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3 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**
4 **OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
5 **OF THE NATIONAL BISON ASSOCIATION**
6 **August 22, 2018**
7 **Via Telephone Conference Call**
8

9 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bison
10 Association was convened at 5:05 p.m. MDT, August 22, 2018 via telephone conference call
11 pursuant to previous action by the board and notification by the Executive 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 Jeremy Allemann	Keith Yearout
19 Kristopher Kelley	

20 Absent was Paul Kolesar. Also attending were Dave Carter and Jim Matheson, Mike
21 Faith and Karen Conley. Roy Liedtke presided, and Dave Carter served as recording secretary.

22 Dick Gehring provided a report of the President. Mr. Gehring reported that he has been
23 busy with conference calls and committee meetings. He noted that the NBA is preparing for its
24 annual Washington, D.C. Policy Roundup. He noted the work that the NBA is conducting on
25 the labeling of bison and water buffalo in both pet food and human food. The Winter
26 Conference Committee is actively planning the 2019 meeting.

27 The InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), has nominated Mike Faith, ITBC Board
28 member and Chairman of the Standing Rock Tribal Nation, to serve as the new ITBC liaison to
29 the NBA. Dick Gehring moved to ratify the nomination of Mike Faith to serve as the board
30 liaison with the NBA. Mimi Hillenbrand seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote
31 and carried.

32
33 The Chair directed the board's attention to the minutes of the meeting of June 27, 2018,
34 which minutes were previously distributed to the board. No changes were made. A motion was

1 made by Donnis Baggett to approve the minutes, as presented. Said motion was seconded and
2 carried.

3 Donnis Baggett, chair of the Finance Committee, provided the Year-to-Date Financial
4 report. Through July, gross income of \$633,745 is \$18,976 below budget. The timing of
5 Farmers' Market Promotion Grant activities is primarily responsible for the shortfall. YTD
6 expenses of \$615,488 are \$19,738 above projections. Summer Conference expenses are a prime
7 factor there. After adjustments, YTD net income of \$2,806 is \$51,291 below budget.

8 Summer Conference expenses were much higher than budgeted, primarily because of
9 meal costs at the Westin Crowne Center, along with the drone filming costs. Gross income for
10 the conference was \$98,253, which was \$15,263 ahead of budget. The starter herd auction was a
11 major factor. However, our total expenses of \$94,215 were roughly double the budgeted
12 amount. The Summer Conference generated \$3,036 in net revenue. Donnis Baggett made a
13 motion to approve the report, as presented. Said motion was seconded and carried.

14 Jim Matheson provided a membership report. The membership count as of August 15th
15 was 1,120, which is a drop of 17 members since June 15th. The Finance Committee has
16 reviewed the life membership database and is removing some that are deceased.

17 Mr. Matheson reported that NBA accountant Teresa Amos has compiled a database and
18 reviewed the costs associated with various membership categories. Our strategic plan calls for
19 the NBA to look at developing a better membership database. Mr. Matheson and Karen Conley
20 participated in a webinar demonstration by Higher Logic Software Company. The software
21 would provide for easier usability, including a smart-phone app.

22 Discussion was held on membership recruitment. Donnis Baggett noted that the most
23 effective recruitment is for existing members to recruit new members as they sell bison to new
24 producers. Mr. Matheson suggested that the Membership/Outreach Committee look at this
25 issue. Mimi Hillenbrand suggested that the NBA provide something that individuals can put on
26 their social media sites to promote NBA membership. Tom Barthel recommended that a
27 discussion on membership development be included on the general membership meeting
28 agenda.

29 The chair called upon Dave Carter to discuss the NBA's work on the labeling of bison
30 and buffalo in pet food products. Mr. Carter reported that he has been involved as a consultant

1 in the pet food industry for the past 16 years, including working with the Pet Food Institute on
2 organic pet food regulations, and currently with a manufacturer. That manufacturer does not
3 produce any bison products. He noted that his experience provided some useful knowledge of
4 the procedures for pet food regulations.

5 In July, Mr. Carter attended the annual meeting of the Association of American Feed
6 Control Officials (AAFCO) in Florida, where the association's Ingredients Definition
7 Committee discussed this issue. He addressed the committee meeting and stressed that the
8 current regulations that allow water buffalo to be listed simply as "buffalo": 1) create
9 opportunities for deceptive labeling; and 2) that any food safety issue involving imported water
10 buffalo could create a negative impact on bison. The Ingredients Definitions Committee
11 established a working group to look at this issue. Mr. Carter is serving on that working group.
12 Arnell Abold of ITBC has also been invited to participate. The working group will also include
13 a representative of the Asian water buffalo industry. The working group will be meeting by
14 conference call during the next several months and may have a formal recommendation
15 finalized by the January AAFCO mid-year meeting.

