

Minutes

AVA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting
February 13, 2024

1. **Call to Order: The meeting was called to order on February 13, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. CST by Chair Nancy Wittenberg.**
2. **Roll Call of AVA Board:**
 - **Officers:** All officers and Henry Rosales were present.
 - **RDs:** All RDs were present.
 - **DRDs:** All DRDs were present except MADRD Roberta Allen, RMDRD Christopher Benoché, and SCDRD Terri Tyler
 - **AVA HQ:** Erin Grosso
 - **Committee Chairs:** IT Mike Green; Publicity Susan Fine; Membership Karen Kaufman; Programs Diane Evans
 - **Guests:** Bob Buzolich, Terry Lunghofer, Albert Herrera, Kathy Mack, Pat Jewett, Chris Mellon, Wayne Knapp, and Irene Stanford.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** The modified agenda was approved.
4. **Approval of Minutes of November 21, 2023, Regular Board Meeting:** NERD Carol Giesecke made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 21, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Finance Chair Ed McCabe. The motion to approve was passed.
5. **Board Chair's Report:**
 - a. Wanted to talk about a proposed motion, from the Mid-America Region, in our meeting packet of the possibility of having a regional committee within the region that acts like a club, which can put on a regional conference. It would maintain checking accounts, accept donations, the ability to sanction events, and to report participation figures. The intention is to function as a club but not have the voting privileges of a club or pay the membership fee of a club. In reviewing the proposal, it may require a change in our By-Laws or must form a club within the Region with officers, and be incorporated, etc. It is possible to accomplish these goals within existing state associations, or with teaming with individual clubs. After discussion, MARD, Craig Gauger pulled the motion. No further action was taken on this proposed motion.
6. **Financial Report – Ed McCabe**
 - a. **Preliminary year-end Financial Report:** Program revenues continue decline and costs continue to rise. Non-traditional revenue streams continue to exceed budget. Planning on an additional fund raiser in the fall of 2024. The grants we receive as assisting us maintain a balanced

budget. We were 130% of budget for 2023, but the travel of the Board of Directors in October 2023 was not included in the original budget, so that is a major portion of the overage in the budget.

7. CEO/President's Report – Henry Rosales

- a. For the first year, AVA members who request a paper TAW will be at no cost. This is for the first year only. All will get an electronic copy of the TAW.
- b. Element 3 has been renamed to Grouper.
 - i. Grouper has discontinued the discounted Walk Voucher Program as of January 31, 2024.
 - ii. Grouper will continue to reimburse clubs \$1 for self-guided events and \$1.74 for Group activities. Payment will be in November instead of quarterly. This is intended for new walkers.
 - iii. Grouper will pay the AVA Associate and Club Member dues for existing members.
 - iv. Grouper will purchase New Walker Packets from the AVA and hand them out to new Grouper members. This is for new walkers. – This is under discussion and the particulars are to be worked out with Grouper.
 - v. We are in discussions about partnering with Grouper with our walk app.
 - vi. AVA is developing an updated New Walker Packet.
- c. Walk App – going through a draft of the business plan. This will be proprietary property.
- d. Please attend the King William Parade
- e. Please participate in the membership survey that is coming out in the next week or two. Survey will close on 3-15-2024.
- f. No incident reports for the 4th quarter, 2023.
- g. Deactivate Clubs: The Penn Dutch Pacers has disbanded. ATRD Jeff Giddings made a motion to deactivate the Penn Dutch Pacers. Vice-Chair Carl Cordes seconded the motion. The motion to deactivate the Penn Dutch Pacers was approved.
- h. The Board is recommending the 2025 Convention be held in Las Cruces. An extended report will be presented later in the meeting.
- i. Our legal counsel had retired. We are looking for new legal counsel.
- j. We have two fund raisers pending: 1 is the bus tour in May/June to the Crazy Horse Memorial. 2 is fall festive walk or a cruise. These would be open to members and non-members.

8. Awards and Recognitions Committee – Carl Cordes : No Report

9. SE Region Proposal re: Minors w/o Record Books – Kathryn King

- a. A motion request from the Upstate Pathfinders is seeking concurrence that minors without record books are considered to be free walkers. A discussion was held related to what the clubs can do, how/if to report the minor walker and what could IT do to assist reporting. SERD Kathryn King, made the motion ***“to allow the club to determine how to charge for children 12 and under that don't stamp books, and don't want to pay the \$2.00, and whether they pay the \$2.00 to the AVA.”*** The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Carl Cordes. After discussion, the motion passed.

10. NW Region Director's Recommendation Discussion – 10 min

- a. NW Region is focusing on multi-day events.
- b. There are concerns about the viability of volkssport continuing in the region.
- c. ESVA is forming a committee to look at the continuing viability of clubs due to the sharp decrease in walkers. The report should be available in April, 2024, which will be forwarded to the AVA.
- d. Due to the cost of reserving space at the traditional walk venues, the cost of Special Event Permits, and the decline in participation, many traditional walks will be simpler/group walks, but could also reduce the new walkers as there may not be good orientation to volkssporting.
- e. There is a lot of use of the Traveling Guided Walk Stamp. It reduces the cost to the club.
- f. We started Meetup in 2009. It was beneficial at first. The new generation of Meetup walkers are not as dedicated. There are other groups that are siphoning off AVA walkers. Competition is fierce.
- g. 75% of our YRE events could be PPFs walks because of a drop in participation.
- h. Discussion followed this report, sounding out ways clubs are handling declines in participation and how to counteract it.

