

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION
March 31, 2022
Via Zoom**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison Association was convened at 5 p.m. MST, Thursday, March 31, 2022, via the Zoom virtual platform pursuant to the bylaws and notification by the Executive Director.

Present were:

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| Donnis Baggett | Chad Kremer |
| Robert Johnson | Boyd Meyer |
| Elizabeth Riffle | Mimi Hillenbrand ? |
| Jeremy Allemann | Moritz Espy |
| Ken Klemm | Carie Starr |
| Campbell Burgess | |

Absent were Joe Graham, Mary Adams, and Kevin Leier. Also present were Dave Carter, Jim Matheson, Karen Conley, Eloise Mongillo, and Connor Elliott.

Donnis Baggett presided, and Dave Carter served as recording secretary.

Chad Kremer provided a report of the President. He mentioned that the NBA has had very good discussions with USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) on the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and other programs. He noted that membership is very strong. He said that the Executive Committee has been discussing the process for handling the transition in leadership as Dave Carter steps down as Executive Director. He was very optimistic about the upcoming strategic planning session.

The Chair called the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting on January 29, 2022. A motion was made by Carie Starr to approve the minutes, as distributed. Said motion was seconded and carried.

The chair called for acceptance of the Finance Committee meeting minutes of March 3 and March 22, 2022. A motion was made by Ken Klemm to accept the minutes, as presented.

Mr. Carter provided a financial report through February. The NBA is beginning 2022 in good fiscal shape, primarily because of strong positive results from the Winter Conference benefit auction and the Gold Trophy Sale in January, along with good membership numbers. February's gross revenue of \$31,460 was \$377 below budget, but the Year-To-Date income of \$246,961 was \$27,803 above budget. YTD Growth Fund revenue is \$1,996 below budget, but a large contribution received in March will bring that category above budget for the first quarter. Total expenses for February of \$49,069 were \$6,852 above budget, and YTD expenses through February of \$198,646 were \$18,502 above budget. After adjustments and the two percent designated reserves, the net income of (\$18,387) in February was \$4,850 below budget. However, the YTD net income of \$51,973 was \$7,749 above budget. The association now has \$306,037 in designated reserves. Total equity is \$539,687. A motion was made by Robert Johnson to approve the financial report, as presented.

Mr. Carter reviewed with the board the dashboard analysis of the association's financial performance over the past decade. He noted that the dashboard is a good visual tool for measuring the overall budget trends, as well as variable factors (e.g., grants) that impact our overall financial performance. This is being provided primarily for board members to review

before next week's strategic planning session. Mr. Matheson and Ms. Dowdy have also pulled together a five-year compilation of the condensed year-end financial statements for board members to review before next week's planning session.

The discussion was held regarding an audit of the 2021 financial performance. Mr. Carter noted that the NBA Financial Policies and Procedures Manual states:

The association will contract for a financial review every two years, with an audit to be conducted every six years. All financial reviews and audits shall cover the designated year, in addition to the three months preceding and the three months following the year being reviewed or audited.

An audit may be called at any time by the Board of Directors. It is recommended that the Board of Directors require an audit if there is a change in Executive Director.

The last full audit was conducted on the 2015 financial statements, so an audit of the 2021 financials will keep us in compliance with our financial policies. Mr. Carter said that he concurs with the policy recommendation to perform a full audit when there is a change in an executive director. And recent audit results are often a requirement for many grants. The initial bid provided by a firm recommended by our accountant Teresa Amos came in at \$16,000, compared to \$5,000 in 2016. The NBA is reaching out to some other nonprofit groups to identify other firms that may be more reasonable. However, this item will need to be included in the nine-month budget.

Mr. Carter said that, because of the upcoming strategic planning and his pending departure as executive director, he had not started significant work on the nine-month budget. That budget should be developed to accommodate the priorities established by the board during the strategic planning session.

Jim Matheson recommended that the board should consider eliminating a physical office location. He said that the staff is working remotely and that a physical office may not be needed. Mr. Carter stressed that some financial management procedures will need to be established if the office is discontinued. Ken Klemm made a motion to eliminate the physical office location for the National Bison Association. Said motion was seconded and carried. Mr. Matheson suggested that the move could be implemented by the end of June.

