



Minutes of the New Mexico Search and Rescue Council Board September 9, 2019

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the New Mexico Search and Rescue Council (NMSARC) was called to order by David Price at 7:00 p.m. on September 9, 2019 via teleconference.

Present

Jon Hitchcock
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.

Old Business

◆ Directors and Officers Insurance (D&O)

- Ron: D&O costs about \$600 a year. He is willing to put in the effort to get quotes.
- Jon: An open-ended policy will be a lot more expensive. Ron agreed, especially if the board sponsors trainings.
- Jon: Believes that in New Mexico, nonprofit board members and volunteers are held harmless provided they are not criminally negligent and there is no malfeasance. Ron made good points regarding liability and that litigation would ruin the council. The board has some protections, but despite that, mounting a legal defense would cost quite a bit of money.
- David: Imagines the board could find a lawyer who would work fairly cheaply.
- Terry: There are attorneys who are happy to help the council by working pro bono.
- Ron: It's not likely to find someone who will work pro bono to defend the board in a legal proceeding.
- Terry: Will talk to some lawyers about getting insurance, i.e., the risks in not getting it and what the law says.

- David: The board needs to determine what it might be up against before deciding whether it needs insurance and what kind to get.
- Ron: Will consult with insurance companies.
- David: Insurance companies just want to sell policies; a lawyer will know what will transpire.
- Jon: Filling out an application provides insight into how to evaluate the insurance.
- Ron: Has looked over forms and noticed that having employees and vehicles runs up the cost. One company has a version of liability insurance for omissions and errors, which would give the board a little bit of coverage.

◆ ESCAPE

Ruth Ann reported the following:

- **Funding**
 - The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is providing \$6,000 in funding for ESCAPE.
 - That will help offset the cost of printing.
 - It's important that the invoices come in.
- **Training**
 - Ruth Ann will meet with Spenser Moreland and Amy Adamek on October 5. Spenser is reaching out to people to host classes and has suggested an idea for the K9 track that is very attractive. Ruth Ann will discuss this with Terry and Tamar.
 - Ruth Ann has an idea for the keynote speaker and will contact a band suggested by Tamar.
 - Food is the most expensive item.
 - Terry requested more information about the K9 track.
 - Ruth Ann has a proposal that seems legitimate. She'll probably go with it.
 - She'll need help, at least to set it up.
 - Classroom sessions will run all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Field training will run Sunday morning. That way people working the K9 track can attend other trainings. She'll have a better idea after meeting with Amy and Spenser.
 - Terry: It's difficult to make everyone happy with the K9 field training.
- **Registration/Budget**
 - Jon: The council needs to refine the registration form to encourage members to confirm and pay for their rooms when they register so it doesn't turn into two different transactions.
 - Ruth Ann: That's a good idea. Perhaps people can get a five percent discount if they pay for their lodgings when they register. That could save hours of work.
 - Jon: Lodging is a straight pass-through, so rooms cannot be discounted or marked up.
 - There was general discussion about raising the registration fees, especially because ESCAPE 2019 lost money.
 - Ruth Ann: DPS is helping to fund ESCAPE and is encouraging the council not to raise the registration fees.

- Jon: DPS has to understand the council's issues.
- Ruth Ann: Raising the registration fee could jeopardize the DPS funding. Perhaps raise other fees.
- David: ESCAPE did well in 2018. Fundraising was down in 2019.
- Ruth Ann: The number of attendees was way down in 2019. Fundraising at the silent auction was down from the previous year because people didn't have time to go to a separate room to look at and bid on items. Holding the silent auction last year at Philmont in the same room as the registration desk really helped. The board will have to revisit where to hold the silent auction next year at New Mexico Tech.
- David: ESCAPE 2019 did not have the level of peer donations as in previous years. The first year he was on the board, there was a dedicated fundraising group that got \$3,000 to \$4,000 in gift certificates and money from places in town. ESCAPE slumped on doing that this year, but the board is not in dire straits.
- Jon: The council has been profitable in the past. This year marks the first loss the council has suffered since 2015. Operating at a loss shows the board is not being a good steward of resources.
- David: The counterargument is that the council accomplished what it's supposed to do at ESCAPE. It brought a lot of training at good value to the members. The council lost thousands, if not tens of thousands, of dollars when it hosted ESCAPE at Buffalo Thunder. Perhaps the board is overcorrecting. If it steps up fundraising, that could more than make up for a little bit of a loss.
- Jon: If revenue from ESCAPE 2020 doesn't make up for the shortfall, perhaps membership dues will help to break even. The council will have to budget for a payment to Philmont by the end of the year.
- Ruth Ann: The council has already put a deposit down.
- Jon: After checking the budget handouts, he concurred. The council needs a negotiated firm contract.
- David: The scheduled \$550 shortfall is close to breaking even. Revenue from ESCAPE should not be used to keep the council in the black.
- Jon: By the next meeting, the board should revisit the registration prices. The council also needs to get a better handle on Philmont's fees and perhaps mark them up one to two percent to compensate for PayPal fees. The council needs to be careful not to start out in the hole.
- David: If the council had adjusted for PayPal fees at ESCAPE 2019, it would be in the black.
- Terry: PayPal has a "friends and family" payment option.
- David: That might not be applicable because the council has set up its PayPal account as a business.
- Terry: PayPal fees could be folded into the registration fees at the time of payment.
- Jon: That would be good to do.
- David: You can't just add stuff to the cart. You have to do a separate transaction.
- Jon: Most people won't be set up to that.
- David: It would have to be set up in email and would require a lot of work.
- Jon: That could discourage people from registering.

