

## Minutes

AVA Board of Directors (BOD) Electronic Board Meeting (EBM)  
April 20, 2021

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. EDT by Board Chair David Bonewitz.
2. All were present, except for the Rocky Mountain RD, who was represented by the DRD. Representing the National Office (NO) were Henry Rosales, Executive Director (ED) and CEO; and Erin Grosso, Finance Manager. Also participating were DRDs from North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Pacific, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest Regions; Committee Chairs Jerry Wilson (Convention) and Tim Miner (Programs and Special Programs – Club Hosted); and guest John Burnham. A quorum was declared.
3. Agenda. Approved with one modification.
4. Minutes of the March 15, 2021, AVA Special Meeting and the March 16, 2021, Board meeting were approved by acclamation.
5. CEO Report, Henry Rosales
  - a. The Open House went well with press coverage throughout the day by the local TV station, radio stations, and newspapers. Henry will send his slides so attendees can access the links to the coverage. Part of the coverage included the 2023 Olympiad, with economic impact estimated to be \$5 million for projected participation of 3000.
  - b. Convention update
    - Decision was made at last meeting to keep our 2021 Convention in June.
    - 2019/2021 YTD comparison of registrations:
      - Full registrations: 150 (2019)/119 (2021)
      - Other registrations (separate walks, socials, etc.): 191 (2019)/53 (2021)
    - If numbers remain low, this Convention could result in a loss of over \$9,000. The breakeven point would be 160 full registrations and 880 “other.” Henry noted that Convention registration rates typically pick up in May and asked RDs to urge club members to register soon.
    - A bright point is that we have exceeded the number of room nights needed to leverage local grant money.
    - Safety. As of now, in Dane County (Madison’s location), 51% of the population has received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine. By June 1, 100% of those wanting the vaccine should have it. Expect to still need masks and expect some distancing.
    - Some sessions may be streamed, depending on cost. Larger workshops can be moved into the lecture hall, and when the COVID capacity is reached, doors will close.
    - Most dining options will be outside.
    - Spike Carlsen will be the keynote speaker. A former editor for *Reader’s Digest*, he is also the author of several books, including *A Walk around the Block*. Mr. Carlsen will have books for sale and signing.
    - Chris Mellen (NE RD) reminded everyone there is a deadline of May 1 to get reports for the program to Hector with copy to Henry.

- Erin Grosso (NO) noted that credentialing forms were mailed April 7. About 10 have come back, and they must be postmarked by May 31, or delegates will need to hand carry them to convention.

#### 6. Final Report on Governing Documents Approval

Both documents were approved by a strong margin, so both are effective immediately. Tom Baltes (NW RD) commented the voting report listed only 108 votes out of 200 possible. The Secretary reported that a handful of votes were removed, as some voters representing clubs did not appear on the roster of club officers, which was a requirement from the NO for this vote. The removed votes did not affect the outcome.

#### 7. Report on Madison Biennial Convention Plans, Jerry Wilson, Convention Committee Chair.

- Jerry Wilson added to the CEO's Convention update. In particular, full registrations continue to increase almost daily.
- In a setback, the Wednesday concert on the square has been moved over a mile away, making it difficult for participants to access carrying all their picnic supplies. Thus, the concert will be removed from the itinerary, and Wednesday will be a free night with many local options and the food and beverage forage walk. Jerry will coordinate with Erin on handling those who already preregistered for the concert. Tom Baltes (NW RD) asked if the Committee could hire a small musical group to perform on the square. Given the public location and the permits needed, Jerry was not optimistic.
- Walks are pretty much set up, though one start point had to be moved.
- Jerry is starting to populate the FAQ on the website.
- Lesly (AVA intern) will be posting more on Facebook. John McClellan (SE RD) stressed the need to post frequently on Facebook, and Susan Pinneke (NC DRD) added that Convention posts need to be pinned to the top of the Facebook page so they don't roll off the screen. In addition, the link to Convention needs to be prominently placed at the top of the AVA website.

#### 8. General Discussion on Board Transition

a. Board Chair David Bonewitz introduced guest John Burnham, who will facilitate the upcoming Board retreat that will include refining the role of DRDs and other aspects of the strategic plan.

##### b. Retreat information:

- Location: San Antonio, Texas – National Office
- DRDs will be asked to attend
- Travel Thursday, July 22 (early enough to make an evening social event), meet July 23-24 all day and evening, travel home Sunday, July 25 anytime
- Hotel: Henry will seek a block of rooms likely closer to the downtown office with a van to shuttle attendees to the meeting site
- Airfare paid (reimbursed) up to the usual limit of \$500.
- Hotel for three nights covered by AVA
- AVA usually covers one meal at which all attendees eat together
- All other expenses are paid by attendees
- Attendees note that the retreat focuses on working rather than walking

c. Transition: Nancy Wittenberg (Board Vice Chair) is expected to step into the position of Board Chair after the June election. She will meet with John Burnham to talk about the retreat, with a major focus on reviewing the strategic plan and another on defining the role of the DRD, especially with respect to sharing duties. She will also devote time to developing an experience matrix for the new Board. In addition, Nancy is concerned about the size of regions and the size of the Board. Given the strategic role of the Board, she may reduce the number of full Board meetings, as monthly meetings encourage discussion of operational issues that are the purview of the CEO. She would support an RD operational committee to hash out details on club operations rather than discuss those items at Board meetings. She emphasized that Board meetings should concentrate on policy issues to remain strategic. However, she plans to keep up with Board committee chairs frequently. Finally, she noted that for regular meetings, Zoom has been effective in keeping travel costs down.

