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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION  
October 17, 2019**

**Via Telephone Conference Call**

10 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison  
11 Association was convened at 5:05 p.m. MDT, October 17, 2018 via telephone conference call  
12 pursuant to previous action by the board and notification by the Executive Director.

13 Present were:

14 Roy Liedtke	Dick Gehring
15 Tom Barthel	Paul Kolesar
16 Debbie Thieman (Joined at 5:30 p.m.)	Donnis Baggett
17 Gerald Parsons	Brian Grubb
18 Alan Douglass	Boyd Meyer
19 Jeremy Allemann	Keith Yearout
20 Kristopher Kelley	
21 Mike Faith (Ex Officio ITBC Liaison) (Joined at 6:15 p.m.)	

22 Absent was Mimi Hillenbrand. Also attending were Dave Carter, Jim Matheson, Karen  
23 Conley and Ken Klemm. Roy Liedtke presided, and Dave Carter served as recording secretary.

24 Dick Gehring provided a report of the President. He reported that the Washington, D.C.  
25 Policy Roundup was extremely successful, with good attendance and very productive meetings.  
26 The State-Regional Retreat was held October 12-13 and was also very productive. Mr. Gehring  
27 will be representing the NBA at the InterTribal Buffalo Council annual meeting in Las Vegas,  
28 NV October 24-25.

29 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of August 22,  
30 2018, which minutes were previously distributed to the board. No changes were made. A  
31 motion was made by Alan Douglass to approve the minutes, as presented. Said motion was  
32 seconded and carried.

33 Dave Carter provided the Year-to-Date Financial (YTD) Report through August. The  
34 Finance Committee met September 26 to review the Year-to-Date Financial Report through

1 September. As reported in August, Summer Conference expenses were much higher than  
2 budgeted, primarily because of meal costs at the Westin Crowne Center. Through August,  
3 overall income of \$667,083 is \$9,885 below budget. YTD expenses of \$665,867 were \$25,850  
4 above projections. Summer Conference expenses are a prime factor there. Also, Farmers Market  
5 Promotion Program grant activities are behind schedule. After adjustments, YTD net income of  
6 (\$15,338) is \$48,935 below budget. A motion was made by Gerald Parsons to approve the  
7 financial report as presented. Said motion was seconded and carried.

8 Mr. Carter reported that he is working with the staff to start developing the three-month  
9 budget for 2019. An important component in the budget development will be the infrastructure  
10 to manage a significant fundraising campaign for the association.

11 Jim Matheson provided a membership report. That report is included with the minutes as  
12 Attachment C. The NBA membership count as of August 15<sup>th</sup> was 1,108. This is a drop of 35  
13 members since January. Since August, we are down by 12 regular members and four three-year  
14 members. Discussion was held regarding efforts to survey lapsed members about the reason(s)  
15 they have not renewed.

16 Dave Carter reported on recent activities being conducted to address the mislabeling of  
17 water buffalo in the human food and pet product marketplace. The NBA met with the Food and  
18 Drug Administration and USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service labeling officials on  
19 September 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss this issue. FSIS regulations already require that meat inspected under  
20 its jurisdiction be properly labeled (e.g. “water buffalo”). However, as a non-amenable species,  
21 water buffalo is not required to be inspected, as long as it is processed in an FDA approved  
22 facility. FDA does not require pre-market approval for labels and will only address mislabeling  
23 when receiving a formal complaint. The water buffalo meat being sold in U.S. retail stores is  
24 being processed in an FDA approved facility but is not inspected by FSIS.

25 Following the September Policy Roundup meeting, the NBA filed two formal complaints  
26 with the FDA. The NBA is also working with the offices of Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND),  
27 Michael Bennet (D-CO), and John Thune (R-SD) to circulate a letter among their fellow  
28 Senators to urge FDA to make this issue a top priority for enforcement. Mr. Carter reported that  
29 he has contacted officials in the Consumer Federation of America and Consumers Union to  
30 request support for the NBA complaint. He has also written to the president of the Food

1 Marketing Institute (the major trade association for the retail grocery industry), to request their  
2 support in informing their members of the NBA’s concerns, and the complaints to the FDA.