11. Operative Committees' Reports

- a. **Membership Committee Report 10 min – Karen Kaufmann (Verbal Report)**
 - i. Membership Chair, Karen Kaufman would like to thank all the RD & DRDs helped get the information needed by the Membership Committee for the club roster. Karen will report at the next Webinar, on February 22, 2024, about their findings.
- b. **Convention Committee Report 15 min – Henry Rosales and Albert Herrera of Visit Las Cruces:**
 - i. Albert Hererra, Director of Sales for Visit Las Cruces, made a presentation for convention consideration.
 - ii. Convention would include 2 countries (USA & MX), 3 states (TX, NM & Chihuahua, MX).

- iii. Hotels within walking distance of the convention center. The town has RV sites – about 1.5 mile from the Convention center
- iv. Lots of traditions, heritage and great food & drink.
- v. Expected dates 4-29-25/May 3, 25.
- vi. The nearest airport is El Paso, TX – about a 45-minute drive. Shuttle service is available.
- vii. Possible events at White Sands National Park – would be bussed by motorcoach, El Paso, TX – an international border walk to include Juarez, MX. Additional walks will be provided.
- viii. Las Cruces has a volunteer network of 350 volunteers which can be utilized for help with the convention.
- ix. May be able to get grants to help fund the convention.
- x. Local AVA club is happy to help support the Las Cruces Convention.
- xi. NERD Carol Giesecke made a motion “*that we have our 2025 convention in Las Cruces.*” The motion was seconded by MARD Craig Gauger. The motion passed.

c. Mobile Walk App Committee Business Plan – 15-20 min – Jeff Giddings

- i. Walk App Chair, Jeff Giddings and CEO Henry Rosales have spoken with Debbie at Broad Minded Media. Debbie has presented the first draft of the Walk App Business Plan. It was comprehensive. It is in the process of being reviewed.
- ii. Discussed proposed budget but nothing firm on the budget.
- iii. Preceding forward and hope to have a final draft in the next month or two.
- iv. More detailed discussion to follow.

d. Publicity Committee (TAW, etc.) – 10 min – Susan Fine

- i. Focusing on the TAW. Working with RDs about what they want on their pages.
- ii. TAW has the same email address TAW@AVA.org.
- iii. Cost are still unknow for those who want the TAW printed instead of email. Would like them to try e-version first before saying they want Paper.
- iv. Hoping to publish it at the end of March or the beginning of April.

e. Programs Committee – Diane Evans

- i. Diane Evans reported that there were 3 proposals for special programs. 1 proposal was withdrawn.
- ii. Two remaining proposals submitted were American Royalty and Walking with the Wild Things: Trolls, Gargoyles & Gnomes. After evaluation, the American Royalty program also withdrew from consideration.
- iii. The Special Program to be added for 2025 is Walking with the Wild Things: Trolls, Gargoyles, Ferries, and Gnomes. There are 32

Dambo Trolls in the USA, with more to be made. It would run through 12-31-2027.

- iv. Diane made a motion ***“to approve the Walking with the Wild Things, a special program, beginning in January 2025.”*** Since the motion came from the committee, a second is not needed. The motion passed.

f. IT Committee – 20 min – Mike Green

- i. **Proposal for RDs to approve updated OSB event PDFs:** MT Chair, Mike Green moved ***“that the RDs be able to approve updated OSB event PDFs for already approved OSB events.”***

This motion is from committee so a second is not needed. The motion passed. Mike also demonstrated how the RDs would accomplish the approval.

- ii. **Status of importing AVA events into the IVV Database:** The IT committee was contacted by the IVV to work with the AVA to be able to get AVA events on the IVV calendar. The IVV has a method for the AVA to do the uploading. Mike demonstrated how this is accomplished.

iii. Questions and other topics as time allows.

1. AVA is working on a database to allow walkers to lookup walks by the stamp number. Clubs can search back to 2010. The AVA can search back to 2005. This may be extended to AVA Associates in the future. There is data back to 1981.
2. There is now support for club specific paragraph on event fees and guests that appears in the default event brochure.
3. Used to have a legacy website. You are now directed from <https://cb.ava.org> to <https://ava.org>.
4. There is now a simple link to list all current events that qualify for a specific current AVA Special Programs.
5. All data from the Windows R2 server has been transitioned to my.ava.org. The AVA can back up the server and remove the server.

12. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by SERD Kathryn King. The motion was seconded by MARD Craig Gauger. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M. CST.

The next Board Meeting is May 14, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. CDST.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie L. Stone
Secretary
AVA: America’s Walking Club