

## Minutes

AVA Board of Directors (BOD) Electronic Board Meeting (EBM)  
January 21, 2020

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. EST by President David Bonewitz.
2. All were present except for the North Central RD, who was represented by the DRD. Representing the National Office (NO) were Henry Rosales (ED), Erin Grosso, and Samanta Sanchez. Also participating were DRDs from Northeast and Rocky Mountain Regions, as well as Tim Miner, Chair of the Programs and Special Programs Committee. Brooke Snelling from Mass Media participated as a guest. A quorum was declared.
3. Minutes of the December 17, 2019, EBM were approved.
4. Updates from the Executive Director
  - a. Brooke Snelling, MassMedia (MM) Vice President for Client Services, briefed on work performed under the contract with AVA that goes through 2020:
    - Marketing plan created for remainder of contact
    - New logo and video for branding unveiled with standards for use
    - Website consulting performed
    - Two events promoted via Facebook:
      - U.S. FreedomWalk Festival, Arlington, VA, October 2019. The 2019 event showed a 39% increase in participant numbers over 2018. Facebook reached 150,000 people through targeted ads with 12,000 clicks on the ad, 2,100 indicated interest, 79 said they were going. There was an erroneous claim that USFWF did not collect participant information through interviews.
      - Our Lady of the Snows Walk in Belleville, IL, November 2019. Walker participation increased 402%. Facebook reached 100,000 with 13,000 ad clicks, 2,400 indicated interest, 140 said they were going. Interviews were collected with a third of the walkers. From those surveys, it was surmised that 52% of the walkers came from social media.

### Discussion:

MM is working with the ED to decide if they should continue promoting individual events or work more broadly to get exposure of AVA name, especially for National Walking Week (NWW) in April. Henry added that NWW presents an opportunity to change marketing focus from increased participation to increased awareness. Brooke and her team will consider what it will take to make the change.

Tom Baltes (NW RD) asked if there had been club training on use of Facebook for events, to which Henry said no. John McClellan (SE RD) pointed out that even those who click on "Going" do not necessarily show up. After years of using Facebook for events, he estimates about 1% of those indicating interest show up. Mike Green (AT RD) added that many people who click on the ads are already AVA, but an advantage of the MM approach is that they target those who have already expressed interest in the topic.

- b. Bylaws: Still working on bylaws changes and hoping to be ready by March.

c. Olympiad: Application submitted. The only other applicant pulled out, so the U.S. is the only applicant for 2023 Olympiad in San Antonio. The IVV Congress meets in Belgium in May, when the vote will take place. AVA is working with the San Antonio Visitors Bureau.

d. Element3 (E3) Health:

As reported in the Checkpoint, Element3 Health is considering working with AVA to increase walker participation through referral of potential walkers. These referrals are mostly from insurance policy holders, using exercise as incentive to reduce cost, so the concept is like Silver Sneakers. Clubs can expect referrals to trickle in rather than being deluged. Tom Baltes (NW RD) pointed out we need a way to validate participation especially for YREs. Erin Grosso (NO) replied that E3 is looking at how we do logging.

The details of dual membership in E3 and AVA are still being worked out, since we would not want to provide more benefits to those joining through E3 than we provide to our core membership. Also, the plan may call for some reimbursement to clubs if the E3 membership offers free walks. Clubs agreeing to accept referrals need to work on the E3 platform GroupWorks, and Henry would like to start up GroupWorks webinars again to get clubs trained.

Henry said the rollout would be in three phases. Phase 1 is for clubs ready to participate with a designated program POC, a POC who will handle reporting of referred members, and at least 3 activities per month (walks, meetings, socials, etc.) Phase 2 is for clubs who agree to the Phase 1 criteria but are not quite ready. Phase 3 is for working with walkers in areas without AVA presence. Henry added that the message has been in the TAW and three times in the Checkpoint. John McClellan offered the following as next steps: 1. RDs report on which clubs are ready for Henry to collect a list. 2. Clubs designate an E3 POC. 3. Clubs train on the GW platform.

e. Virtual Online Program (VOP): Although participant count is down by about 100, registrations have covered program costs. There have been rule changes to offset concern about participation numbers, with categories and trophies created for small, medium, and large groups. The groups have not been categorized yet while waiting for final registration count.

f. Big Give (Samanta): AVA is registered. Goal is \$80,000, and AVA wants committee chairs to create a peer-to-peer page to get donations, perhaps on Facebook or on the Big Give site. The match goal is \$30,000, and the Nancy Wittenberg (VP) asked Board members to contribute to the match. There could also be a regional challenge with a trophy. The VP said it was the Board's responsibility to fund raise, and she will contribute substantially toward the \$30K fund match. Board members should let Samanta know what they are contributing to the match. Tom Baltes mentioned that one member did a walkathon last year on short notice and raised \$800.

g. The club deactivation list was approved by acclamation.

h. The 2019 incident report noted a rise in the number of incidents, which are listed only if the injured party files a claim. AVA's insurance covers injuries but only if the person doesn't have insurance or after they have exhausted their own insurance coverage. Bob Buzolich (MA RD) noted that the main cause of injury is falling, which is often caused by inattentiveness. He recommends extra warnings about exposed roots and uneven sidewalks.