- David: The council can offer people a cash discount if they pay by check. Otherwise, the council will add the PayPal fee.
 - Ruth Ann: Perhaps DPS will cover PayPal fees. She'll discuss it with him in October. Regarding donations, she will not have the time to be in charge of those.
 - David: Someone not on the board could handle donations. He knows one or two people who could help. It won't hurt to ask Bob Rogers about covering the PayPal fees.
 - Ruth Ann: That's part of the cost of running ESCAPE, which is why he might agree to pick up those fees.
 - Jon: The \$6,000 funding from DPS is much better than last year and is a big plus for the council.
- **Work/Study**
 - Tamar: Can the council offer a work/study program for a few ESCAPE attendees who can't afford the registration fee? That would take a big burden off board members. Perhaps those teams whose members pay their own way at ESCAPE can nominate one individual on their team whom they feel needs/deserves the help.
 - Ruth Ann: Not sure it's feasible at this point because it's not in the budget. She could look at the possibility, but the fees are so low already, and they include meals.
 - David: The board can revisit this after fundraising. After the registration fees come in would be a better time. The council is not in a position to offer scholarships to more than three or four people.
 - Ruth Ann: DPS is willing to pay to run ESCAPE. That's why the council pays for the facilities. And paying for food and individual stuff is a problem. It doesn't cost more to have more people.
 - Jon: The variable costs are meals and Philmont housing. That's what has to be covered.
 - Ruth Ann: Everybody pays for their own housing.
 - Jon: That's a consideration. That's half of the fee. There's no out-of-pocket cost to attend classes.
 - Ruth Ann: It costs \$72.00 per person for meals. There are no restaurants, so most people will be eating there. It's hard, but we could discount for that. Let's table it.
 - David: Write up a proposal, and we'll consider it when we're in a better position to understand the finances.
 - Ruth Ann: We don't want to create a financial strain.
 - David: But if we do good fundraising, we can offer a few scholarships.
 - Tamar: Requested additional information about delegating fundraising duties.
 - David: People in the community who are interested in contributing to SAR could spearhead a fundraising effort. He has a spreadsheet of those who have contributed in the past. Doing this closer to ESCAPE would be better, but it should not be left to the last minute.

Treasurer's Report

Referring to his budget handouts, Jon reported the following:

- Activity was minimal in July and August.
- Activity for the full year to date from various departments reflects no change from 2018.
- ESCAPE 2019 shows a loss of \$1,368.86 [P&L REPORT SHOWS NET INCOME OF +\$1,476.15]
 - Can generate a report to look at the total cost of each year's ESCAPE before it sloughs over two calendar years.
- Net expenditures to date are \$29,197.37 including:
 - \$2,200 thus far for ESCAPE 2020;
 - \$150 for field certification patches that Larry arranged to buy from Tony Gaier;
 - \$2.07, which is an occasional donation from Los Alamos;
 - \$36.00 per month for storage;
 - \$55.00 in postage stamps;
 - \$100 to the Attorney General to file an annual report;
 - \$1,100 in donations and disbursements to five SAR teams;
 - \$10.00 to the Secretary of State to file a corporate report; and
 - \$15.76 for filing a 1099 form through Intuit.
- Net revenue to date is \$-317.10 , including:
 - \$-725.38 in G&A;
 - \$39.00 for mapping, which has fallen off;
 - \$1,033 in membership dues; and
 - \$83.34 in the SAR team column due to a training change.
- 2019 reflects a net loss of \$317, compared to a net gain in 2018 of \$6,21.92.
- The balance sheet shows an increase, with a total of \$45,577 in reserves. We have the resources. The problem is with ongoing operations. This covers unanticipated contingencies that could wipe you out, such as what happened at Buffalo Thunder. The council needs this level of reserves.
 - David: That represents two years of operating costs.
 - Jon requested an extension to amend the report based on changes suggested by the board.

