

1 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
3 **OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION**
4 **March 15, 2018**
5 **Conducted by Telephone Conference Call**
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8 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison
9 Association was convened at 5:00 p.m. MDT on Thursday, March 15, 2018, by telephone
10 conference call, pursuant to previous action by the board and notification by the Executive
11 Director.

12 Present were:

13 Roy Liedtke	Dick Gehring
14 Mimi Hillenbrand	Tom Barthel
15 Debbie Thieman	Donnis Baggett
16 Gerald Parsons	Brian Grubb
17 Alan Douglass	Boyd Meyer
18 Paul Kolesar	Kristopher Kelley
19 Jeremy Allemann	

20 Absent were Keith Yearout and Patrick Toomey (ex-officio). Also attending were Dave
21 Carter and Jim Matheson. Roy Liedtke presided, and Dave Carter served as recording secretary.

22 Dick Gehring provided a report of the president. He reported that he has been busy with
23 committee calls. He also attended the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association meeting. He is
24 scheduled to speak at the Minnesota Buffalo Association meeting in April.

25 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of January 16,
26 2018, which minutes were previously distributed to the board. No changes were made. A
27 motion was made by Donnis Baggett to approve the minutes, as distributed. Said motion was
28 seconded and carried.

29 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of January 19,
30 2018, which minutes were previously distributed to the board. No changes were made. A
31 motion was made by Paul Kolesar to approve the minutes as distributed. Said motion was
32 seconded and carried.

1 The Chair noted that the minutes of the annual membership meeting of January 19,
2 2018, had not been distributed with the board packet. Review of those minutes was postponed
3 to the next meeting.

4 The Chair called upon the Executive Director to provide a review of the year-to-date
5 financial report. Mr. Carter noted that the Finance Committee met February 28th to review the
6 year-to-date financial report. Positive results from Winter Conference and the Gold Trophy
7 Show and Sale have resulted in financial performance that exceeded budgeted projections.
8 Gross income in January of \$344,486 was \$28,553 above budgeted projections. Total expenses
9 of \$258,838 were \$8,019 above budget projection. After adjustments and designated reserve,
10 net results in January were \$80,838, which was \$21,953 ahead of budget. A motion was made
11 by Donnis Baggett to approve the financial report, as presented. Said motion was seconded and
12 carried.

13 Mr. Carter reported that the staff will begin to develop a proposed 9-month budget once
14 the financial report is finalized through February. This will likely require a special board
15 meeting in April for adoption.

16 The chair called on Jim Matheson for a membership report. The NBA membership count
17 as of March 5th was 1,137. This is a drop of six members since the January report, but still 51
18 higher than in January 2017. The reductions all occurred in the active membership category,
19 which went from 694 in January to 676 in March. However, some of that drop was likely the
20 result of eight members purchasing life memberships. There are now 80 life members in the
21 NBA.

22 Mr. Matheson provided a report on the Winter Conference. He reported that Winter
23 Conference was a tremendous success and resulted in \$69,761 in net revenue for the NBA. He
24 said that he received no negative feedback from the new process of a higher registration fee,
25 with no extra charge for the banquet. The Winter Conference Committee held a meeting last
26 month to debrief from the 2018 conference, and to review the results of the conference survey.

27 Mr. Matheson reported that the Summer Conference is set for June 27-29 at the Westin
28 Crown Center in Kansas City, MO. The Kansas Buffalo Association is coordinating a starter
29 herd as a raffle item. Two key areas for the conference are a virtual tour of several bison

1 ranches, and a KC Bison Barbecue Challenge. The Friday program will be considered an
2 optional day and will be primarily targeted to newcomers.

3 Mr. Carter provided an update on the progress with the NBA Strategic Plan. The
4 progress report is included with the board packets as Attachment G. He reported that the
5 association is making significant progress in most areas of the Strategic Plan, including
6 communications and fundraising.

7 Discussion was held on the progress in hiring a communications director. The NBA
8 received nearly 60 applicants for the position. Mr. Carter and Mr. Matheson reviewed the
9 applications and established a field of six finalists. Telephone interviews were conducted with
10 all six, with follow-up interviews to be held with three. A final decision is expected by March
11 20th. The new communications director will start on April 2nd.

12 The Chair called on Dave Carter to provide a report on the *Bison 1 Million* campaign.
13 Mr. Carter reported that two efforts are underway to develop significant fundraising programs to
14 support research initiatives and technology applications that can be used to build herds.

15 One area of potential funding will be a coordinated grant application for one of six
16 anticipated grants to be awarded by USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture
17 (NIFA). The application will involve a cooperative proposal from the NBA, South Dakota State
18 University (SDSU), Microsoft, InterTribal Buffalo Council and Sinte Gleske University. The
19 Science and Research Committee is planning a meeting in Minneapolis, MN for April 10th and
20 11th to begin developing the groundwork for a proposal. SDSU and Microsoft have offered to
21 provide support for a grant writer on this project.

