



Draft Minutes Board of Directors Meeting AVA: America's Walking Club

**Friday, June 5, 2026, 9:00 AM MDT – 1:00 PM MDT
Location: 613 Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57701 and MS Teams**

- 1. Call to Order –Chairman, Carl Cordes:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Carl Cordes, at 9:17 AM MDT.
- 2. Roll Call – Secretary:**
 - a. All the sitting officers and the CEO were present.
 - b. All Regional Directors were present except RM_RD Christopher Benoché
 - c. DRDs present were AT_DRD Ron Jones, MA_DRD Roxie Geiser-Weaver. NW_DRD Pat Jewett, and SE_DRD Mike Lanpher. RM_DRD & SC_DRD are vacant.
 - d. Committee Chairs in attendance were App-Jeff Giddings, Convention-Jerry Wilson, IT-Mike Green, Programs-Diane Evans, and Publicity-Susan Fine.
 - e. AVA National Office: Erin Grosso, Hector Hernandez, and Marian DeVaul.
 - f. Guests included Ed Hainline, Yvonne Pennington, Sharon Moats, Blake Charvoz, Anne Horst, Scott Isom, Brenda Harris, Duane Neugebauer, Ken Fine, and Dolores Grenier
- 3. Recognition of guest present**
 - a. **Visit Rapid City – Comments by Tyson Steiger:** Mr. Steiger did not attend the meeting.
 - b. **Walking Adventures International comments by new owner Scott Isom:**
 - i. Scott talked about himself and Walking Adventures International (WAI). There has been a long-standing partnership between WAI and the AVA. It was started primarily to provide walking opportunities for the volkssport community.
 - ii. Borealis on Trekking, located in Portugal, agreed to purchase WAI and the guides would partner with Borealis to conduct tours. Our team is more international now. We are thrilled to keep WAI working and we continue to keep our association with the AVA and the IVV because they have been so important to our history.
 - iii. Scott and Tim Freisen will be the primary USA guides. They will reach out to RDs to get information on walks etc. We are excited to have high-value tours where people can get their IVV stamps. They are an AVA member club-International Wanderers (AVA 759), so they can also curate their own walks when needed. Visit www.walkingadventures.com for the adventures available.
 - c. **Black Hills Volkssport Club – Comments by Anne Horst, club Vice-President:**
 - i. Notes about the walks this weekend:





1. Crazy Horse will be held tomorrow and there will be lots going on all day.
2. On Sunday, 6:30 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. is the signup for the Outlaw Ranch Walk, outside of Custer. You have to be off the trail by noon.
3. We will be at Way Park in Custer City from 10:00 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. to register walkers for the Hill City Walk, The Custer City Walk and the Mickelson Trail Walk. The Custer City Walk and the Mickelson Trail Walk will start from Way Park. We will have Brats, chips and cupcakes. Cooking starts at 11:00 A.M. and will go to 1:00 P.M.
4. Anne has brochures for all the club's walks available.
5. Anne provided directions and information for RDs who would be driving to Crazy Horse to volunteer who did not have the pass for volunteers.
6. President's walk will be this afternoon starting at the Alex Johnson Hotel on 6th Street. Sign up in the Lobby.

4. Approval of Agenda:

- a. The agenda was amended to section 3c to reflect Anne Horst as club Vice President. NC_RD Ken Johnson seconded the motion. The amended agenda was approved.

5. Approval of Minutes of March 12, 2026, Board Meeting:

- a. MA_RD Bob Buzolich requested a clarification on section 10 iv to add "Mid-America Walking Weekend to the number of pre-registered walkers.
- b. SE_RD Jeanne Stokes advised that section 9 vii has a typo. June 38 should be June 28.
- c. The corrected minutes were approved.

6. CEO's Report – Henry Rosales:

- a. Welcome to everyone who joined in person and via MS Teams.
- b. Henry Rosales submitted the report, and he has no comments or recommendations.
- c. There will be an informal social tonight at "Thirsty's", address 819 W. Main, between 4 & 6 p.m. We have invited the mayor; we are not sure if the City Council members are coming. The CEO of the Crazy Horse Memorial will attend.

7. Old Business

a. Walk App Update:

i. Blake Charvoz, Project Manager & Jeff Giddings

1. Blake Charvoz and Elizabeth Dugan have designed the User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX) investigation and interview schedule. They have completed interviews and generated a prototype using an AI build platform and





presented the prototype to the three app users. There will be more discussion on the interviews later in the meeting.