Mr. Matheson provided a membership report. The membership count of 1,185 on March 28th is the highest in nearly two decades. The NBA has 725 regular members, which is an increase of 10 since January. The highest level of growth is in the Supporter Membership category, which has grown by 19 members since January.

Mr. Matheson provided a report on the North Central SARE Grant. He has begun working on implementing the field day workshops that will be conducted through this grant. The workshops will be scheduled for the summers of 2022 and 2023. The workshops will feature tours and speakers on working bison ranches.

Mr. Carter reported that USDA is accepting applications to fund a series of significant demonstration projects to promote climate-smart agricultural practices. The NBA is working with the Center of Excellence, which has pulled together a collaboration of bison and beef interests to develop a proposal to implement practices involving "large grazers." If funded, the COE and South Dakota State University will develop and implement the technologies and protocols for monitoring carbon sequestration. The NBA will serve as the entity to administer the

financial incentives to participating producers. The grant would allow for personnel support to administer this function.

Eloise Mongillo provided a report of the Director of Development. She thanked board members for their participation in interviews with her regarding potential funding sources. She said that an NBA/National Buffalo Foundation brochure is being printed. Raisers' Edge database has all the information entered into it, and Ms. Mongillo is working on an implementation plan. She is working with four potential significant donors on giving plans. She is also working on a fundraising appeal in connection with Earth Day.

The Chair called on Boyd Meyer for a report on the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. The 2022 Gold Trophy Sale went very smoothly in the new facilities at the National Western Stock Show. Prices were relatively strong, and the sale generated approximately \$17,500 in net revenue. The committee met in March to review the 2022 show and sale. He said there was negative feedback on the quality of the trophies. The committee discussed the process for getting bids for an auctioneer for the 2023 sale and is recommending that the NBA solicit bids for 2023, with an option to also bid on the following two years at the discretion of both parties. The request for bids will be distributed in April, and the committee will meet sometime in May to review the bids and develop a formal recommendation for board consideration. Mr. Meyer made a motion to approve solicitation of bids for 2023, with an option to also bid on the following two years at the discretion of both parties. Said motion was seconded and carried.

Connor Elliott, chair of the North American Bison Registry Committee (NABR) joined the meeting to discuss NABR. He said that the NABR is recommending that the National Bison Association work with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for a bison-specific RFID tag for bison. Mr. Carter noted that the NBA has had a discussion with APHIS about this process. The major limitation in the U.S. is that USDA is offering the RFID tags at no cost. Discussion was held. Carrie Starr recommended that more information be gathered before any action is taken. Moritz Espy made a motion to table this issue until the next meeting. Said motion was second and carried.

Mr. Carter provided a report on the Commercial Marketers' Committee. At the January meeting, the Committee recommended that the NBA focus Growth Fund promotional funds primarily on consumer outreach in 2022. The initial consumer outreach campaign is *Buff or Bluff*, a card game intended to promote Earth Day dinners featuring bison at the center of the plate. He said that the response to this promotion has been extremely positive. The NBA is also scheduled to serve as the primary sponsor for the World Food Championships in Dallas next November. That sponsorship is \$25,000, with Benjamin Lee Bison agreeing to pay \$10,000 of the sponsorship amount. The NBA will likely repeat the offer to split the \$7,500 per event sponsorship at the four upcoming Q Series barbecue events with participating marketers. Mr. Carter reported that he will be attending a meeting of USDA's Agricultural Trade Advisory Committees in Washington, D.C. on April 19th. He also reported that he will be reviewing with commercial marketers the USDA FAS Requests for Applications for funding under the Emerging Markets Program and the Quality Samples program. FAS is encouraging bison marketers to apply to participate in both of those programs.

Mr. Carter provided a report of the NBA Science and Research Committee. That committee is formally reviewing the eight applications for funding that have been submitted to the Center of Excellence. The committee will meet in May to complete this process.

Ken Klemm, chair of the NBA Conservation Committee, provided a report. He met with Rocky Mountain Natural Meats in March to discuss utilizing the association's Conservation

Management Plan as a tool that could be used to market the regenerative aspect of bison meat. Liz Riffle asked how animals sourced through a feedlot can be part of the Conservation Management Plan. Discussion was held, but no action was taken.