3 The NBA is also working with Sens. Hoeven, Bennet and Thune to explore a legislative  
4 solution for this issue. Those Senators have agreed to consider introducing legislation in the  
5 next session of Congress. The approach being developed for consideration would enact a new  
6 statute requiring commercially marketed non-amenable meat to be processed under voluntary  
7 inspection (either FSIS or state-equivalent). The proposal currently drafted for consideration  
8 reads: *Any processor or producer of a species defined under 9 CFR §352.1 with gross annual*  
9 *sales of \$5,000 or more of product from that species shall be required to apply for inspection*  
10 *services as specified in 9 CFR §352.3 or §352.4, or as authorized under 21 USC, Title 21,*  
11 *Chapter 12, Subchapter III §661(c).*

12 Mr. Carter noted that states also have the authority to enforce truth-in-labeling laws. The  
13 Texas Agriculture Code requires proper labeling of water buffalo. Mr. Carter has modified the  
14 Texas language to be a model bill designed to be used as a template for drafting state legislative  
15 proposals. Mr. Baggett said that he will work with a contact in the Texas legislature to refine the  
16 model bill language. Mr. Carter also reported that participants at the State/Regional Retreat  
17 were interested in working on legislation in their states. He is working with Mr. Baggett to  
18 develop recommendations for getting legislation introduced and passed in state legislatures.

19 Mr. Parsons recommended that the NBA look at state laws declaring bison as an amenable  
20 species.

21 Mr. Carter reported that the Bison/Buffalo Definitions Working Group established by  
22 Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) conducted a meeting in September  
23 to discuss this issue. The working group indicated that the issue may be better addressed by  
24 developing new language within the AAFCO model regulations. Mr. Carter is working with an  
25 AAFCO consultant to develop the proposed model language.

26 The board discussed the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with  
27 LedgerSpace, L.L.C. to establish a blockchain traceability program for the bison business. As  
28 per authority granted by the full board in August, the Executive Committee met last week to  
29 review those documents, and formally approved the Memorandum of Understanding. That  
30 Memorandum of Understanding is included as Attachment H with the board packets. Mr.

1 Carter, Mr. Matheson and Mr. Liedtke are working with Gregg Barfield of LedgerSpace, L.L.C.  
2 to execute the items listed in the MOU. Mr. Carter is also working with Mr. Barfield to develop  
3 a statement of value to be distributed to the commercial marketers in the NBA.

4 Paul Kolesar recommended that the NBA coordinate with the Canadian Bison Association  
5 as much as possible. He also noted that it is important not to under-price the services offered.  
6 Discussion was held. No action was taken. The Executive Committee will finalize any  
7 agreement with LedgerSpace L.L.C.

8 Discussion was held regarding the fundraising proposal that has been developed with the  
9 assistance of Front Range Source. The assessment completed by Front Range Source concludes  
10 that the NBA has a strong opportunity to develop a campaign to raise at least \$600,000 to  
11 support the research priorities for our business. Mr. Carter reported that he will be working to  
12 implement the infrastructure requirements needed to support that fundraising effort in the 2019  
13 budget. The infrastructure will include a software program and potential personnel to help us  
14 administer this campaign.

15 Mr. Carter noted that research objectives are also a top priority for the National Buffalo  
16 Foundation. He is looking at establishing some type of strategic planning session with the NBA  
17 and NBF to explore how we can coordinate our efforts and capitalize on the respective strengths  
18 of each organization.

19 Mr. Matheson provided a report on Winter Conference. Registration is open and about 50  
20 people have registered. The trade show is filling up. The January 22<sup>nd</sup> board meeting will be  
21 held from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., followed by a board dinner. The Winter Conference Committee is  
22 looking at ways to better acquaint participants to their regional leaders. The Nature  
23 Conservancy is meeting in conjunction with the Winter Conference. Temple Grandin will be  
24 addressing the TNC meeting.

25 Mr. Matheson reported that the NBA has developed a new approach for convention  
26 sponsorships. This approach allows our sponsors to maximize the value they receive for their  
27 financial support. We have developed a “menu” of advertising, promotional, and participation  
28 opportunities, along with the cost of those items.

29 Mr. Carter also reported on the 2019 Summer Conference. The North Dakota Buffalo  
30 Association is developing its plans for the 2019 Summer Conference in Bismarck, ND. The

1 conference is set for July 7-10. The North Dakota Buffalo Association, and the National Buffalo  
2 Museum, are working together to plan the conference. There is a riverboat dinner cruise planned  
3 as an opening event.