22 The NBA is also contracting with Front Range Source, a fundraising consulting firm
23 specializing in foundation funding, and corporate partnerships. Mimi Hillenbrand is assisting in
24 underwriting that effort, which is designed to equip the NBA to target potential funding sources,
25 and to develop specific requests from those sources.

26 Mr. Carter reported that Microsoft Corp. is hosting a student culinary competition in
27 partnership with James Beard Foundation, Slow Food USA and local culinary schools. They are
28 featuring bison as the center-of-the-plate sustainable ingredient. Mimi Hillenbrand has agreed to
29 serve as one of the judges for the competition, and Durham Ranch is providing bison for the
30 competition.

1 Mr. Carter provided a report on the progress with the Farmers' Market Promotion
2 Program Grant. He reported that the new farmers' market resource guide and curriculum is
3 completed and in production. Also, two farmers' market training workshops are planned in the
4 coming months. The first will be April 13th in Bloomington, IN, in conjunction with the Illinois-
5 Indiana Bison Association spring meeting, and the second will be May 11th in Fredericksburg,
6 TX in conjunction with the Texas Bison Association spring meeting. The NBA is also working
7 with the Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts to develop three brief on-line videos
8 providing basic instructions on cooking with ground bison, bison steaks, and bison roasts. The
9 videos are intended to be a tool for marketers to provide customers with an easily-accessible
10 cooking resource. The staff is working with the NBA website administrator to create the on-line
11 directories for farmers' marketers and agritourism operators.

12 Dick Gehring reported that he has been in contact with the chairs most of the standing
13 committees to assess their willingness to continue serving. The Membership and the Outreach
14 Committees will likely be combined. The chair of the Commercial Marketers Committee is
15 moving out of the country, so Mr. Gehring will be appointing a new chair for that committee.

16 Boyd Meyer provided a report on the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. He
17 reported that the committee is considering the benefits and limitations of a video auction format
18 for the 2019 GTSS. He said that discussion was held regarding eliminating the market class, but
19 that the financial impact for the NBA will have to be assessed. Mr. Meyer reported that the
20 GTSS Committee is recommending that the National Bison Association not use Bradeen
21 Auction Services for the 2019 Gold Trophy Sale. Discussion was held. No action was taken.
22 Consensus was expressed to analyze options for auction services for the Gold Trophy Sale,
23 including potential auctioneers' promotion capabilities, bison industry knowledge, video sale
24 capabilities and other factors. Boyd Meyer agreed to contact Ron Bradeen to discuss issues
25 related to Mr. Bradeen's early departure from the 2018 Gold Trophy auction.

26 Jim Matheson provided a report of the State/Regional Committee. That committee is
27 planning a meeting in Kansas City in October. Mr. Carter reported that John Graves, president
28 of the Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association, had contacted the NBA with suggestions regarding
29 the relationship between the NBA and RMBA. Discussion was held. No action was taken.

1 Dave Carter reported that the Science and Research Committee met on the morning of
2 March 15th to discuss the literature review being conducted by Dr. Gerald Huntington. Brian
3 Grubb recommended that the Science and Research Committee reach out to the NBA and
4 state/regional associations to help identify research priorities.

5 Gerald Parsons reported that the North American Bison Registry is working to finalize
6 the website and program that will capture and record the registry information.

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

8 He reported that the USDA Farm Service Agency has responded favorably to the NBA's
9 request for increased compensation rates for eligible bison loss claims filed under the Livestock
10 Indemnity Program. The new rates are effective for losses experienced in 2018. The Secretary
11 of Agriculture has not yet responded to the NBA's request for revisions to the compensation
12 levels for 2017.

13 On the topic of trade, Mr. Carter reported that the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service is
14 contacting the U.S. Trade Representative's office to begin the process of establishing a unique
15 export code for bison. Also, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is beginning
16 to develop a petition to Japan to open that market for U.S. bison meat. He noted that some
17 issues are being delayed because of the ongoing renegotiations with NAFTA.

18 Mr. Carter said that the debate schedule for the next Farm Bill is yet unknown. U.S.
19 Sens. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) have committed to hold Farm Bill
20 listening sessions on bison ranches in their respective states.

21 Mr. Carter reported that a growing number of pet food companies are utilizing water
22 buffalo as ingredients in their products labeled simply as "buffalo." He recommended that the
23 NBA submit a formal request to the Association of American Feed Control Officials to require
24 that pet food products containing water buffalo also be required to contain the proper name. He
25 reviewed the process for obtaining a change in pet food regulations. He discussed with the
26 board a proposed resolution to be submitted to AAFCO. Discussion was held. A motion was
27 made by Tom Barthel to approve the following resolution:

28 *Whereas*, the term "buffalo" has been used to describe American bison (*bison*
29 *bison*) for more than 400 years. The use of the term buffalo as a descriptor for bison is
30 evident throughout American culture, including:

- 1 • The University of Colorado Buffalos (Ralphie is an American bison);
- 2 • The Buffalo Trace describes a major trackway through Kentucky,
- 3 Indiana and Illinois, and was a trail formed by millions of migrating bison. The
- 4 American Bourbon brand, “Buffalo Trace” includes the image of an American
- 5 bison;
- 6 • Buffalo, NY was named by French trappers for the animals spotted on
- 7 the shores of Lake Erie; and

