS Post in Mexico City has provided the NBA with a series of questions
10 regarding processing protocols in the United States. Mr. Carter has forwarded those questions to
11 some of the larger commercial marketers.

12 Mr. Carter said that Elizabeth Riley of USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service contacted
13 him to report that the Tariff and Harmonization Schedule published by the United Kingdom in
14 anticipation of Brexit later this month, may mean that U.S. bison meat can be exported to the
15 UK with no tariff. Mr. Carter will be discussing this issue with Ms. Riley and an FAS technical
16 expert on March 22nd.

17 Dave Carter provided a report on the Farmers' Market Promotion Program grant. The
18 primary focus is on finalizing pop-up events being planned in Seattle, Minneapolis/St. Paul and
19 the greater New York City area this summer. Each event will begin with a local chef
20 demonstrating various cuts of bison and tips on how to prepare them. If the venue can do
21 something unique, such as a butchering demo on-site, we will consider adding that component
22 to the agenda. Then, three student chefs from a local culinary arts program will compete in an
23 Iron Chef competition featuring bison. A panel of judges, including local food media
24 representatives, will be invited to judge the results. Additional tasting samples will be provided
25 to attendees at the event on a first-come, first-serve basis. Mr. Carter is meeting with chefs,
26 producers and culinary officials to plan the events.

27 Mr. Carter noted that Jim Matheson also conducted a farmers' market training workshop
28 in conjunction with the Eastern Bison Association meeting in March.

29 Jim Matheson reported on the implementation of the \$93,219 grant for Record Keeping for
30 Risk Mitigation awarded through USDA's Risk Management Agency. The NBA issued a

1 request for proposals in February for the development of a producer app that will be a functional
2 and useful data collection and analysis tool for bison producers. The app will allow users the
3 ability to capture key data points on bison herd health in the field on a smartphone or tablet.
4 Four firms responded to the RFP, and the project team selected Herddogg, Inc. for the project.
5 Herddogg has requested 40 percent payment up-front. That request was reviewed by the
6 Finance Committee and does not require board action.

7 Jim Matheson provided a report on Summer Conference. The planning committee met a
8 couple of weeks ago to plan the conference. We are currently working on sponsorship
9 opportunities.

10 The Chair called for reports from the regional directors.

11 Robert Johnson provided a report of the International Director. He reported that the
12 Provincial Bison Associations are having their spring conferences and show and sale. He has
13 been in contact with several farm credit lenders who are interested in obtaining more
14 information on the bison market. The Canadian Bison Association will likely be changing the
15 venue for its annual meeting in November.

16 Alan Douglass reported that the Western Bison Association will be holding its summer
17 meeting in Utah in June. He reported that the Northwest Bison Association recently held their
18 winter meeting, with good attendance.

19 Debbie Thieman provided a report of Region II. She noted that nearly 80 members attended
20 the RMBA spring conference in early March. The association has changed its name from Rocky
21 Mountain Buffalo Association to Rocky Mountain Bison Association. RMBA has redesigned its
22 website.

23 Jeremy Alemann provided a report of Region V. He reported that the Wisconsin Bison
24 Association recently held its meeting. He was unable to attend because of weather. The
25 Minnesota Buffalo Association has its spring meeting scheduled for April.

26 Brian Grubb provided a report of Region VII. He reported that the EBA had its spring
27 conference March 8-9. Jim Matheson conducted a farmers' market workshop in conjunction
28 with the EBA conference.

29 Mr. Carter provided a report of the Executive Director. He reported that he was contacted
30 by John Calvelli of the Wildlife Conservation Society. Mr. Calvelli is involved with planning

1 for the 125th Anniversary Celebration of Central Park in New York City in 2020. Mr. Carter
2 said that he will be working with Mr. Calvelli to have a live bison (National Mammal) at
3 Central Park for that celebration.

4 Mr. Carter and Ms. Karen Conley provided a report to the board on their attendance at
5 Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, California in March.

6 The next board meeting is scheduled for May 16th.

7 There being no additional business to come before the board, and upon motion made,
8 seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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12 Tom Barthel, Secretary

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16 Dave Carter, Recording Secretary

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