



Minutes of the New Mexico Search and Rescue Council (NMSARC) Board  
July 15, 2019

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the NMSARC board was called to order via teleconference at 7:07 p.m. on July 15, 2019 by David Price, chair.

**Present**

Jon Hitchcock  
Maria McGrane  
Terry Ann Miller  
Ruth Ann Neal  
Ron Nelson  
David Price  
Tamar Stieber  
Larry Zentner

**Absent**

Erik Nelson

**Approval of Agenda**

◆ *The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.*

**Approval of Minutes**

◆ *The minutes of the previous meeting, incorporating changes made by Ron, David and Tamar, were approved with unanimous consent.*

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

ESCAPE 2020

- Ruth Ann will follow up regarding problems with invoicing and permission to use the facilities at Philmont.
- If the Department of Public Safety (DPS) can fund ESCAPE at \$6,000, the registration fee will not increase from last year. Ruth Ann will send a formal request to DPS on NMSARC letterhead after consulting with Bob Rodgers. Jon noted that it might be premature to decide on the price before seeing the 2019 financials. Ruth Ann agreed but said that the hope is not to increase the registration fee.
- Ruth Ann has contacts for live music from former ESCAPE chair Aimee Adamek and from Tamar.
- There was discussion about offering work scholarships for ESCAPE 2020 to take the burden off of board members. The topic was tabled for a later date.
- Ruth Ann noted that ESCAPE attendees start arriving Thursday, so it's critical to have personnel at the check-in desk early – probably by 1:00 p.m. Terry Ann noted

that personnel were at the 2019 registration desk in the morning. Larry said he could be there Thursday morning to set up tables and/or register people.

- Ruth Ann said she will talk to outgoing board member and Aimee about setting up. She will also ask Roberta Armstrong to volunteer again.
- Ruth Ann said she has some ideas about K9 training at ESCAPE and will discuss those with Terry at a future date.
- There was discussion about seeking help from Spenser Moreland, who organized most of the classes at ESCAPE 2019. The consensus is to use him as much as possible without burning him out.
- There was discussion about online registration. David said he's familiar with the process and is willing to take that on in 2020.
- Jon noted that ESCAPE is too much for one person to handle and suggested all board members do as much as possible to assist Ruth Ann. Maria suggested creating a list of ESCAPE duties and having board members sign up. Terry said it's a good idea and suggested recruiting non-board members to volunteer. Larry echoed that. Ruth Ann agreed and said she'll put together a list.
- Tamar suggested offering working scholarships. David said it has been considered in the past and that Aimee awarded a couple of scholarships in 2019. Ruth Ann said scholarships could require raising the registration. Maria said the fee is inexpensive and that raising it \$5.00 or \$10.00 wouldn't be a hardship for most people. David pointed out that lots of people attend because the price is low and that ESCAPE is all about training as many people as possible. Ruth Ann said DPS likes to keep the price low. Maria suggested asking for volunteers who will work for free. The topic was tabled for additional discussion at a later date.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Jon reported that financial activity was minimal and included the following:

- \$240 in additional ESCAPE fees for a first aid instructor who initially committed to teaching for free but demanded \$20.00 per student after classes began or he would not award certificates; and
- a \$50.00 annual software fee.

### YTD ACTIVITY

- The mapping program appears to be dead.
- Membership after ESCAPE 2019 accounted for more revenue than ESCAPE.
- There was a returned item charge.
- Sar Teams:
  - Some donations made in late December were returned as undeliverable in January, hence a credit in the donation field of the report. Total net = \$56.83
- Training:
  - Issuing 1099 forms to instructors is expensive and frustrating.
- Storage:
  - It costs \$3.00 per month to hold such items as projectors, tripods, merchandise (shirts, patches, decals, etc.) and banners. Larry noted that all could fit in someone's garage, but because of the high turnover of board members, the board decided three years ago to acquire a neutral unit that would roll over from year to year regardless of who is on the board. He said the board could look for someone who has access to long-term storage. Jon said the current unit is convenient and centrally located.

