



NATIONAL SEARCH DOG ALLIANCE
Minutes of an Open Meeting of the Board of Directors
February 27th 2023
certified

An open meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Search Dog Alliance was held via zoom on Monday, February 27th, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm EST.

The following Board members were present and constituted a quorum:

President/Chief Executive Officer Terry Crooks	Chief Financial Officer Jan Meyer
Executive Vice President Amity Larsen	Corporate Secretary Gail Collins
Board Member At-Large Zephrin Allen	

Others present were: No members attended the meeting.

Old Business

Meeting Minutes. Chief Financial Officer Meyer made a motion to accept the minutes from the Open Board meeting held on 13-Feb-23, Board Member Allen seconded, passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report. Chief Financial Officer Meyer reported no updates since the last meeting

Program Reports.

Testing Program. Corporate Secretary Collins provided a report submitted by Testing Supervisor Gibson. Since 1-Jan-23, 25 tests have been proctored, 22 of those were in February and 15 of which were associated with a regional testing event in Emmett and McCall, Idaho. At the Idaho event, three Apprentice Evaluators were also able to complete their shadowing requirements.

President Crooks reported that there will be a regional testing event scheduled in Anchorage, AK in May for Land HRD and another scheduled in Libby, MT in June for Water HRD and Area tests.

Membership Program. Corporate Secretary Collins provided a report submitted by Membership Manager Ferguson. As of February 2023, NSDA has 500 members (18 teams with a total of 263 members; 237 individual members). There were 19 individuals that either joined or renewed their membership and 2 team membership renewals. Twenty-nine members have received notice regarding expired / expiring memberships.

Evaluators Program. Nothing reported.

Education Program. Nothing reported.

Communications Program. Corporate Secretary Collins reported that the photo contest was closed and that she had forwarded a set of selected photos for inclusion in the new website.

Website. Corporate Secretary Collins reported that the new website is currently undergoing beta testing by a selected number of participants. Thus far the feedback has been very positive.

Board Member Allen reported that he is working to move the podcasts to a free hosting site. The Board discussed opportunities for restarting the podcast program.

SAR Shop. Vice President Larsen reported that the vendor is working on the list of initial merchandise. A small number of items will be offered initially, with the ability to offer additional items as requested. The merchandise will be created on demand, so no payment is required up-front. President Crooks will forward the patches in his possession to Vice President Larsen and the log books to Board Member Allen.

Bylaws Review and Board Ethics. The 30-day comment period for the proposed amendments to the Bylaws regarding non-US citizens passed during the 24-Jan-23 Board meeting closed on 25-Feb-23; no comments were received.

Vice President Larsen reported that the Bylaws Committee had submitted draft proposals with regards to voting procedures. The Board reviewed amendments that were made to the Bylaws in September 2017 with regards to the removal of the Voting Regions. The Board also discussed reinstating election procedures - the current Board was elected in 2022 under special circumstances following the resignation of the previous Board, and all positions have currently been seated for less than one of their three year terms. Vice President Larsen made a motion that staggered election procedures be resumed in Fall 2024 with the formation of a nominating committee for a subsequent election for one or more positions to be held in Spring 2025. Corporate Secretary Collins seconded, approved unanimously. In the meantime, the Board will continue to work with the Bylaws Committee to make any necessary amendments.

Volunteer Survey and Suggestion Box. Nothing to report.

Appointments and Personnel. President Crooks reported that he is continuing to coordinate with interested members about vacancies. The potential for a Seminar Coordinator position has been tabled.