8 *Whereas*, Native Americans prefer the term buffalo when describing the bison
9 that have been integral to their culture though the ages; and

10 *Whereas* a growing number of pet food manufacturers are incorporating Asian
11 water buffalo into their formulations and labeling those ingredients as “buffalo” to
12 deceive consumers into believing that the formulations contain American bison. One
13 nationally marketed brand is marketing a formula “made with bison” with a front panel
14 that displays a pack of wolves closing in on a herd of American bison. Yet, bison is the
15 ninth ingredient in the formula. The first ingredient is water buffalo, which is simply
16 labeled as “buffalo.”

17 *Therefore be it resolved*, The National Bison Association formally requests that
18 the Association of American Feed Control Officials amend Chapter 6, Section 9 of the
19 Official Publication with the following language:

20 **Buffalo** is the clean flesh derived from slaughtered bison (*bison bison*) and is
21 limited to that part of the striate muscles which are skeletal or that which is found in the
22 tongue, in the diaphragm, in the heart, or in the esophagus, with or without the
23 accompanying and overlying fat and the portions of the skin, sinew, nerve, and blood
24 vessels in which normally accompany the flesh. It shall be suitable for use in animal
25 food.

26 **Water buffalo** is the clean flesh derived from slaughtered water buffalo
27 (*babalus babalis*) and is limited to that part of the striate muscles which are skeletal or
28 that which is found in the tongue, in the diaphragm, in the heart, or in the esophagus,
29 with or without the accompanying and overlying fat and the potions of the skin, sinew,

1 nerve, and blood vessels in which normally accompany the flesh. It shall be suitable for
2 use in animal food. If used in pet food, it shall be identified as water buffalo.

3
4 Said motion was seconded by Donnis Baggett and carried.

5 Mr. Carter reported that the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) has petitioned the
6 USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to request that the agency strictly define "meat" and
7 "beef" as animals raised and slaughtered. USCA is asking for support from other agricultural
8 organizations in this petition. Brian Grubb moved to support the USCA petition. Said motion
9 was seconded. Discussion was held. The motion was put to a vote and carried.

10 Mr. Carter reported that discussion continues to progress on a merger of the National
11 Buffalo Foundation and the Throlson American Bison Foundation, but no formal action has
12 been taken. Mr. Carter reported that an attorney has developed draft bylaws for a combined
13 foundation. Those bylaws specify a seven-member board of directors, with two directors to be
14 appointed by the NBA Board of Directors.

15 The chairman called for regional reports.

16 Paul Kolesar provided a report from the International Director. He reported that the
17 Canadian Bison Association is closely monitoring the status of the NAFTA negotiations.

18 Alan Douglass provided a report from Region I. The Northwest Bison Association will
19 be meeting March 31. The Western Bison Association will be holding its summer conference in
20 New Mexico in early June.

21 Debbie Thieman provided a report from Region II. Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association
22 held its spring meeting the first weekend in March. RMBA combined their meeting with the
23 Genesee Park auction. The meeting was very successful. The conference sessions focused on
24 small-scale producers.

25 Mimi Hillenbrand reported from Region III. Dakota Territory Buffalo Association had a
26 successful winter conference. The association is considering transitioning to a video auction.
27 Three new directors have been elected to the DTBA board of directors. The Kevin Stormo
28 family is hosting the Minnesota Buffalo Association meeting in near Watertown, SD in April.
29 The American Grassfed Association will be holding its annual meeting in Rapid City in June,
30 with a major focus on bison.

1 Dick Gehring provided a report from Region IV. The Kansas Buffalo Association had its
2 spring meeting on March 9 and is planning the summer conference for late June.

3 Jeremy Alemann provided a report from Region V. He attended the Wisconsin Bison
4 Producers Association meeting in February. A major concern among producers is the lack of
5 slaughter capacity among processing plants. They are looking at a cooperative effort to combine
6 loads to go to the North American Bison LLC. The Minnesota Buffalo Association's spring
7 meeting will be in Watertown, SD in April.

8 Gerald Parson reported from Region VI. He reported that USDA's Farm Service Agency
9 has been very helpful with new producers in Oklahoma. He noted that the Missouri Bison
10 Association Show and Sale is scheduled for this weekend.

11 Brian Grubb provided a report from Region VII. He reported that the Eastern Bison
12 Association just completed its annual meeting and show and sale in Harrisburg. The meeting
13 was successful, and the sale was strong.

14 Kristopher Kelley provided a report from Region VIII. He reported that spring weather
15 has arrived in his region. No regional organizations have conducted meetings in his area.

16 Mr. Carter provided a report of the Executive Director.

17 There being no additional issues to come before the board, and upon motion made,
18 seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

19
20 Respectfully submitted,

21
22
23 _____
24 Tom Barthel, Secretary

25
26
27 _____
28 Dave Carter, Recording Secretary