16 Mr. Carter reported that the company that purchases the bulk of bison trim and offal is
17 also a major importer of water buffalo ingredients for pet food. That company is strenuously
18 opposed to the NBA proposal and contacted most of our major processors to say that the price
19 for bison trim and offal will decrease if the current definitions are changed. This issue was fully
20 discussed at the Commercial Marketers' Committee meeting on Monday. The commercial
21 marketers expressed a consensus that the NBA should continue to work to clarify the current
22 regulations.

23 One marketer on the committee call said that the wording of the March board resolution
24 implied that we wanted all bison pet food ingredients to be labeled as buffalo. Mr. Carter
25 reported that this was not the intent of the resolution. AAFCO's definition for meat ingredients
26 already specifies that "If it bears a name descriptive of its kind, it must correspond thereto."

27 He also directed the board's attention to a listing that he has compiled on pet food
28 brands that utilize bison and/or water buffalo in their formulas. Eight brands produce pet food
29 with bison, and not water buffalo. Seven brands either solely utilize water buffalo, or a

1 combination of bison and water buffalo. Discussion was held. Tom Barthel urged that the NBA
2 continue to seek the regulatory change.

3 Discussion then turned to the issue of water buffalo meat being marketed in the United
4 States. Mr. Carter reported that one of the major marketers recently passed along photos of 1 lb.
5 packages of ground “Wild Buffalo -- Free Range” in the meat case of a regional retail chain in
6 Virginia. The product is water buffalo meat, which is being imported into the U.S. through the
7 U.S. subsidiary of an Australian company. Mr. Carter has compiled an analysis on water
8 buffalo in the human food chain, which is included as Attachment E with this board packet.

9 The NBA filed formal comments with USDA FSIS in 2015 as a part of their proposed
10 update of the *Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book*. Those comments urged that any water
11 buffalo should have to be labeled as “water buffalo” when utilized in the human food
12 marketplace. FSIS and FDA have shelved the process of updating the Policy Book. However,
13 the agencies can consider requests for amendments to the current Policy Book.

14 The NBA has now submitted letters to the USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety and
15 the Deputy Commissioner of the FDA with the following request:

16 *In the absence of a revised Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book, we formally*
17 *request an amendment to the current book requiring the following labeling terms:*

18

19 *Water Buffalo:*

20 *This shall be the labeling term utilized for any product comprised of the species*
21 *Bubalus bubalis. It shall also be the term describing Bubalus bubalis as an*
22 *ingredient in any multi-ingredient product.*

23

24 *Cape Buffalo:*

25 *This shall be the labeling term utilized for any product comprised of the species*
26 *Synderus caffer. It shall also be the term describing Synderus caffer as an*
27 *ingredient in any multi-ingredient product.*

28

29 *North American Buffalo:*

1 *If bison is utilized in a product, or as an ingredient in a product, it may also be*
2 *identified as North American buffalo.*

3
4 Discussion was held. Mr. Carter noted that bison could be labeled as bison/buffalo, or as
5 American buffalo. The FSIS Labeling and Program Delivery has previously issued a memo
6 stating, “FSIS does not object to American bison being labeled as ‘buffalo’ or ‘American
7 buffalo’.”

8 Boyd Meyer noted that the imported water buffalo poses a significant threat to the
9 economic viability of the bison business.

10 Consensus was expressed that the NBA immediately develop a petition for members and
11 others to sign to urge immediate action by FSIS and FDA to address this issue. Brian Grubb
12 recommended that the petition be made available to bison farmers’ market vendors. Jim
13 Matheson noted that an on-line petition could be developed on the change.org website. Mike
14 Faith noted that the ITBC and its member tribes would likely be interested in signing a letter or
15 petition to USDA and FDA.

16 Mr. Carter noted that he will reach out to consumer organizations to enlist their support
17 for the NBA’s efforts.

18 He also recommended that the NBA work with appropriate Senate staff members to
19 develop a “Dear Colleague” letter that could be circulated during the Policy Roundup.

20 Donnis Baggett recommended that the NBA develop a PR/advertising campaign. Mimi
21 Hillenbrand recommended that the NBA develop materials that could be distributed by
22 producers.

23 Roy Liedtke recommended that the NBA send out targeted e-blasts to members
24 informing them of this issue.

25 Dick Gehring made a motion that the issue of proper identification of water buffalo on
26 product labeling be a top priority for the National Bison Association. Said motion was seconded
27 and carried.