2. Jeff Giddings has completed the toolset that will allow club members to convert their OSB PDF documents into geocoded trail files. Jeff is unable to convert the 3,000 files that exist. Clubs will need to assist by using the toolset.
3. First phase of app development has been highly successful and under budget. Have concerns about schedule moving to the right. Also concerned that there is not much marketing or support from the clubs.
4. Recommend continuing with the next phase of the project which is designing and prototyping the walk app further.
5. Jeff is hoping to reduce the estimate for development by one third. We will probably have to go for another round of bids due to time since we received the last bids. The AVA is searching for grants to help support the app development.
6. Jeff provided a quick overview of the OSB walk directions converter toolset. Jeff plans on a webinar to spread the word.
7. Blake Charvoz praised the AVA efforts to develop an app. We are speaking with our potential users to develop an app that will fit the users' needs.
8. Blake spoke in more detail about the process and survey they utilized to develop a prototype and work with users to test the prototype. He advised that we are using AI to assist in developing the app. Existing (All Trails, Strava) apps are not going after our market.

ii. App Fundraising Report (Seth Werner)

1. Seth advised the initial fundraising discussed in 2025 was put on hold while the App Committee and the National Office decided to bring Blake Charvoz on board to help design the app and to clarify what functions the app should have.
2. We have had meetings with BroadMinded Media, we put together a video, which we will show in a bit, and looked at call strips and fund-raising financials & recognition.
3. We brought BroadMinded Media on to help with the grants, proposal and letters of intent to assist in the process.
4. We would like board members to identify 10-15 people from their regions that the AVA could contact during fund-raising. These would be people who are very involved in the AVA, have a history with the AVA, or are supporters of the AVA now. We ask for the Board to lead by example.
5. Ron Jones, AT_DRD, has been working on the walk app development and is continuing this report.
6. This "Silent" phase of fund-raising is critical. If we don't do well enough in this phase, the app may not be developed.





7. We want to reach out past the Board to those who might be able to help with the fundraising for the next few months. We are looking for outreach to Officers, Directors, Deputy Directors, Committee Chairs and committee members. Also, AVA Life members, individual members, and those who are passionate about volkssports. We will not be contacting any staff or contractors during this phase.
8. We would like board members to provide 10-15 people to contact by June 30. Seth will send out a letter to the Board with the expectations outlined.
9. If a donor donates and the app is not produced, the AVA will retain the donation unless the donor restricts the use of the donation. This is in addition to The Big Give.
10. We are asking for board members to man a phone bank to contact submitted names. There will also be a "Public" phase to follow the "Silent" phase.
11. There will be some non-monetary incentives and recognition. Donors will be placed on an Honor Roll. There are other benefits and incentives under consideration, such as early access to beta apps.
12. We want to encourage clubs to have friendly competition to help raise funds.
13. Next step is to send names to the AVA for solicitation of funding for the walk app.
14. Clubs that choose to put one of their walks on the app will sign an intellectual property agreement which will state the amount of royalties they will receive. These amounts will be determined in the future.
15. The app is planned to be a subscription model, with different tiers for buy-in.
16. The AVA expects to go out for bids again based on the recent efficiencies of AI. The AVA also expects to own the code so changes can be made in-house.

8. New Business There was no new business presented.

9. Officer Reports

- a. **Chairman:** Carl stated that his report is in the package. He added that he is flying to Belgium for the IVV Congress where he will be proposing Rapid City as the site of the 2028 IVV Congress (June 8, 2028), followed by the first Americaspiad.
- b. **Vice-Chairman:** Ed McCabe stated that he feels that the AVA should be focused on growing membership in addition to developing the walk app.
- c. **Finance Chair Report (Unaudited Preliminary 2025 Year End Financials) – Finance Chair, Seth Werner:** Seth stated that his report is in the packet and he has 2 motions to put forward.





- i. **Motion 1:** Direct Henry Rosales, CEO, to convene a panel/group of current AVA members and key stakeholders, in collaboration with an external facilitator, to conduct a high-level, comprehensive review of participation trends, organizational and hierarchical structure, mission, vision, and funding model of AVA.
 1. A second is not required.
 2. Discussion followed.
 3. The motion passed.
- ii. **Motion 2:** Authorize the allocation of funds, not to exceed \$15,000.00 to support Motion 1, including engagement of an external consulting firm, organizational development expertise, and associated travel and meeting costs.
 1. A second is not required.
 2. Discussion followed.
 3. The motion passed.
- d. **Secretary:** Leslie reported that she accompanied Carl & Brenda to New Zealand for IML/IVV walks and then to Canberra, Australia for the first Oceaniapiad and the IML/IVV March Mingle/Aussie Peach Walks. Leslie also attended the 50th anniversary walks in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Leslie will be headed to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, on Wednesday, to attend the Canadian Volkssport Federation's biennial walking festival.