## 2018-2019 COMPARATIVE INCOME

- 2019 is behind, primarily because the council was the hotelier in 2018, which shot up revenues. If the three-year average income exceeds \$50,000, the board has to file a complex IRS Form 990. However, 2019 ESCAPE income was low enough to keep the three-year average under \$50,000, which eliminates the Form 990 problem.

## BALANCE SHEET

- The council received a \$50.00 PayPal donation at the end of the month from an undetermined source.
- The Capital One account has been closed. All funds are at Wells Fargo. Interest rates are low, so there's not much to be earned.
- Liabilities are zero.

## FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY OF ESCAPE, 2015-2019

- Jon reclassified financial support from the state as a separate line item that shows \$3,900 in support from DPS.
- It's unclear to what extent ESCAPE was receiving financial support from DPS in prior years.
- David said DPS did not support ESCAPE before 2018.
- Jon noted that with the increased income from oil fields, the state should be providing more money.
- One man was adamant that ESCAPE fees are too high
- There were fewer registrants in 2019 than in 2018, which caused revenue to go down, including for the silent auction.
- Terry said a lot of K9 people didn't go to ESCAPE 2019 because of the heat and because of conflicts with other events, which are plentiful that time of year.
- Jon suggested memorializing what was done right and what could be done better. The 2019 venue was fabulous but the date was problematic.
- Meals and entertainment will be a big item at Philmont in 2020. There are not as many places to eat in Cimarron. Managing lodging is a big burden.
- Printing and stationery are expensive.
- Bottom line: the council lost money with ESCAPE 2019.

## **Membership**

- Terry will send membership reminders.
- Dues are supposed to be in hand by December 31.
- There are two applications for review:
  1. High Desert K9 Search & Rescue; and
  2. an individual not affiliated with a team.
- The board does not rubberstamp applications. It needs to see a member's intention and capability to conduct business under the SAR Act and the SAR plan. Both of those documents are hefty.
- Bob Rodgers sends out a standard operating procedure that summarizes what he wants to see in a team.
- If the board receives an application from a team that is already experienced and responding to searches, then there's not much to discuss unless someone expresses concerns.
- High Desert K9 Search & Rescue has already been on some missions. The members are very experienced. Terry has trained with the team for about a year.

The team knows how to work the system, including getting on the callout list and making sure the team is called.

◆ *Larry made a motion, seconded by Jon, to accept High Desert K9 Search & Rescue's application for membership on the council. With no opposition or abstentions, the motion passed unanimously. Terry will notify the team.*

- There was discussion about the second application, which is from a young man in Española who is recently out of high school who is enthusiastic about joining the council. He is not on a SAR team.
- The NMSARC website doesn't have information on individual memberships.
- Individual membership tends to be for experienced people, such as incident commanders, who are no longer on a team.
- Terry will explain to the applicant that, despite his personal experience and enthusiasm, there's not much the council can do except help him join a team.
- Maria agreed and wondered why the council would allow individual memberships. David explained that they are for people who are retired after a long SAR career but still want to be connected, like an emeritus or alum.
- Maria thought there would be too many negatives, including how to do a callout for a mission. She thought it would set a bad precedent.
- Jon noted that the bylaws provide for individual memberships and wondered how the board could refuse to approve him based on that alone. Tamar concurred. There was general consensus that, based on the bylaws, the board cannot turn down a formal application from an individual.
- Maria suggested directing him to Santa Fe SAR, for which she is the membership chair. She thought it might be a disservice not to encourage him to work with a team.
- Terry noted that he wants to participate in SAR but is not interested in contributing to the council, which is one of the criteria for membership.
- He applied shortly before ESCAPE and received a lot of information but never followed up.
- Larry said he'd like to follow up with the applicant to share his own experiences in Junior ROTC and to encourage him to join a team.
- Terry noted that he is aware that he's not a typical applicant, but he didn't withdraw his application. He was ambivalent. She stressed the importance of providing guidance to young people interested in SAR.

