

VASA Board of Director Minutes  
April 13, 2026  
VASA HQ

Douglas Stone calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Douglas Stone begins the meeting with everyone standing for the Pledge of Alliance.

## **Roll Call**

### **BOD Present:**

Ray Blakeney, Robbie Perdue, Bob Cruickshank, James Sullivan, Chris Hill, Brian Benoit, Mike Smith, George Barton, Mike Small, Fred Elliott, Vern Stone

### **BOD Present Online:**

Steve Mosher, Kurt Girard, Ken Wetherell, Ian MacKenzie, Chuck Lyman, Brent Labree, Christine Carpenter, Mike Coleman, Laura Champagne, William Faford

**E-Board Present:** Douglas Stone, Doug Wheeler (Online), Tom Nazzewski, Melissa LaBounty, Bartholomew Howes (online)

**Staff (Non-voting) present:** Dani Luce, Jeremy Sneed, Ethan Hill, Gordon Pirie

**Lobbyist / Consultant present:** Frank Stanley

### **Secretary's Report:**

Are there any additions or corrections to the secretaries report?

-Chris Hill made a motion to approve the report, seconded by Ray Blakeney, approved by all, none opposed, motion carries

### **Treasurer's Report:**

-Tom says there are 3 reports in the packet, does everyone want to see all the reports or just the profit & loss report? As of March 2026, we are running a substantial deficit. We need to figure out a way to start saving money.

-A motion to accept the report by Chris Hill, seconded by Ray Blakeney, approved by all, none opposed, motion carries.

### **Staff Reports:**

#### **Trails Coordinator - Ethan Hill:**

- **VTMP:** Current Construction Season Schedule (not currently in any order)
  - **VOREC Flood Recovery Grant projects:** **NEKW** - Sugarhouse trail, **BTW** - Trailhead Kiosk & **BTW** - Lacroix Property

- **VTMP projects:** **BTW** - Mccarthy Property, **TOW** - Horn of the Moon, **JPP** - Lions Club, **JPP** - O Gorman, **GMATV** - Hannah Trail Pad?, **GMNF** - Trail 9 Corridor?, **SRR** - Sucker Pond Trail?, **SVTR** - New Loop?

Included in the packet is a copy of trailhead directions. Each club needs to check them for accuracy and email Ethan with any changes necessary. Please also take a good look at your clubs trail system on the Polaris ride command app to make sure that is accurate too.

- **Equipment:** The 1 ton is currently at the shop for a state inspection. The vibratory roller is at Anderson's equipment to diagnose a problem that we didn't have the special tools to fix. While at Andersons, they found a problem with a failed bearing that wore the roller shaft. They gave us an estimate of \$5.000 in parts and another \$2.500 in labor for a total of \$7.500. We don't currently have that kind of funds to fix a piece of equipment that we can do without. I priced a brand new one and they are between \$14 and \$17.000 so obviously that is not an option either. In the meantime, we will perform trailwork without it. We will start bringing the trailers in for state inspection next.
- **Great Trails Workshop:** We had another meeting and the next steps are scheduling amenities. The workshop will be in Hardwick this year so I would like to know who will need rooms for the weekend. It's looking like Saturday will be at the office for in-classroom training in the morning and then Hardwick in the afternoon and then in Hardwick all day Sunday. Are there any specific things you as the attendees would like to learn more about or specific questions you would like answered for the next meeting?

**Frank Stanley gave a legislative update report.**

### **Executive Director - Dani Luce:**

#### **Personnel & Efficiency:**

- Ex employee update:
  - Update on Erik: Erik & Dani had an altercation, he quit, he left, he took back his quit, said that he didn't quit. He was then terminated for insubordination due to the incident. He did not like that & then got a lawyer. He came back at us saying that he was going to have legal actions filed against VASA. In the meantime, he was clearly going through a lot with his health and some family issues along with some employment issues. He had made contact with the previous E.D and made some significant threats which is why we had Police presence at the last month's meeting. In the meantime, we have been working with 2 different lawyers; Hans Huesy who is VASA's land lawyer (not an employment lawyer). We have since been working with an Insurance Lawyer to save on costs. How this basically works, we were assured that we would win the case but that it would cost us up to \$200,000 in defense attorney fees plus at least 120 hours of Dani's time in court. Everyone present at the BOD meeting would have their emails subpoena'd in order to win the case. We decided to settle out of court, the matter is now over

and complete. In the settlement, there is a bit of confidentiality on both sides. So, that is the gist of what we can discuss. We are moving onward & upward.

- Restructure / retask - plan for moving forward is to not rehire for his position
  - Jeremy and Dani are covering the bulk of Erik's job
  - Gordon is handling most of the TAD's and helping with customer service until he is needed back on the trails. There is a plan for when that time comes.
  - All the staff are filling in where needed & taking initiative!