Jim Matheson noted that the State/Regional Committee is being re-instated. President Kremer has asked John Graves to chair that committee, and Mr. Graves has agreed to that request.

Discussion was held on the strategic planning session scheduled for April 6 and 7. Facilitator Tara Kuipers has all of the pre-meeting information in hand. The session will begin at 8 a.m. on April 6th and run for the full day. The 7th is reserved for any follow-up work, and a board meeting, if needed, to act on any items developed during the planning meeting.

The chair called on Directors for Regional Reports.

Boyd Meyer provided a report on Region II. He reported that the Rocky Mountain Bison Association had a successful meeting in March. Dave Carter reported that the NBA assisted the Rocky Mountain Bison Association in successfully opposing a recent petition to the Colorado Wildlife Commission to designate some free-roaming bison as wildlife.

Moritz Espy provided a report from Region III. He said that the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association had a very successful conference in February. There was strong fundraising for Bruce Anderson and for Tammi Cooley. He also reported that more than 30 Native Americans participated in the DTBA meeting. The Montana Bison Association just completed a series of four webinars.

Ken Klemm provided a report from Region IV. He said that he has not heard directly from State/Regional Associations in his region.

Jeremy Allemann provided a report from Region V. The Minnesota Bison Association had a very successful conference in March. Dave Carter provided a report on NBA activities at the conference.

Campbell Burgess provided a report on Region VI. He noted that drought and market conditions are major concerns in the region.

Carie Starr provided a report from Region VII. She reported that she has been elected president of the Eastern Bison Association. She and Liz Riffle are producing the EBA newsletter.

Liz Riffle provided a report from Region VIII. Producers in her area want access to more animals and processing facilities.

Robert Johnson provided a report of the international director. He said that the International Bison Convention Committee's primary priority is to promote attendance at the conference.

Dave Carter reported on legislative and regulatory issues.

He said that USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) awarded contracts in March to purchase 200,000 lbs. of frozen ground bison for use in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) between May and September. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has indicated that it will be offering solicitations for FDPIR deliveries periodically throughout the year.

He said that following Farm Service Agency Administrator Zach Ducheneaux's announcement at the Winter Conference that bison losses due to *Mycoplasma bovis* could be eligible for coverage under the USDA Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the NBA has worked with the agency to finalize the procedures for producers to utilize in filing claims.

The NBA hosted a meeting on February 22nd with Foreign Agriculture Service Associate Administrator Brooke Jamison to discuss the bison sector's trade priorities. Before that meeting,

Mr. Carter provided a tour for Ms. Jamison at the West Bijou bison ranch east of Denver. Ms. Jamison scheduled a follow-up Zoom meeting with Mr. Carter and Mr. Matheson to cover those topics in greater depth. During that meeting, the NBA was informed that the Dominican Republic has been opened for U.S. bison meat exports.

Mr. Carter reported that the USDA has announced that it would be accepting applications for up to \$150 million in assistance under the first phase of the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP). The deadline for applying for these grants is May 6th. This summer, another \$225 million in funding will be made available for start-up projects.

The Chair called for a report on communications activities. Mr. Carter reported that he met with Communications Director Karen Conley in February to inform her of the board's directive to make a change in the editorship of *Bison World* magazine because of problems in meeting publication deadlines. Ms. Conley assured Mr. Carter that she had been working to get the magazine back on schedule and would have the Spring issue of the magazine posted online by mid-March. The issue was posted online on March 10th. Mr. Carter said that he had told Ms. Conley that he would ask the board to reconsider the directive if she would enter into a formal contract for the remainder of 2022, with specific deadlines specified for the summer, fall, and winter *Bison World* editions to be posted online. No objection was given to the recommendation to provide a contract to Ms. Conley to perform as *Bison World* editor until December 31, 2022.

Carie Starr made a motion to enter into an executive session for the discussion of personnel issues. Said motion was seconded and carried. The committee entered into executive session at 7:20 p.m. The board arose to open session at 8:05 p.m. with the following report:

- Jim Matheson would be named as Interim Director of the National Bison Association, effective immediately;
- The Board would work with Mr. Carter to develop a job description for the executive director and would post a job opening by April 22nd.
- _____.

There being no additional business to come before the board, and upon motion made, seconded, and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Leier,
Secretary

David E. Carter
Recording Secretary