◆ *Larry moved to table the application pending further discussion. Maria seconded the motion. With no opposition or abstentions, the motion passed unanimously.*

- David agreed to manage the membership page on the council website.
- Jon requested that renewal notices direct members to send payment by check to the council's post office box, which will allow for money to get into the bank ASAP. Terry suggested that this be brought up again in October.
- Larry said that direct deposits are working well, so he will continue to use the phone app to make them. He will scan all mail and send everything to the board to ensure transparency. He will check the post office box every 10 days.

## **Training**

- David said he submitted one training application. DPS agreed to per diem and mileage.
- Larry put in an application for air operations – for a subset rather than for full certification – to familiarize incident command staff with procedures. That, too, was approved. Larry said mileage and per diem is for incident commanders and section

chiefs only, who are ineligible for state reimbursement otherwise. Instructors will be reimbursed if they're with another organization. The training is posted on the website. Bob Rodgers will advertise it to the entire forum beginning in late August.

- David said there are quite a few other state-funded courses, though not necessarily through NMSARC. He noted that Tamar is working with Delinda VanneBrightyn of Taos Search and Rescue on a K9 training and that Maria has suggested a number of good training ideas. Maria has volunteered to operate as the council's training "go-to" person. It would be good to have other people on the Training Committee. The council has been pretty weak in organizing trainings other than at ESCAPE.
- Maria said she's willing to take on that role and is anxious for other people to participate.
- David noted that proposing more training ideas and getting people to put them on will make it easier to get funds from the state.
- Tamar suggested creating a request-for-proposals template with a checklist of what needs to be included in a training proposal. She and Maria will meet to discuss that further. Larry said he had submitted a template to be embedded in the council's website and was wondering who got it and where it is now. David said he has it.
- Larry said it's important to have a functional email for training purposes and that it needs to be distributed to appropriate people. David said he and Aimee were sharing that task and now he's doing it on his own.

## **Communications**

- Ron and Erik are updating the repeater list to put on the website. It's close to finished.
- They're working with Tony Gaier and Bruce Waggoner from Catron County on portable repeaters and put one together using radio tracking.
- They will get more involved with SAR topo mapping.
- They're buying a radio with APS (Internet streaming) capabilities and will be reporting on that to Marc Levesque. It will be the way most teams go in the future.
- New technology makes things easier and lowers costs a lot.
- They purchased 10 new digital radios for New Mexico Mounted Search and Rescue. The radios still need to be programmed. It will take a bit of work to get that done according to NM Mounted SAR specifications.
- The FCC requires adding digital permissions to the council's radio license. It's a minor change and will help move SAR into the future. It will not cost additional money if the license includes both analog and digital permissions.
- Larry asked whether the 10 Pelican case repeaters that Tom Bemis built about 10 years ago are lost. Ron said the DPS has them and that people can borrow them, though last time someone borrowed one, that person was asked to return it immediately.
- Larry noted that a repeater was badly needed for the mission in the Four Corners region, where an infant went missing. Although four repeaters were available, their location was uncertain, as was how to get them.
- Over the weekend, there was an unsuccessful search for a suitcase-style repeater that Tom Bemis constructed and for which Larry spent close to \$5,000. It's council property, and it's time to pull the repeaters back, put them on the bench, verify that they're working, repair anything that isn't working and make them available to the incident commanders.
- Ron said they can't be pulled back. Bob Rodgers should know where they are and how to get them. Someone should learn how to use them. They're expensive and rather large and heavy. The repeater he works with fits into a small ammo box.
- David said his team constructed one similar to Tony Gaier's. Larry said it's gone.

