

BSLA Board of Directors Meeting
September 30, 2023
9:00am
Headwaters Golf Club

Present: Mark Kalvoda, Chuck Fenton, Al Judson, Ann Hilger, Catharine Williamson, Jo Kilander, Don Kilander, Mike Cziok

Not Present: Linda Lee, Steve Kimpton, Rich Provinzino

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Chuck Fenton at 9:03 a.m.

Minutes

Jo asked for any comments regarding the past meeting's minutes. Catharine identified two things that need to be corrected. One is to remove the section about Belle Taine Lake being divided into 16 AIS inspection sections and Bob Bray doing something similar on Big Sand. The second change was to add to the minutes the discussion about investigating the possibility of hiring a professional lake inspector service.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved with the two changes.

Treasurer's Report

Al shared the BSLA financial report and explained that in 2023 there were 148 member dues payers, down from 170 in the prior year. Ann suggested comparing donor lists between the BSLA and the Charitable Fund. Al and Ann will work to clarify donation and fund confusion in the future. Don explained that the BSLA budget stays largely consistent each year. Some unknown future budget expenses include the cost of water testing from Hubbard County COLA, and the expense of mailing an extra newsletter. The current BSLA account balance is \$20,619.89.

Don reported speaking with the director of the Hubbard County AIS inspection program, who suggested that the \$25 per hour inspection price should stay the same for 2024.

The board discussed whether to continue hiring for 1100 hours of DNR inspection in 2024. Catharine suggested that it would also be wise to plan for some inspection hours for Lake Emma, which appears to be getting busier. Al will request an inspection report from Hubbard County to get more information before the board decides on the total number of inspection hours needed for 2024. Al needs to request the total hours from the DNR in December.

Ann moved to adopt the treasurer's report, and Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Charitable Fund Report

Ann presented a Charitable Fund Financial Statement from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. She explained that the "spendable" portion of the fund can be spent by the BSLA association needs, but it earns money at a lower interest rate (1%). The "endowment/nonspendable" part of the fund typically earns interest income at a higher rate (6-7%) but can never be spent. At some point in the future, the BSLA and Charitable Fund committee should decide if some money should be moved from the spendable fund to the endowment fund to increase investment returns. There was some confusion over whether the "Nonspendable Accumulated Earnings" line on the report (\$32, 670.73) represented money that could be spent or not. Ann will double check with the foundation and report back to the board.

Chuck suggested transferring money from the BSLA checking account to the Charitable Fund, but Al recommended keeping enough in the BSLA account to prepay for the DNR watercraft inspection bill in January, should it need to be paid before the Charitable Fund can approve a grant.

OLD BUSINESS

Membership

Chuck explained that the BSLA needed to come up with a new way of increasing lake association membership. He suggested that the BSLA adopt a similar program to one used by the Potato Lake Association, where the lake properties are divided into sections, and each section has a volunteer leader who speaks personally to other section members to encourage membership participation. New members would be encouraged to join with a free first year membership. Mike suggested using a Hubbard County map to identify all Big Sand Lake property owners. Jo offered to do research to come up with a list of names and addresses that could be divided into sections. She will also use the information for a potential future BSLA directory. Chuck recommended that BSLA board members could be the original section leaders. Catharine volunteered that there is already some existing member property information by street from the old phone tree list. Al will provide Jo with the information he has on members.

Welcoming New Members

Section leaders will also be responsible for greeting new lake members. Catharine shared that there could be some leftover welcome packet material from when it was done in the past. The board agreed welcome packets should be hand delivered to new neighbors.

Newsletter

Jo reported that Barb Kimer is collecting articles for a fall newsletter. Chuck will write a president's message to include. According to Catharine, Heather Whitman will help to create content, write articles and lay the newsletter out. Catharine suggested that there are two potential volunteers who could take over Barb's job in the future. The board agreed that 2 newsletters per year are needed.

Garbage Problem at Boat Launch

Don checked with the DNR to see who is responsible for cleaning up the area near the public access and was told that local residents should be responsible for that effort. The board discussed whether a commercial trash can and regular seasonal trash pickup would be a good solution. Al will check what trash pickup would cost. Mike suggested that young employees from Pine Cone Lodge could be hired to do some regular cleanup of the area. Catharine suggested a volunteer clean-up committee could be created. Don added that the DNR owns the parking lot, but doesn't have the staff or budget to keep the parking area clean. The board will make a decision on this matter in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

Vegetative Study and Invasive Species Detection Study

Using information gained from a contact she has on Long Lake, Catharine conducted research into what the possibilities would be for employing a professional water inspection service to conduct sampling on Big Sand Lake. Specifically, she spoke extensively with Steve Henry of Aquatic Survey Professionals, a company currently located in Nevis, MN. Catharine provided the board with Steve's credentials and a copy of the lake study he did for Long Lake, which identified the presence of Starry Stonewort there.

Meanwhile, the DNR had recommended to the BSLA that an updated vegetative study should be conducted on Big Sand Lake, studying both emergent and submergent vegetation. A previous vegetative study of Big Sand had been conducted by lake volunteers in 2009. Catharine discussed with Steve the possibility of combining both a vegetative study and an invasive species detection/native aquatic plant survey.

Catharine shared Steve's combined proposal with the board, which included a map of where samples would be collected in the lake, focusing heavily on vulnerable areas most likely to be contaminated. The proposal also addressed the appropriate water depths that would need to be sampled, including several 20-foot depths (where most vegetation is present), and a few 37-foot depths. The proposal price is \$4,700. If approved, the study would begin the first week of October and the results should be available in about 6 weeks.

Don moved that the board hire Aquative Survey Professionals to conduct the study. Mike seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Catharine moved that the board approve that the \$4,700 expenditure be requested from the Charitable Fund. Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The board thanked Catharine for her hard work in coordinating the proposal.

Social

Jo does summer social activity planning and will recap past summer activities for the newsletter. Jo reported great attendance the past year with regular social dates and added that it is difficult to find couples to host parties because of parking space needs.

Rain Garden

Catharine informed the board that Big Sand Lake sponsors a rain garden near lake Emma, and that it currently is overgrown and needs attention. A workshop was held in the past about the advantages of the rain garden and how to plant it. There is a sign marking the rain garden area. Board members suggested putting an article about rain gardens in the fall newsletter. The article should explain what a raingarden is, what the benefits are, and that we need volunteers to care for it. Catharine will contact a perspective volunteer.

Board Member Elections

Chuck suggested that board member nominations are needed for the June annual meeting vote. Wick Corwin has been identified as an interested volunteer. Don shared that in the past we have appointed members to the board and ratified them with a vote at the annual meeting. Catharine reminded the board that board terms are 3 years and should be staggered. Don will provide the board with information about a potential nominating committee.

Bylaws

The board needs to review and update the bylaws. Catharine will ask Linda Lee if she will lead this effort. Then, a volunteer with legal experience will be asked to review the changes. Any changes must be presented to the membership in writing at least 15 days prior to the annual meeting and vote of adoption. Don asked that changes be presented in a "red-lined" manner so the changes are clear to the members. Chuck asked that bylaw changes be created by the February board meeting.

Next Meeting

Ann will send board members a Zoom link for the Saturday, February 17, board meeting.

Don moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:02 a.m. Mike seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Hilger
Big Sand Lake Board Association Secretary