28 Boyd Meyer recommended that the NBA encourage members to start using bison as the
29 preferred nomenclature.

1 The board called on Mr. Carter to review the proposal for developing blockchain
2 technology for the bison business. Mr. Carter reported that blockchain technology is being
3 widely incorporated in many sectors of the livestock business and was the subject of a cover
4 story in a recent edition of *Meatingplace* magazine. Some members of the board participated in
5 the blockchain meeting conducted by Gregg Barfield of Ledgerspace, LLC during June's
6 Summer Conference. Mr. Barfield proposed a Memorandum of Understanding for the NBA to
7 utilize Ledgerspace, LLC as our sole provider of this technology.

8 Mr. Carter discussed the LedgerSpace proposal with the commercial marketers during
9 their meeting on August 20th. The committee recommended that we work with Mr. Barfield to
10 develop a value proposition that will identify the benefits and costs of this technology. Mr.
11 Barfield has provided the NBA with a letter listing the specific benefits.

12 Mr. Carter said that he would like to work with Mr. Barfield to refine the value
13 proposition for this technology.

14 A motion was made by Brian Grubb to authorize the Executive Committee to take
15 formal action on the Memorandum of Understanding with LedgerSpace, L.L.C. Said motion
16 was seconded and carried.

17 Mr. Carter reported that the fundraising campaign planning project with Front Range
18 Source is nearing completion. Front Range Source has reviewed the potential funders analysis
19 conducted by the NBA Board in June and has conducted telephone interviews with 12
20 individuals that were identified by the NBA staff. Front Range Source has also developed a
21 prospectus that can be used to show potential funders how any funds will be utilized to advance
22 the bison business and to move toward *Bison 1 Million*. Mr. Carter and Mr. Matheson will be
23 meeting with the principals of Front Range Source on August 27th to receive an update on this
24 project.

25 Jim Matheson provided a report on Winter Conference 2019. The Winter Conference
26 Planning Committee, chaired by Beverly Brown, has nearly finalized the conference agenda.
27 One of the key sessions this year will be a Ranching for Profit presentation by Dave Pratt.

28 Dave Carter reported that the NBA staff is developing a new sponsorship/advertising/
29 promotion program intended to encourage supporters to be able to personalize the recognition
30 benefits that they will receive in return for their sponsorships.

1 Roy Liedtke recommended that the January 22nd board meeting be scheduled as an evening
2 meeting. Consensus was expressed to support this change.

3 Mr. Matheson provided a report on Summer Conference 2019. In June, the NBA board
4 voted to accept the North Dakota Buffalo Association's offer to host the 2019 Summer
5 Conference and expressed preference that it be held in Bismarck. The Director of the National
6 Buffalo Museum in Jamestown subsequently expressed disappointment that Jamestown was not
7 chosen. The NDBA board has reviewed the alternatives, in conjunction with the museum, and
8 continues to recommend Bismarck. There may be additional tour alternatives for Heart Land
9 Bison Ranch and the National Buffalo Museum.

10 Mr. Matheson reported that he is working with the Bismarck Radisson as the host hotel.
11 The meal costs quoted by that facility are roughly half the cost of the prices incurred at the
12 Westin Crowne Center in Kansas City.

13 Boyd Meyer made a motion to host the 2019 Summer Conference at the Radisson Hotel in
14 Bismarck. Said motion was seconded and carried.

15 The chair called upon committee reports.

16 Dave Carter reported on the Science and Research Committee. He reported that the
17 letter of intent to apply for the NIFA Sustainable Agriculture Grants was not accepted, so the
18 committee is looking into alternative grant sources. On mycoplasma, Dr. Dave Hunter, chair of
19 the committee, has been working with South Dakota State University to designate their lab as
20 the central location to process and test samples for mycoplasma. The NBA is placing the forms
21 for submitting those samples on our website. The cost will be borne on a user-fee basis. Jeremy
22 Allemann noted that any samples have to be submitted by a veterinarian. Mr. Carter reported
23 that the updated version of the *Bison Disease Field Guide* is ready to go to print. Because the
24 ITBC did not receive a renewal of the grant that paid for the original book, it is not able to share
25 the printing costs on this. The Canadian Bison Association is looking into potential funding to
26 help offset the costs. The NBA is receiving quotes from printers and will sell this publication at
27 a price that will generate revenue for the entities that pay for the printing.

28 Boyd Meyer reported on the Gold Trophy Show and Sale Committee. The committee put
29 out a request for proposal for auctioneers for the 2019 show and sale and received four
30 auctioneer proposals. Bradeen Auctions submitted a proposal to conduct the auction at no

1 commission, but with travel and lodging reimbursed. The committee is recommending that the
2 NBA accept that proposal. Keith Yearout made a motion to accept the proposal from Bradeen
3 Auction Services. Said motion was seconded and carried.

