

Minutes
AVA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting
April 12, 2023

1. Meeting called to order on Teams at 6:00pm CDT by Chair Nancy Wittenberg.
2. All Officers and Regional Directors (RD) were present. Representing the National Office (NO) were Henry Rosales, AVA CEO and President; Erin Grosso, Finance Director; and Marian DeVaul, Accounting Specialist. Also participating were Deputy Regional Directors (DRD) from North Central, Northeast, Northwest, South Central and Southwest Regions. A quorum existed. Committee Chairs and members present included Chris Mellen (Chair, Nominating Committee), Tim Miner (Chair, Programs Committee) and Diane Howell Evans (Programs Committee member), Jerry Wilson (Chair, Convention Committee), and Mike Green (Chair, IT Committee). Guests: Leslie Murphey Stone, Mary Gustafson, Craig Gauger (incoming Mid America RD), Dolores Grenier, John McClellan, Jim Medzviega, Meg McDevitt, Dawn Gruber, Connie Bost, and Joseph Piffat.
3. Agenda (Attachment 1) was approved as corrected.
4. Minutes approval.
 - a. MA RD made **motion** to accept minutes from December 14, 2022, Special Board Meeting. NW RD seconded. **Approved.**
 - b. PA RD made **motion** to accept minutes from the February 24, 2023, Special Membership Meeting. MA RD seconded. **Approved.**
 - c. Approved minutes will be posted on the AVA website.
5. CEO Report (Henry Rosales).
 - a. Preliminary Olympiad Report. The IVV Olympiad and the International Marching League (IML) Texas Trail Roundup (TTR) drew over 1,020 participants and spectators from 23 countries. The events were featured on several media outlets, including radio, TV, newspapers, and streaming. Henry thanked the planning committee and volunteers for directly contributing to the success of the events.
 - b. Approval of AVA Policy Manual – Wayne Knapp, NE RD
Wayne Knapp (Chair) and committee made substantial updates and streamlining and recommended approval of the revised manual. With the **motion** coming from the Operations Policy Committee, no second was needed.
Discussion: Carl Cordes noted the document is a living document, but the new document gets the organization to present day.
Vote: **Approved.** Policy Manual will go live on the AVA website.

c. Henry noted several deadlines ahead of the June **regular membership meeting**, which will be held electronically on **June 14, 2023, 5-8pm CDT**. Some key dates:

- April 30, 2023—Deadline for clubs to be in good standing to vote in meeting
- May 15, 2023—Officer, Board Member, and Committee reports due to AVA
- May 31, 2023—Credentialing forms received by AVA

d. Board training for new and returning Board members will be by webinar.

- Sanctioning Webinar: Wednesday, May 17 – 7pm CDT
- Duties and Responsibilities of a non-profit Board: Wed., July 19, 6-8pm CDT
- Fundraising, a joint responsibility of the board and staff: July 26, 6-7pm CDT; Budgeting and Financial Processes – Erin Grosso 7-8pm CDT.

e. Next Regular Board meeting – Arlington, VA. This meeting will be ahead of the US FreedomWalk Festival (USFWF) and will include opportunities for interaction with IML leadership, which will also be meeting then. Dolores Grenier, USFWF Chair and IML Vice President, presented key activities and discussed lodging. The AVA Chair announced the following schedule for the BOD:

- Arrive for Freedom Festival Club Event, Tuesday, Oct. 17
- Board Meeting, Wednesday, Oct 18
- US FreedomWalk Festival, Friday, Oct 20 – Sunday, Oct 22

f. Approval of new and deactivated clubs.

- New: Alabama Amblers in Madison, AL
- Reactivated: 0
- Deactivated as of March 30, 2023:
 - AVA-0124, Plano Walking Club in Plano, TX
 - AVA-0067, Fort Belvoir-DFMWR at Fort Belvoir, VA

The total club count is 183

Motion to approve came from CEO, no second needed. **Approved.**

g. Big Give. The 2022 campaign netted over \$90,000. Henry asked all to save the dates of the next Big Give: September 20-21, 2023. Also, there have been two AVA Angels who left bequests to AVA.

h. Finance Chair Ed McCabe presented financial status.

6. Reports of Officers.

a. Chair Nancy Wittenberg participated in Olympiad and met with many delegations.

b. Vice Chair Susan Medlin – No report

c. Secretary Cecilia Miner – No report

d. Finance Chair Ed McCabe – Reported with financial presentation

7. Financials – Erin Grosso and Ed McCabe report the preliminary 2022 year-end report and the preliminary 2023 first quarter financials. Erin reported that input was still coming in, and more information would be presented at a later date.

8. Board Committee Reports. The only formal report came from the Awards Committee proposal (Attachment 2) – Carl Cordes

The Committee discussed national awards and a proposed change for the President's Award. The proposal was to change the name of the President's Award to the Chair's Award for Excellence to distinguish it from an award for service. Carl recommended deleting the online nomination form as it is not needed for the award. Attachment 3 contains the motion along with recommended wording for the next update of the Policy Manual. In addition, the nomination form for this award would be deleted on approval of the motion.

Motion that the President's Award be renamed the AVA Chair's Award for Excellence came from committee, so no second was needed.