4 The Chair called upon the committees for reports.

5 Mr. Carter provided a report of the Science and Research Committee. He reported that that  
6 the committee is working with South Dakota State University to designate the SDSU lab as the  
7 central location to process and test samples for mycoplasma. The Science & Research  
8 Committee held a conference call meeting last week that included a discussion with Drs. Steve  
9 Olson and Bob Briggs of the USDA ARS National Diseases lab in Ames, IA. ARS is working  
10 to develop an autogenous vaccine for cattle. They are willing to look at a similar vaccine for  
11 bison.

12 While in Washington, D.C., the NBA delegations met with USDA APHIS Administrator  
13 Kevin Shea and Chief Veterinarian Jack Scherer. The agency agreed to look into a follow-up  
14 epidemiological study on bison, with a particular focus on *Mycoplasma bovis*.

15 Mr. Carter reported that the updated version of the *Bison Disease Field Guide* is at the  
16 printer. The Canadian Bison Association will be purchasing 500 copies, and the ITBC will be  
17 purchasing 100 copies. The actual printing cost will be roughly \$2.60/copy.

18 Ted Turner is interested in underwriting an Endowed Chair for bison research at SDSU.

19 The NBA met with Robin Schoen of the National Academy of Science during the Policy  
20 Roundup to discuss the completion of the literature review, and to discuss the next steps  
21 required to establish nutritional requirements for bison.

22 Boyd Meyer provided a report of the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. He reported  
23 that consignments are open for the 2019 show and sale. The number of entries of yearling bulls  
24 has been capped at 16 and 2-year-old bulls at 12 animals. Those classes have nearly been filled.  
25 Susan Maass and Jeremy Alemann are the judges for this year.

26 Mr. Matheson provided a report on the State/Regional Retreat in Kansas City, MO in  
27 October. The meeting included productive discussion held on leadership transitions, mentorship  
28 development, and collaboration among the NBA and State/Regional associations.

29 Jud Seaman, chair of the committee, did an excellent job in facilitating the meeting.

1 Ken Klemm, chair of the Conservation Committee, reported that the committee has  
2 executed the agreement with nRythm consulting to implement the conservation plan. The  
3 committee will be meeting with Tre Cates in conjunction with the Kansas Buffalo Association  
4 auction in December.

5 Mr. Klemm also asked the board to provide direction for the letter that he has drafted to the  
6 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Discussion was held. Mr. Klemm's  
7 letter was distributed to the board prior to the August meeting. Chairman Liedtke urged  
8 members to read the letter and to submit feedback to the NBA within the next few days.

9 Gerald Parsons provided a report of the North American Bison Registry. He reported that  
10 the NBA website developer has been working with the registry to finalize the NABR web  
11 database. The price for the programming will be about \$3,000. The NABR is requesting  
12 donations to reimburse the NBA for expenses in developing the website. Alan Douglass noted  
13 that the total cost to develop the website will be roughly \$6,000.

14 Dave Carter provided a report on legislative and regulatory activities. He noted that the  
15 NBA Policy Roundup in September had a delegation of 18 members conducting more than 35  
16 meetings with USDA and FDA officials, congressional offices, and the National Academy of  
17 Science. Some outcomes include:

- 18 • National Institute for Food and Agriculture/Agricultural Research Service agreed to  
19 provide us with feedback regarding the Letter of Intent that was not accepted for the  
20 proposal for the large NIFA grant.
- 21 • Agricultural Marketing Service officials will work with the NBA to expand their reporting  
22 services to include live animal prices.
- 23 • Foreign Agriculture Service and U.S. Trade Representative officials provided information  
24 regarding issues that are inhibiting the elimination of the tariff on bison meat exports to  
25 the EU. Mr. Carter noted that the White House announcement in October that it intends  
26 to enter into negotiations with the EU, Great Britain and Japan over new trade  
27 agreements is positive news. He also said that the new USMCA (replacing NAFTA)  
28 does no harm to the bison business in regard to U.S./Canadian trade.

1 • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is interested in conducting a follow-up  
2 epidemiological assessment of bison, with a particular focus on herd health. APHIS is  
3 also moving forward to improve traceability in the U.S.

4 • Dr. Robin Schoen, Director of the Board of Agriculture and Natural Sciences for the  
5 National Academy of Science provided the Policy Roundup delegation with the next  
6 steps that need to be taken to establish nutritional requirements for bison.