10. Committee Reports:

- a. **Award Recognition (Karen Kaufman):** Karen has submitted an article for the June issue of the Checkpoint, to start thinking about awards at the next convention. Send email queries to awards@ava.org.
- b. **Convention Committee (Jerry Wilson):** Jerry reports that he submitted a report and is soliciting members for the committee. The committee will start meeting in July and the AVA is working on the registration system. The hotel has been contracted.
- c. **Governance (Carol Giesecke):** There was no report. Working on recruiting new members. Hope to have a report for the next meeting.
- d. **IT (Mike Green):** A committee report was submitted.
 - i. Mike Green and Chris Zegelin introduced a proposed new website program, to assist clubs that don't have the ability to create a website to be able to have a web presence by using the my.ava.org website. This would be free for the clubs. It would be integrated into the club's walks on my.ava.org. It would have a home page, event list, calendar, and contacts. The home page would be configurable by each club. A non-techie should be able to figure it out. Chris would like the Board to ask their clubs if something like a simple website would be useful for the clubs. The proposed site would be free to the clubs.
 - ii. Mike Green advised that 66% of YREs are on the on-line start box. That seems low if we want to put walks on an app. It should be a





- high priority for the RDs to encourage the clubs to convert walks to on-line start box events.
- iii. Mike has responded to about 700 questions that were submitted to the IT committee.
 - iv. The new 2027 Special Programs have been posted to the AVA website for use in the 2027 YRE renewals now. The deadline for renewals is the end of August.
 - v. A website the AVA used for awards became unsupported. Mike was able to change the website and it now resides on members.avabiz.org and supports both avabiz.org and member.ava.org. The costs were covered by our \$5,000 grant from Microsoft.
- e. **Programs (Diane Evans):** Diane reported that 3 special programs have been approved by the committee and submitted to Henry for approval. They are: Historic Places of Worship, submitted by a club in Virginia; Craft Beer, submitted by Ron Jones; and Route 66-Celebrating 100 Years, submitted by SC_RD Terri Tyler. The Board of Directors no longer votes on these programs.
- f. **(Ad hoc) New Club Model Study (Holly Pelking):**
- i. Holly Pelking and Chris Zegelin presented information on the “New Club Model Committee Charter”
 - ii. Holly Pelking moved that we accept the Charter of New Club Model Committee. No second is required as it came from committee. The motion passed unanimously.
 - iii. The committee has come up with the term “Horizons” as a term for this new type up club. They chose it because it can reflect beginnings, and/or endings.
 - iv. The goal would be to allow clubs to be able to transition to a horizons club or from a horizons club to a regular club.
 - v. The club principle should be an AVA Associate Member.
 - vi. A Horizon club would not handle money. They won’t be able to hold Traditional or ACE events. All the money from the on-line start box would go to the AVA. The Horizon club would make no money and would have no expenses. The Horizon would manage the existing year-round events.
 - vii. We are hoping to keep the walks from disappearing.
 - viii. There will be no physical stamps/start boxes. All walks will be on the on-line start box. If there is a group walk, waivers would need to be signed. Group walks could bring in new walkers.
 - ix. We are identifying a few clubs that are close to closing and will experiment with them to determine the correct way to update the By-Laws and Policy Manual regarding Horizon clubs.
 - x. Because the club “principle” would be an associate member, they would be able to vote at conventions.
 - xi. We need to make sure that we meet the needs of the Horizon club volunteers, so that the club will succeed.





- xii. The AVA would need to close out the EIN and complete all IRS filing prior to converting it to a Horizon club.
- xiii. Henry would like to review the information provided and determine how to operationally convert the clubs and modify the By-Laws and Policy Manual.

11. Regional Director Reports or Comments:

- a. Carl advised that RDs that wanted to submit reports should send them to secretary@ava.org to be included in the draft minutes.
- b. MA_RD Bob Buzolich advised that the pre-registration for the Mid-America Walking Weekend is closed. You will be able to register for the walking events via the online start box. Registration is open for the Mackinac Bridge walk. Registration will close on August 17.
- c. NE_RD Carol Giesecke advised that the registration for the Boston 50th Anniversary Event on August 28 & 29 closed on August 1, 2026 and all are invited to sign up for the event.
- d. SE_RD Jeanne Stokes advised that registration for Walk Around Florida 35, an AVA 50th Anniversary event on November 6 through 8. Pre-registration needs to be postmarked before 10-26-26. Please check the websites for the Suncoast Sandpipers, the Mid-Florida Milers or The Happy Wanderers for hotel information. The rooms are going fast.

12. Member Comments (Deputy Directors & Guests) Time did not allow for comments.

13. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM MDT.

14. The next Board Meeting will be on September 17, 2026, 5-7 PM CDT, online via MS TEAMS.

