

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION
Renaissance Central Park Hotel
Denver, Colorado
January 19, 2022**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison Association was convened at 8 a.m. MST, Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at the Renaissance Central Park Hotel, Denver, CO, pursuant to the bylaws and notification by the Executive Director.

Present were:

Donnis Baggett

Dick Gehring

Joe Graham

Kristopher Kelley (via Zoom)

Chad Kremer

Mimi Hillenbrand (via Zoom)

Jeremy Allemann (via Zoom)

Mary Adams (via Zoom)

Ken Klemm

Kevin Leier

Carie Starr

Robert Johnson (via Zoom)

Boyd Meyer

Absent was Campbell Burgess. Also present were Dave Carter, Jim Matheson (via Zoom) and Eloise Mongillo.

Dick Gehring presided, and Dave Carter served as recording secretary.

Donnis Baggett provided a report of the President. Thanked the Board for the effort to be at the meeting. He reported that the marketers' discussion in Deadwood, SD was very productive.

The chair called the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of November 4th. A motion was made by Carie Starr to approve the minutes, as distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

He called for the attention to the Finance Committee minutes of December 10, 2021, and January 6, 2022. A motion was made by Carie to accept the minutes as distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

The Chair called for a review of the 2021 Financial Statements. Mr. Carter reported that the December 31 financials were not completed prior to the meeting, so the reports distributed to the board reflected year-to-date performance through November 30th, 2021. Gross revenue for November of \$57,256 was \$3,476 above budget, although year-to-date income of \$597,994 is \$21,609 below budget. Gross expenses of \$56,028 in November were \$6,361 above budget, but YTD expenses of \$656,812 are \$21,028 below budget. After adjustments and designated reserves, the net YTD performance of (\$70,815) is \$46 less than budgeted loss. Net equity in the association on November 30, 2021, was \$400,331 compared with \$380,388 the previous November. Carie Starr made a motion to approve the financial report, as presented. . Said motion was seconded and carried.

Mr. Carter reviewed the proposed 2022 three-month budget with the board. He noted that the budget included with the board packet has gone through three complete drafts, with considerable input from staff and the Finance Committee. The budget will be for review only. The new board will take formal action on this budget next week. The budget projects a three-month net performance of \$3,086. That's an improvement over 2021's actual performance.

Jim Matheson provided a membership report for the board. The membership count has rebounded sharply since November and is now at the highest overall level since the early 2000's. Total membership in the NBA is 1,177, which is an increase of 45 members overall since the November 2, 2021, report. Mr. Matheson said the NBA sent out surveys in late November to all members, and to lapsed members. The information will be utilized during the upcoming Strategic Planning session.

We heard two weeks ago that we have formally been approved for the \$39,087 grant that Ms. Mongillo and Mr. Matheson coordinated to submit to North Central SARE in October. The grant proposal will underwrite a series of six field days/workshops that will feature tours and speakers on working bison ranches demonstrating how to maximize producers' regenerative impact in bison production through the holistic management of bison operations across the region. Bison North Central Regenerative Workshop Series.

Eloise Mongillo provided a report of the Director of Development. We received roughly \$14,000 Growth Fund contributions in the year-end appeal. There is \$41,000 in sponsorships for

the 2022 winter conference. She is now working on scheduling meetings with potential donors for the National Buffalo Foundation.

Mr. Carter and Mr. Matheson reviewed the 2022 Winter Conference schedule. The Winter Conference Committee has been meeting monthly since June and has worked hard to develop a very informative and educational program. The staff had planned on holding the conference with only in-person attendance, but the rise in COVID cases and the extension of the Denver City/County mask mandate prompted them add a livestream option. A Denver-based company has been contracted to provide that option for a total cost of about \$3,200 for the Thursday sessions. The auctioneer scheduled for both our Gold Trophy Sale and benefit auction was hospitalized over the weekend for COVID-related issues, and Assistant Director Matheson will not be able to participate in person because of testing positive for COVID.