4 The committee is also recommending that the NBA cap the number of entries of yearling
5 bulls to 16 entries and 2-year-old bulls to 12 entries at the 2019 sale. Each consignor will be
6 allowed to enter two animals in each class. A motion was made by Boyd Meyer to adopt the
7 committee recommendation. Said motion was seconded and carried.

8 The committee has recommended that the ranch-ready pen of five yearling heifer class
9 have a recommended weight range of 635 lbs. to 875 lbs. A motion was made by Jeremy
10 Allemann to approve the committee's recommendation. Said motion was seconded and carried.

11 Jim reported that the next state/regional committee gathering is scheduled for October 12 –
12 13th in Kansas City. This year's focus will be on mentorship and succession planning.

13 Mimi Hillenbrand reported that, pursuant to action by the board in June, the conservation
14 committee has located a consultant to assist with the implementation of the conservation plan
15 initiative. Trey Lewis, principal of nRythm Consulting firm has submitted a proposal for \$7,500
16 to finalize and implement the plan. Keith Yearout moved to authorize the funds to retain
17 nRythm to develop the conservation plan. Said motion was seconded. Discussion was held. The
18 motion was put to a vote, and carried, but not unanimously.

19 Jim Matheson and Ken Klemm have both been appointed to serve as commercial bison
20 producer liaisons for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Mr.
21 Klemm has drafted a letter that he would like to submit to IUCN. Mr. Klemm was not on the
22 call for this meeting. Mr. Matheson noted that there will be another board meeting prior to the
23 next IUCN meeting. He recommended the Mr. Klemm be present to discuss his letter at that
24 time. No action was taken.

25 Gerald Parsons provided a report of the North American Bison Registry. The NABR is
26 working with the computer programmer utilized by the NBA. He has been working to refine
27 and improve the NABR database. The database should be finalized by winter conference.

28 Mr. Carter reported on the Commercial Marketers' Committee. The committee met on
29 August 20th. On the topic of bison vs. buffalo labeling, there was support expressed for the

1 current work of the NBA. The committee also discussed the Policy Roundup, international
2 trade, blockchain technology, and ideas for the use of Growth Fund resources.

3 Mr. Carter reported that 18 members from 11 states have registered for the Washington
4 Policy Roundup, scheduled for September 11-14. He and Mr. Matheson are now scheduling
5 meetings with USDA agencies, and with key members of Congress.

6 Mr. Carter is finalizing briefing papers for each of the meetings.

7 He reported that there has been little progress on the NBA trade priorities. The ongoing
8 trade disputes with the EU, Canada and Mexico have sidelined several issues

9 He reported that the Farm Bill Conference Committee has been appointed, so we will be
10 working to meet with those representatives and senators in September.

11 Mr. Carter reported on the Farmers' Market Promotion Program grant activities. The
12 three cooking videos have been posted on-line. The development of directories for agritourism
13 and farmer marketers is in progress.

14 The Chair called upon directors for reports from their regions.

15 Kristopher Kelly provided a report from Region VIII. Weather has been very favorable.
16 The supply of bison is increasing.

17 Brian Grubb provided a report from Region VII. The Easter Bison Association has its fall
18 meeting scheduled at the Wilds in Ohio in October.

19 Gerald Parsons provided a report from Region VI. The Texas Bison Association is
20 finalizing the *Texas Bison Journal*. The Oklahoma Bison Association has a sale scheduled in
21 October.

22 Jeremy Allemann provided a report from Region V. Moisture has been spotty in his region.
23 Minnesota has a sale scheduled in November.

24 Keith Yearout provided a report from Region IV. The Kansas Bison Association sale is in
25 December.

26 Mimi Hillenbrand provided a report from Region III. The Dakota Territory Buffalo
27 Association is operating smoothly.

28 Debbie Thieman provided a report from Region II. The Rocky Mountain Association will
29 be having a booth at the Colorado State Fair. The RMBA fall meeting will be at Ken Klemm's
30 ranch near Goodland, KS, this fall.

1 Discussion was held on the issue of bison in rodeos. Dave Carter has been contacted by an
2 NBA member concerned about the use of bison as “bucking animals” in some rodeos in New
3 Mexico. There is a question regarding whether this could create a humane management issue,
4 and whether the NBA should weigh in. Gerald Parsons reported that the animals in the rodeos
5 are about 10-12 months old. Discussion was held. Tom Barthel recommended that this issue is
6 best handled by authorities that regulate rodeos. Mike Faith requested the information on this
7 issue. No action was taken.

8 It was agreed that the next board meeting would be conducted at 5 p.m. MDT, October 17.

9 There being no other business to come before the board, and upon motion made, seconded
10 and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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12 Respectfully submitted,

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16 Tom Barthel, Secretary

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20 Dave Carter, Recording Secretary

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