7 Mr. Carter reported that the U.S. Senate has once again passed a resolution designating the  
8 first Saturday in November as National Bison Day. That resolution contained the signatures of  
9 23 Senators, including the chief sponsor, Sen. Hoeven.

10 Jim Matheson reported that the National Bison Association has been invited to be part of  
11 the National Bison Day event at the Denver Zoo on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

12 Mr. Carter reported that the National Bison Association has been attempting to coordinate  
13 with other agricultural groups to request changes to the Hours of Service Rule under the  
14 Electronic Logging Devices mandate. In September, the NBA filed public comments with the  
15 Department of Transportation stressing that a 14-hour driving window, with mandatory 10  
16 hours off-duty, is not workable for livestock haulers and could result in seriously compromising  
17 animal welfare while resulting in negligible safety improvements. The comments recommended  
18 development of a working group within the Department of Transportation to identify the  
19 obstacles to the safe and humane transport of livestock—including bison. Mr. Carter reported  
20 that he has also been in contact with the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, which is  
21 coordinating a coalition that filed a formal petition with the Department of Transportation with  
22 a similar recommendation.

23 Boyd Meyer commended the staff on the Policy Roundup.

24 Mr. Carter reported on the status of the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant. He  
25 noted that the NBA has completed the on-line videos and promotional materials and has  
26 completed two of the three workshops. The staff is now working to develop on-line consumer  
27 directories for Farmers’ Markets and Agritourism. Mr. Carter is also working with chefs and  
28 bison producers to organize three pop-up marketing events in the summer of 2019. Those events  
29 will be in New York City, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and either San Francisco or Seattle. This grant  
30 will continue through September 30, 2019, but we have the ability to extend it for a year.

1 Mr. Matheson reported that the NBA has been awarded a \$93,219 grant from USDA Risk  
2 Management Agency for Record Keeping for Risk Mitigation. One of the major focuses of this  
3 grant will be the development of a producer app to assist with bison health and herd  
4 management. The project will focus on six upper Midwest and western states that account for  
5 the majority of U.S. bison production. The grant will also underwrite several workshops, many  
6 of which will be conducted in conjunction with State/Regional bison association meetings.

7 The Chair called on directors for regional reports.

8 Paul Kolesar provided a report of the International Director. He reported that the Canadian  
9 producers were happy to see the successful negotiation of USMCA.

10 Alan Douglass reported that the Western Bison Association is planning its conference for  
11 December 6-7 in Ogden, UT.

12 Deb Thiemann reported that Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association is getting ready to hold a  
13 board meeting to review some of the issues discussed at the State Regional Retreat. RMBA held  
14 a very successful fall meeting.

15 Keith Yearout provided a report from Region IV. He suggested that NBA revive the  
16 promotion to connect key food bloggers with bison marketers.

17 Jeremy Alemann provided a report from Region V. He noted that the Minnesota Buffalo  
18 Association has its Legends of the Fall sale scheduled for November 23-24.

19 Gerald Parsons provided a report from Region VI. The Oklahoma Bison Association is  
20 planning a show and sale on November 10<sup>th</sup> in Sulfur, OK with a banquet and meeting the  
21 previous evening. The Texas Bison Association is holding its fall conference on October 19 in  
22 Georgetown, TX.

23 Brian Grubb provided a report from Region VII. He reported that it has been extremely wet  
24 in the Northeast.

25 Kristopher Kelley provided a report from Region VIII. He reported that there are a number  
26 of new members in his region.

27 Mike Faith joined the meeting and reported on the InterTribal Buffalo Council. He reported  
28 that the ITBC annual meeting is scheduled for October 24-25 in Las Vegas, NV. He  
29 stressed the importance of continuing to build the partnership among the NBA and ITBC.

1 Mr. Carter reported that the NBA has a busy schedule during the coming weeks, with the  
2 FFA National Convention, the National Association of Farm Broadcasting meeting, and the  
3 Agricultural Bankers Conference all scheduled.

4 The board set December 13<sup>th</sup> as the date for the next meeting of the board.

5 There being no additional business to come before the board, and upon motion made  
6 seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

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9 Respectfully submitted,

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13 Tom Barthel, Secretary

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17 Dave Carter, Recording Secretary

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