Discussion: None

Vote: **Approved**

9. Proposed Convention Cruise Idea – Jerry Wilson and Delores Grenier

Jerry Wilson, Convention Chair, noted there were no proposals to host the 2025 Convention. Dolores suggested a change to use a cruise for a Convention. She presented three proposals:

- AVA Biennial Convention on the high seas (cruise). Prices for 2025 will be out around July 2023. The Convention could possibly link the cruise with IVV/IML events in Canada and USA (Arlington, VA).
- On land near the USFWF in 2025 (17-19 October 2025).
- Coordinate with NO to find a place near existing walks.

Nancy asked if there could be further development on the cruise option and asked Jerry to continue to look at other options. All, please send Dolores any questions. Erin said she and Marian could compile info from previous conventions.

10. Board discussion of sources of revenue, including recommending possible fee changes – Finance Chair Ed McCabe. Highlights:

- Handling of free walkers continues to be a controversy. Some states want the free walker category universally eliminated, while other states need flexibility to work around their governments' requirements for charging fees.
- Participation fees have not increased since 2003. A \$3.00 fee in 2003 would be \$4.92 in 2023. Whether or not participation fees increase, Ed McCabe proposed that the amount going to AVA increase from \$1.25 to \$2.00 for anyone who walks, including free walkers. This idea would not dictate what clubs charge for walks, only what they remit to AVA. He noted that in 2022 clubs reported over 6,000 free walkers. The key issue is that AVA needs to transparently

communicate to clubs the need to increase fees. Costs increase, especially insurance and personnel.

- Ed McCabe also proposed increasing sanction fees for YREs to \$45 annually with no quarterly \$5 fee. This proposal would bring in all the sanction fees up front plus an additional \$5 per walk.
- MA RD made a **motion** to create an ad hoc committee to examine options on price increases and report back in 90 days. NW RD seconded.
 - Discussion: none
 - Vote. **Approved** in a split voice vote. Chair Wittenberg asked for a volunteer to chair the committee. The Chair will not create the committee until after efforts have been made to educate clubs.

11. New Business -- Chair

a. Tom Baltes, Sharon Moats (NW RD), and Ed Hainline (NW DRD) submitted a **motion** to create a pilot program to use stickers instead of stamps in record books, based on Canadian efforts during Covid. Participants would pick up stickers with stamp information for AVA record books and special programs and paste them into their books instead of physically handling a stamp. The suggestion is that at least one club per region should participate for the remaining 2023 traditional events and for 2024 YREs with a physical start box (PSB). The 2024 YREs with a PSB would request "no stamp." Seconded by MA RD for discussion.

Discussion:

- MA RD stated the "cut and paste" option is already available, and the decision to permit stickers is operational and could be decided by Henry without BOD action.
- Mike Green (Chair, IT Committee) pointed out the sticker size does not conform to common sticker templates that are readily available, and there could be alignment issues for individual printers. That said, AVA could buy sticker pages in bulk and sell them to clubs more cheaply than clubs could buy them. Then, AVA could provide a template for printing.
- Mike Green further noted that the stickers would have no control information such as the code that appears on the current "cut and paste" option for the OSB.
- Based on the idea that action taken to implement stickers on a trial basis is an operational decision, NW RD requested **motion** be **rescinded**.

b. Evergreen State Volkssport Association (ESVA) and NW RD submitted a **motion** that AVA establish distance and event record books specifically for swim and snowshoe/cross-country skiing record books. Discussion:

- The Chair noted there are no IVV-authorized books for these events, so AVA would have to do this independently.
- MA RD said IVV specifically does not allow distance credit for swim events. We would need to go through IVV to offer this program at the AVA level.
- Henry stated it would not be cost-effective based on numbers for those events (400 for swims and 94 for snowshoe in 2022), because AVA would need to create books in bulk to sell and then process them. The numbers don't warrant the investment at this time. In addition, fewer members are still keeping books.

- Mike Green recommended offering the idea as a special program perhaps sponsored by NW region. NW RD **rescinded the motion** and will follow up with ESVA to consider creating a special program.

c. NW RD submitted a **motion** regarding forms of registering. The motion was that walk registration should be ONLY by PSB and/or AVA OSB by the end of 2023. There are walks that are not offered by PSB or AVA OSB and have registration only through alternate methods, such as "contact the POC" or separate digital registration systems that do not go through AVA. Henry noted the walk information is on AVA, though the payment process is not, and for pay-direct systems, walkers get directions e-mailed to them once they pay in the alternate system. He does not see an issue with the alternate systems, as AVA still receives its fee. Mike Green agreed that the alternate systems seem to work well for the clubs using them. NW RD asked that **motion be rescinded** but asked that AVA and RDs encourage clubs to put walks on the OSB to help walkers.

d. AT RD submitted a **motion** that member clubs be prevented through the ESR system from sanctioning traditional events on dates of AVA national events and regional conferences. This action would affect clubs in those regions within which these events or conferences take place.

MA RD seconded for sake of discussion.

The Chair pointed out that no other sanctions are usually granted during Conventions. MA RD said this is an RD issue to handle. The Chair noted that the IT committee is an operational committee, so Henry could decide.

AT RD asked that **motion be rescinded**, and he will follow up with Henry.

12. Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm CDT. Board reconvened in Executive Session at 9:31pm CDT for approval of national Awards – Carl Cordes. Adjourned from executive session 10:05pm CDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Miner, Ph.D.
AVA Secretary

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Awards Committee Report
3. Awards Committee proposal to change name of President's Award