The Chair called for committee reports.

Boyd Meyer provided a report of the Gold Trophy Show and Sale (GTSS) Committee. He said there were 98 live bison consigned for this year's GTSS. The new bison handling facilities are completed, but there are concerns over some design flaws that will need to be addressed moving forward. Chisolm Peterson of South Dakota has agreed to serve as the substitute auctioneer. Dick Gehring has agreed to serve as a GTSS judge because of the absence of Jud Seaman. Kevin Leier moved to approve Dick Gehring as the second judge. Said motion was seconded and carried.

The 2022 Junior Judging Competition has been cancelled because of COVID issues.

Mr. Carter said that there will be a Friday catered luncheon in the new National Sale Arena on Friday, immediately prior to the ribbon cutting on the Del Hensel working facilities. The GTSS awards ceremony will also be conducted at the National Western.

Mr. Carter provided a report of the Commercial Marketers' Committee. He said roughly one dozen marketers, finishers and cow-calf producers met in Deadwood, SD in January to discuss the market outlook and to offer suggestions for new outreach initiatives. It was not a formal committee meeting, and no action was taken. Mr. Carter also reviewed with the board the results of the twice-yearly marketers' survey conducted in November.

Mr. Carter noted that the Science and Research Committee meeting scheduled to coincide with the conference had been cancelled because of the large number of members who would not

be in Denver. Kristi Cammack, director of the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies, joined the meeting to report on the status of the 2022 round of competitive grants. She said that nine full proposals will be submitted for this round of funding.

Discussion was held on reviving the State/Regional Committee, which was disbanded a few years ago due to the lack of issues for that committee to discuss. Chad Kremer reported that he has been receiving requests to revive that committee. Discussion was held. Dave Carter said that the committee was previously disbanded because of low attendance. Consensus was expressed to revive the committee.

Discussion was held regarding the upcoming two-day strategic planning meeting. Mr. Carter said that April 6-7 are the best dates for board members to participate. He noted that four potential facilitators had been contacted. Mr. Carter, Mr. Matheson and Mr. Kremer had interviewed three of those candidates, and had agreed to move forward with Tara Kuipers of Wyoming to facilitate our session. Following Winter Conference, the staff will work with Ms. Kuiper to provide her with our recent surveys and to get an updated SWOT analysis from board members. Robert Johnson recommended a zoom option if the border restrictions are in place.

Dick Gehring made the following comments regarding social media participation in NBA activities:

I want to encourage the new board to really look at the way we do social media, Zoom, and the benefits we give to our members. I never want to take away benefits. But we are entering a new time where Zoom is going to be commonplace. My fear is if we do this, allow virtual participation at a discount instead of charging more for the convenience of not traveling, and if we allow everyone to watch videos for free, what will be the incentive to be here in person, spend money at the fundraiser, volunteer time, be involved, help this thing grow? I don't have an answer but we, you, may need to think outside the box, because we have changes coming, we don't see yet.

We may need to look at this organization differently and perhaps the way we do business is in for an overhaul. I wish I could be there for the discussions, but lucky for you, I won't. Good luck.

The Chair called on directors for regional reports.

Mary Adams provided a report from Region I. She was pleased with the increase in memberships in Region I. Rocky Mountain Bison Association is planning a spring meeting in early March.

Boyd Meyer provided a report from region II. He reported that the Western Bison Association had a successful conference and sale in December.

Kevin Leier provided a report from Region III. Montana Bison Association conference was cancelled because of weather. The Dakota Territory Buffalo Association is planning its meeting in February. He reported that some tribal groups in North Dakota are hosting Bison Symposiums focusing on cultural and historic aspects of bison. He noted that there are discussions in North Dakota regarding the future of the National Buffalo Museum.

Ken Klemm provided a report from Region IV. He is receiving calls from people who are planning to liquidate. He noted that there is a new effort to get Yellowstone Bison as endangered.