d. Discussion

- Current Chair David Bonewitz noted that moving the Board toward a strategic level has taken time, and much progress has been made in the last eight years. Susan Pinneke (NC DRD) agreed, adding that the Board should move to fewer meetings given that strategy, once in place, does not change monthly.
- Ben McDonald (Member-at-Large) asked about an anonymous e-mail Henry shared with ideas for the future of the Board and suggested changes. Nancy replied the e-mail was a thought piece with one person's opinion and was not a proposal.
- Also on the anonymous e-mail, Mike Green (AT RD) disagreed with the suggestion to move event approval to the NO, which isn't up on local conflicts. Nancy reiterated that the anonymous e-mail was not proposals.
- John McClellan (SE RD) stressed that the Board needs to avoid setting a tempo that can be filled only by retired people, as some RDs work, and his current DRD has a full-time job. Nancy agreed, saying the Board meeting time should consider those still employed.
- Bob Buzolich (MA RD) pointed out the need to recruit people to serve. He knows of clubs with presidents that have served 20 years, and some state associations are removing term limits because they can't get people to serve.
- John McClellan noted that policy is a narrow definition of the strategic role. The Board's role is strategic engagement, of which policy is a part. The Board should work on setting priorities for the organization on a regular basis.
- Policy documents need to be updated now that the new Bylaws are in place, both the AVA (club) Policy Manual and the governing Board document (NEC Handbook). Carl Cordes (PA RD and Awards Committee Chair) said the Awards Committee has been working to update the awards section of the Policy Manual. Other committees that have unique sections should also work their parts.
- Speaking of committees, Bob Buzolich recommended making committee assignments at the retreat, so none fall through the cracks.
- Carl Cordes suggested sending out the experience matrix in advance so people can have as much as possible completed when the retreat starts.
- Chris Mellen stated he contacted each RD and DRD individually soliciting feedback. He compiled comments and sent them to Henry, possibly for sharing at the retreat.

- Henry thanked everyone who sent in input for this portion of the meeting. He would like to see the current Board leave recommendations, best practices, pitfalls, etc. for the incoming Board.
- David summed up that challenges are before the future Board, but they will have able leadership.

#### 9. Special Programs for 2022 and National Walking Week (NWW) results, Tim Miner, Programs Chair

a. Tim led off with the statement that how we present our organization to the world is strategic. In particular, from a strategic level, are we using NWW in a way that will present ourselves to the world? There were several comments relating to fear of publicizing events this year due to COVID, though Bob Buzolich reported he had conducted two RD events in eastern Kentucky that week. Participation was low with no locals, but he reached into a state with only one inactive club.

b. John McClellan pointed out it's a challenge for clubs to do NWW publicity when they can't even find people to run for offices. He lauded Tim for the guidance and products he provided: news releases, a logo, a template for getting proclamations. John noted how much traffic there was on the AVA Facebook page by people who hosted walks or participated in them and would like to get that kind of info on other fitness pages. Also, would like to get the AVA logo on other pages. David Bonewitz agreed, saying that to get a partnership going, the other organization has to recognize the value AVA brings. Tom Baltes added the challenge is to get national exposure of the idea of NWW and that any group can set up activities to support it. Finally, Bob Buzolich suggested pushing planning out to at least six months before NWW because of long lead times by localities. Carl Cordes added that RDs should poke clubs in 4th quarter while they are planning for the new year.

c. Tim asked the RDs for success stories for an article in the upcoming *The American Wanderer*. Butch Spaulding reported that during NWW, North Central Region hosted 6 events with 89 walkers. There were 32 new walkers that week and a traditional event held the Saturday after with more new walkers. Susan Pinneke recommended a national collection site of ideas, best practices, and participation summaries.

d. John McClellan offered kudos to Henry, who has been talking to the National Pediatric Cancer Foundation, which is putting AVA logo on their website. Tim added that the webinar on Wednesday, April 21, would feature Henry's guest, Lauren Nunn, Development Associate, National Pediatric Cancer Foundation. She will talk about inviting clubs to participate.

e. Upcoming 2022 special programs and partners.

- Rails-to-Trails, sponsored by Colorado Springs Walking Club (Sherry Sayers), and partnering with the Rails-to-Trails organization
- Town Halls, sponsored by the Peninsula Pathfinders (Sandy Croushore), partnering with National League of Cities

10. Other topics as needed

a. Erin Grosso: May Volkssporting Month patches came in with spelling areas. They will be redone, but they won't be available for awhile.

b. Henry Rosales: The State Association meeting at Convention will be facilitated by John McClellan. Also, the person who helped with the Open House will speak at Convention about how to get local publicity.

c. Mike Green: RDs and state associations must now go through my.ava.org. New RDs/DRDs should send contact info to Mike to get RD privileges and training.

d. John McClellan suggested having a kiosk at Convention where people can sign up.

e. Henry: Nancy Wittenberg has made a donation to support DRD participation in the retreat.

11. Next EBM Tuesday, May 18, 10:00 am EDT. Adjourned 11:48 am EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Miner  
AVA Secretary