### **Program & Operations:**

- Membership software = FULLY functional; 740 plus members so far
  - She reminds that if any club has not handed in their Charter agreements / Code of ethics etc. your club will not get paid until you are in good standings
- Preparations for renewal of "Big Grant" = Budget work plan / Audit / Reports
- Annual Meeting: sponsors / meal tickets (will be \$20)
  - Donations will still be needed from every club for the raffle. Sponsorships will be sought to help offset costs. A sponsorship tier system has been developed.
- Signs: switching from shopify to Wix (saves \$400 per year). New payment plan being introduced which reduces effort on the club's part. Signs and shipping will now be taken out of membership dues owed to clubs, invoices will be approved by Ethan and complete invoice breakdowns including shipping cost will be provided to clubs.
- Law Enforcement - setting up a meeting with Commissioner Batchelder for the 2026 schedule. Contracts being set up with local law enforcement also.
  - Plan to discuss the importance of fines vs warnings
- Land acquisitions
  - GMATV possible land acquisitions
- Donation stickers created for \$15.00 (minimum), similar to Habitat stamps and can be purchased separately from TAD's
- VASA Newsletter to be produced
- Municipal information packet being put together too
- Green up day - hope to see all clubs involved in it, let the office know if you plan to participate

### **Government / External Partners:**

- VAST - huge asset, working together with Cindy
- Trails & Greenways
  - Dani was voted into the Chair position
  - A strategic management plan is being developed
- Horse Council
  - Dani will be doing a joint presentation with them about sharing trails at the VT Trails & Greenways Council meeting on May 5th. Talking about trail etiquette etc.
- FPR - working on funding opportunities, ways to improve efficiencies with our big grant, and other grants, keeping communications open.
- NOHVCC - working on Great Trails workshop (as Ethan mentioned if lodging is needed please let VASA know)

**Organizational Needs:**

- VOC Club status - They have decided that they no longer want to be a part of VASA. 3 separate letters were mailed out on 3/23/2026 (to members, VOC officers & landowners). As of 4/6/2026, only 2 responses (1 to Dani and 1 to Melissa). They will be dissolved this week.
- Bylaws: Changes to vote on: Ex-employees on the board (introduced last month). Proposal for vote next month - mileage.

**Financial Stabilization:**

- Draft budget for Fiscal year 2027 (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027) is provided for your review. Please read through this budget carefully. We have found ourselves needing to cut the budget by \$200,000 due to previous budgeting errors in both State and non-State numbers going down dramatically. There are significant changes in the budget this year. We are now in survival mode for the unforeseeable future.
  - Hoping that this draft budget can be voted on at the May 2026 meeting
  - First item to put out, no room in the budget to provide food at future meetings & Mileage! Payroll & staff mileage has been cut also.
- Yamaha Grant - previous grant officially closed. New Yamaha grant applied for.
- Reports this month -additional reports included this month for budget clarification purposes
  - Douglas Stone states that the E-board is 100% backing Dani on this. This is what we hired her to do, to come in & get things back on track to move forward.
  - Ideas mentioned at the meeting also is that we could bring back the 50/50 raffle at monthly BOD meetings. Someone on the BOD would have to step forward to do it at each meeting. Clubs could potentially sponsor having a meal at the BOD meetings.
  - Melissa mentions that the VOC club bylaws state that upon the termination of that club, the liquidation of the assets are to be divided amongst all the remaining clubs which each club could decide to donate VASA if they wish to
  - George Barton makes a motion to change the by laws to eliminate paying mileage to the BOD (as a warning to vote on the by law change at May 2026 meeting to be effective July 1st, 2026), Seconded by Brian Benoit.
  - Fred Elliot makes a motion to approve the by law change, mentioned in March's meeting regarding ex paid employees not being allowed to be on the board, seconded by Brian Benoit, approval by all, motion carries to change the by law..

She reminds everyone that she is open to feedback, please reach out to her with any concerns, etc.

**Old / New Business:**

- Fred Elliot made a motion to make a policy change to charge \$15.00 for replacement TAD stickers, seconded by Brian Benoit, approved by all, motion carries.
- George Barton comments that after the Horse Council meeting, that we should share a definition of shared trail etiquette & post it on the website & have a points bulletin for Kiosk display
- Douglas Stone asks how many clubs will participate in Green-up day? Post & share so VASA can share
- Douglas reminds that if Clubs are having events, please post and share so VASA can help boost your events too and support each other
- Dani has purchased a gift for Bill Huff and a card for everyone to sign
- Douglas Stone thanks Dani & the staff for stepping up and working well together and supporting each other!
- Doug Wheeler mentions that he would like to get out and make rounds to the club's meetings with Dani.

A motion was made to adjourn by Ray Blakeney, seconded by Brian Benoit meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.