## New Business (cont.)

### OFFICER ELECTIONS

- ◆ *Jon nominated himself as treasurer. Terry seconded the nomination. With no opposition or abstentions, Jon Hitchcock was unanimously re-elected as board treasurer.*
- ◆ *Maria nominated Tamar as secretary. Ruth Ann seconded the nomination. With no opposition or abstentions, Tamar Stieber was unanimously elected as board secretary.*
- ◆ *Jon nominated David for chair and Larry for vice chair. Maria seconded the nominations. With no opposition or abstentions, David Price was re-elected board chair and Larry Zentner was elected board vice chair.*

### COMMITTEES

- Training:
  - Maria will be training officer. Tamar will assist. David will provide input.
- Mapping
  - Larry asked whether there is less demand for mapping. David said few people are interested in getting hard copies of maps that they use often in their districts and that the council does not have to devote lots of resources to that. While the council can draw up custom maps, buying a printer is not to its advantage.
  - Larry asked if the council owns mapping equipment, e.g., plotters, printers, paper, etc. David said Tony Gaier has given the council a great deal of equipment, and the council probably owes him some money, though he has never charged the council.
  - Tony Gaier had waterproof paper and that 5 percent of maps were printed on that. It looks like it might be poly paper and is as good as waterproof and significantly cheaper.
  - Larry asked to table the mapping discussion until the SAR community determines whether it wants mapping and whether the Mapping Committee is still warranted.
  - Maria said she took an operations section chief course in January, and participants wanted maps. Participants went on the NMSARC website, which said maps were not available. While she personally has an interest in continuing the mapping program, she's not sure the council has a good read on what the rest of the SAR community wants.
  - David said the council has received one written inquiry about maps since the program was suspended more than a year ago. He believes there would have been more orders if the program had been up and running. If the council can print custom maps cheaply, that might be worthwhile.
  - Maria asked if it's possible to get maps online and send them to a local printer. David said the maps come out as PDF files to be printed. Michaela Buenemann has designed and printed them.

## BOARD INSURANCE

- Ron thinks the board should have insurance so that the board is not liable if someone sues. He's surprised at how many insurance agencies don't offer it. He did get an application from one agency in Santa Fe that asked many questions, such as what the council does in terms of trainings, the possibility of injuries, etc. It cost \$600 a year. It was adamant that the council have a physical address.
- Maria said such insurance "is not worth the paper it's printed on."
- Ron said if someone sues, the council can still be stuck with legal fees, even with insurance.
- Larry said the topic has surfaced a few times, but the board never purchased insurance because the risk management consensus is that the board is at low risk of being sued. NMSARC only facilitates trainings. It is a loose association for the purpose of distributing information and offering fellowship. Except for ESCAPE, it's not legally responsible for assemblies. On a day-to-day basis, it does not own, direct or manage any risky operations. Previous boards chose not to purchase insurance.
- Jon said that for the past two years, the council purchased separate liability insurance for ESCAPE.
- Ruth Ann said liability insurance is included in next year's ESCAPE budget.
- Maria said people can still sue. In her past profession, one did not go without insurance. Insurance is reasonably priced.
- The NMSARC director cannot be sued.
- Larry said there are no deep pockets on the board, so individuals are not going to get sued. An event sponsor or an organization can be sued, but it's rare. Previous boards have looked at climbing organizations and the National Ski Patrol. They don't carry insurance. Teams are responsible for their own risk management.
- Ron said the information is useful. He would like to consider whether insurance covers everything the council does.
- Regarding organizing trainings, Maria said liability depends on who's interpreting that and how. She'd like to see a legal document showing that board members are not personally liable.
- David noted that over the history of the council, insurance would have cost close to \$30,000 by now.
- Ron suggested getting legal advice, including someone to guide the discussion. He said he would organize that.
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### **Adjournment**

♦ *There being no further business before the council, Tamar moved to adjourn the meeting, Larry seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m. by David Price, chair.*

### **Next Meeting**

The next general meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on September 19, 2019 via teleconference.

Minutes submitted by:

Tamar Stieber