Jeremy Allemann provided a report from Region V. He reported that the Minnesota Bison Association's fall action was successful. MnBA is planning a spring meeting in March. Producers in Michigan are reporting that there are difficulties in moving animals across state lines because of tuberculosis testing requirements.

Carie Starr provided a report from Region VII. The Eastern Bison Association is planning its spring meeting and show and sale in March. The Beltway Auction is planned in February in Pennsylvania

Kristopher Kelley provided a report from Region VIII. He said there is a lot of interest from prospective producers.

Robert Johnson provided a report from the International Director. He said some events in Canada are now transitioning to all-virtual activities. The drought is having a serious impact in Canada. He has had an opportunity to participate in some joint sessions with Tribal groups. He urged that the NBA look at signing on to the Buffalo Treaty. Planning for the International Bison Conference is on schedule.

The chair called upon Dave Carter for a report on legislative and regulatory issues.

He noted that January 31st was the published deadline for delivering the second phase of the Section 32 purchase program to USDA. He does not have a report on the current status of the program.

Mr. Carter noted that USDA Farm Service Agency Administrator Zach Ducheneaux has responded to a request from the NBA to provide coverage under the agency's Livestock Indemnity program (LIP) for producers suffering herd losses because of *Mycoplasma bovis*. Mr.

Ducheneaux will formally announce that development when addressing the NBA winter conference on January 20th.

Mr. Carter noted that he is continuing to work with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to provide relief from holiday and overtime inspection fees for bison processors. He has also reached out to Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND), and Michael Bennet (D-CO) to inform their offices of the oversight. They are looking at the potential for offering some legislative language to address this problem.

Mr. Carter reported that USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have completed the surveys and other paperwork issues to get Japan to open as a market for U.S. bison exports. Also, USDA Foreign Agriculture Service Associate Administrator Brooke Jamison is scheduled to be in Colorado on February 22 and 23 and has offered to meet with us to discuss our export priorities.

In early January, President Biden announced that the administration was directing \$1 billion under the American Rescue Act to underwrite grants, loans, and loan guarantees to expand independent meat processing capacity. An initial Request for Applications is expected to be issued by USDA AMS in April. Approximately \$100 million of the overall funding will be dedicated to training the workforce needed in the meat processing sector.

Mr. Carter noted that the Michigan Bison Association had requested that the board discuss the difficulties Michigan Producers are facing on shipping their animals interstate because of the tuberculosis regulations. Discussion was held. No action was taken.

Dick Gehring provided a report on the foundations. He said that the Throlson Foundation awarded \$15,000 in scholarships. He also noted that Cecil Miskin is still developing the formal language to finalize the merger of the Throlson Foundation and the National Buffalo Foundation.

Discussion was held on the timing of *Bison World* publication. Concern was expressed regarding the late timing of the publications, and the impact it is having on the revenue for the National Bison Association. The board directed the Executive Director to bring to the next board meeting a specific transition plan for the *Bison World* magazine editorial content.

Mr. Carter noted that the InterTribal Buffalo Council was holding its regularly scheduled board meeting elsewhere in the Renaissance Hotel in order to provide an opportunity for the

boards to meet jointly to discuss potential issues to expand the Memorandum of Understanding among the two organizations. The board recessed at 10:35 a.m. to meet with the ITBC board.

The joint session of the two boards was convened at 10:40 a.m. Discussion was held on issues of joint concern, including:

- Support for the Indian Buffalo Management Act;
- Collaborating to eliminate inspection fees n bison slaughter without impairing the ability to conduct field harvesting;
- Working jointly to advocate for the protection of the genetic integrity of Yellowstone bison without formal endangered species designation;
- Cooperating on new producer outreach.

ITBC's legal counsel will develop initial language for the updated MOU to submit to the NBA board for consideration and further discussion.

There being no additional items to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Graham, Secretary

David E. Carter, Recording Secretary