Questions/Comments

- Larry: The website domain costs \$228.
- Tamar: How much are membership dues? They're not on the website.
 - Jon: It depends on the size of the team.
 - Terry: \$70.00/\$50.00/\$35.00.
- Tamar: Is the annual net loss a trend or an anomaly?
 - Larry: It's a trend. It's a negative flow. Teams are getting smaller so there are fewer \$75.00 renewals. Many renewals are slipping into the \$50.00 category.
 - Tamar: Can we increase membership dues?

- David: Teams have to vote on that issue.
- Terry: That came out two years ago. We didn't increase dues. We changed the dues schedule to make it fairer to smaller teams.
- Larry: A re-examination would be prudent.
- David: Dues is not an overwhelming source of income. If we do ESCAPE right, the membership fees are secondary.
- Jon: David is correct. We had a net at Philmont of \$6,000 versus a loss at Socorro of \$1,369. Registration fell off almost \$300. The bid decline was the silent auction. So it just takes a few items to skew the results.
- David: It makes sense that there would be less money from the silent auction if fewer people attend.
- Jon: We'd better identify someone pretty quickly before the next board meeting to take on the silent auction.
- David: Same for outside fundraising.

Membership Report

Terry reported the following:

- She is updating the team liaison list.
- There are still teams available.
- Ron added himself as liaison to a couple more teams.
- Board members volunteered for the remaining committees, including:
 - Los Alamos Fire Brigade—Ruth Ann;
 - Santa Fe County Sheriff's Posse—Tamar;
 - Cibola Search and Rescue—Larry; and
 - Santa Ana—David.
- Terry will send the full updated list to David for the web page.
- Emails Terry has sent are not getting to the board.
 - Tamar has had the same problem.
 - David: It's possible that some accounts came off the board. He'll check on it.
- Membership information has disappeared from the website. The basics should be posted.

Questions/Comments

- David: It's close to the time for sending out renewals. It should be easy to re-enable that on the website.
- Terry: We usually do that in October. We're encouraging people to use the website more often.

Training Report

With the resignation of Maria McGrane, training chair, Tamar agreed to take over those duties. Tamar reported the following:

- She spoke to Bob Rodgers, who said there is plenty of money for training.

- She is considering:
 - creating a one-page checklist/bullet points explaining the information proposals must include; and
 - sending a request for proposals (RFP), to include the checklist and a sample proposal with budget, to all teams in the state and posting that on the NMSARC website.
- Tamar will act as the “middle layer,” i.e., receiving draft proposals and working with the proposers to get their drafts into proper form to send to Bob Rodgers for approval.

Questions/Comments:

- David: [Regarding an RFP], it’s a good idea in theory, but don’t get your hopes up. Without beating the bushes, there will be few responses. Better to keep in constant one-on-one contact. The NMSARC Forum is not the best place to do that. Consider the following methods:
 - approach people at trainings to see if they have ideas; and
 - encourage other people to do the same.
- Terry: You need to start with ideas.
- David: Put ideas together with people who can write them up.
- Tamar: Writing up proposals is very labor intensive, which deters people. Delinda VanneBrightyn from Taos Search and Rescue is working on a proposal that has gone back and forth many times.
- Terry: Responsiveness will go a long way to move this forward. There are instructors who were submitting multiple proposals and never heard back from anyone. This was before Sean McGann became chair of the Training Committee. Sean was submitting everything in the proper form.
- David: Based on Sean’s experience, you’re going to have to do a lot of outreach. Contact non-SAR groups, including:
 - Open Space;
 - International Guard; and
 - other groups that might want the opportunity to work with SAR teams.

Communications Report

Ron reported the following:

- Erik is working on updates to the ham repeater list. He removed some that are not working and added others for better coverage.
- There will be an app on the website soon with this information.
- They are working on programming newer-model radios that are good for search and rescue.

New Business

- ◆ Board Resignation

David reported that Maria McGrane said she didn't have time to commit to the council and tendered her resignation. Tamar is taking over. She will take on all training issues with help from the rest of the board.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the council, the NMSARC general meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. by David Price.

Next Meeting

The next NMSARC general meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

Minutes submitted by:

Tamar Stieber, Board Secretary