i. Texas Trail Roundup (TTR) International Marching League (IML) event is approaching fast. A press conference is scheduled for February 21 (Friday) at 1 pm, with San Antonio's mayor in attendance, and David will speak. Expect invitation from Samanta. The event will take about 20 minutes and transition into the opening ceremony. Henry is hoping for a parade of flags starting at 12:30 if he gets permits. If so, Erin will bring a school band and kids to lead the parade. After everything, there will be a reception. There will also be an open house at AVA all day on Thursday. Henry wants to set up meetings with the knowledge that this event will set the stage for the Olympiad. Also, he had a good discussion with local AARP and will try to do something at a national level with them, like getting AARP articles in TAW. John McClellan said we should try to get AVA articles in AARP magazine. Board members may be asked to host VIPs, and Henry is trying to get the E3 CEO there.

j. Crazy Horse. Nancy, David, and Carl will be at Crazy Horse to work. David advised Board members attending to arrive in the area by Friday and plan on staying through Sunday night. The event is Saturday and Sunday.

k. Budget.

Projected revenue is \$470,418 minus cost of sales of \$24,000, for gross revenue of \$446, 418. Projected expenses are \$501,435, for a net deficit of \$55,017.

There are some miscellaneous revenue streams through Cafe Press, Amazon Smiles, Goodshop (through goodsearch), etc. Over two years, total contributions have been about \$735. John McClellan noted that we have 10,000 club members but only 59 use the Goodshop. Need to get the word out through clubs and Facebook.

Chase Davis (Treasurer) stated that as Board members, we have fiduciary responsibility for the AVA. If AVA must dissolve, a court will look at each Board member's personal assets to make up shortfall for creditors. He urged the board to not take action on this budget and direct the AVA executive director to prepare a budget where expenses are less than or equal to revenues. Henry responded that AVA does have funds in reserve, which would be used for shortfalls. John McClellan said the NO has done a good job of trimming expenses. We need to focus on the revenue side. Erin Grosso added that one thing that would help is to encourage club members to become associate members. John replied that we need to keep the President's challenge in front of people.

Board action on budget. **Motion:** VP moved to accept the budget as stated. PA RD: second Vote: 9 yes, 4 no. Motion carried.

5. Discussions on National Walking Week (NWW) (Tim Miner)

The brand is National Walking Week (#NationalWalkingWeek). Tim puts out recurring reminders on social media to keep the effort in front of people. Very quickly we need a press release, a banner for social media, and declarations/proclamations from local and state governments. The goal is to produce a super event that maximizes local community support over the seven days of April 1-7. Tim asked the Board to consider NWW a short-term special program. His club will have a walk each day and ask for proclamations in the communities in which the walks take place. He has invited the Virginia Governor to appear at one. The club will use a Traveling Guided Walk stamp for areas in which volksmarches do not already exist.

The Publicity Committee will create a social media banner, and Hector may be able to create a special stamp. We should promote like OptOutside. Tim added that to engage organizations outside AVA, we should have a neutral website to encourage collaboration. Henry and Tim will work the website issue offline.

There is a declaration/proclamation template that can be used by others. Carl Cordes noted that most governments need at least four weeks' notice, so this is time sensitive. Bob Buzolich asked if we could get a proclamation signed by the White House. Tim responded that he would explore that idea. In the meantime, he is also working with the Centers for Disease Control. RDs and clubs can work on proclamations all the way down to local government levels.

The American Heart Association replaced National Walking Day with Month of Movement, so NWW will be unique to AVA and allows us to be an influencer. We need to collaborate with other major organizations, such as Walk America. Henry asked Tim to be the DC liaison to talk to people on the Hill.

David Bonewitz said we have a good start. We will go as fast as we can, but given the short time, some ideas may be deferred for the future. Not everything may get done this year, but we have to put in the energy to make it work.

## 6. Other

a. Henry: With respect to previous mention that accidents are mostly tripping and falling, and clubs need to warn participants, AVA could help by doing WalkAmerica's community walk audits that focus on identifying hazards.

b. In the past, the Board approved upcoming special programs in the January face-to-face meeting, which no longer occurs. David Bonewitz said under the new structure, approving special programs is a committee responsibility as a tactical or operational focus, so the strategic-focused Board doesn't need to approve. There are several ideas for 2021 special programs, but the Programs & Special Programs Committee has asked that new special programs link with partners outside AVA to widen influence. Programs for 2021 will be briefed at the next meeting.

c. Bob Buzolich urged updating Board and club policy. David Bonewitz agreed we are still trying to update governance documents, but we need to move forward.

d. Nancy Wittenberg asked what we can do about members and walks when a club is deactivated. As an operational issue, Henry will consider.

e. Board members planning to attend Crazy Horse, please e-mail David Bonewitz and Jerry Wilson. Those attending TTR, e-mail David and Henry. Expect to spend time to meet and strategize on club development.

f. Bob Buzolich asked when Board Committees would be filled. David acknowledged that committees need to be addressed and could be discussed at TTR. Henry added that time needs to be set aside at TTR to strategize about the 2023 Olympiad. David will bring examples from the Provence Olympiad.

7. Adjourned 12:08 EST. Next BOD meeting is Tuesday, February 18, 10:00 am EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Miner  
AVA Secretary