Apprentice Evaluator application process. President Crooks and the Board continued to discuss proposed changes regarding the Apprentice Evaluator application and approval process. The following revisions are to be implemented, and are to take effect April 1st, 2023:

- Elimination of the “Transfer” Principal Evaluator application process (i.e., individuals who are existing evaluators with other organizations). All candidates accepted into the Apprentice program will be referred to singularly as “Apprentice Evaluators” or “Apprentices” and will be subjected to one set of prerequisites and program requirements. In addition, revised the field test participation requirement for Apprentices to two (2) tests under the guidance of a Principal Evaluator. Both field tests must be under different Principal Evaluators, neither of which may be on the Apprentices team. Board Member Allen made the motion, Chief Financial Officer Meyer seconded, approved unanimously.
- Added requirement that Apprentices who have not previously certified with NSDA as a handler in the discipline for which they are applying shall successfully complete NSDA-certification within 6-months of achieving Principal Evaluator status. Apprentices who hold certification as a handler from one of the approved certifying organizations can apply for, be accepted into, and complete the program, but failure to achieve an NSDA certification will result in suspension of Evaluator status. Vice President Larsen made the motion, Chief Financial Officer Meyer seconded, approved unanimously.
- Added requirement for applicants to submit a Federal Identity History Summary (i.e., a Federal background check) from within the last 5 years. Chief Financial Officer Meyer made the motion, Vice President Larsen seconded, approved unanimously.
- Added requirement for applicants to submit a Letter of Reference from a deploying agency or SAR Coordinator; this is in addition to the existing requirement to provide contact information from a SAR/LE professional or other independent 3rd party who will provide a secondary reference. Chief Financial Officer Meyer made the motion, Vice President Larsen seconded, approved unanimously.
- Revised requirement that mock tests, actual tests, or a combination thereof are acceptable for Apprentice field tests, as approved by a Principal Evaluator. In addition, clarified that for Apprentices for Area, Area [live], Area [live with large source cadaver], and Wilderness Cadaver field tests are acceptable. Chief Financial Officer Meyer made the motion, Vice President Larsen seconded, approved unanimously.
- Elimination of the requirement to submit duplicative application form(s) for upgrading / converting to Principal Evaluator status following the completion of the Apprentice program. Board Member Allen made the motion, Chief Financial Officer Meyer seconded, approved unanimously.

Testing and Certificates. At the 13-Feb-23 Board meeting, the Board unanimously approved a motion to reinstate the requirement that all handlers seeking certification submit a Letter of Reference from a deploying agency or SAR Coordinator. The Board clarified that this requirement will take effect on April 1st, 2023.

Seminars. *Dallas, Texas Seminar.* Board Member Allen and Chief Financial Officer Meyer reported on their continuing work to develop a multi-discipline field seminar. The selected dates are November 30th to December 3rd, 2023 and a venue near Dallas, TX has been booked.

SAR Dog News Newsletter. Mrs. Snelling has notified the Board that she has sold the SAR Dog Newsletter to an outside third party. President Crooks will make contact with the new owner to establish a relationship.

New Business

Workspace for Evaluators. Corporate Secretary Collins reported that she had created a Slack Workspace and sent an invitation to all of the Principal and Apprentice Evaluators; thus far roughly half have joined. The intent is to provide a space for Evaluators to connect informally, coordinate, and discuss topics.

Testing Standards. Chief Financial Officer Meyer reported on ongoing work by ASB/NIST to revise standards for deployed dog/handler teams. The Board decided to wait until the new standards are published before considering potential revisions for alignment. President Crooks also reported that he has been working with an individual interested in potentially conducting an overall review of NSDA's standards.

Board Member Allen provided a review of certification standards for two organizations for consideration to add to the approved certifying organization list: American Working Dog Association (AWDA) and American Mantrailing, Police, and Work Dog Association (AMPWDA). Board Member Allen made a motion to approve recognizing the following certification standards, Vice President Larsen seconded, approved unanimously:

- AWDA: Wilderness Area Search and Wilderness HRD Land Type III
- AMPWDA: Airscent Live Find and Human Remains Detection Land.

Member questions/comments. No members attended the meeting.

The Board will hold an open business meeting on March 12th at 7:30 pm (EST), followed by a closed Executive Session if required. Members interested in joining should send an email to Secretary@n-sda.org no later than March 11th. As there was no further business, a motion was made Board Member Allen, seconded by Corporate Secretary Collins to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm EST.