

Attendees:

Ben McCandless
Joe Ray
Matt Benson
Chris Ruch

By Proxy

Jennifer Kelley (proxy to Matt Benson)

Absent:

Don Scelza
Keith Conover
Scott Jackson (proxy to Don Scelza)

Minutes taken by Chris Ruch

- *There is not a quorum present, so the meeting was not called to order and no voting or business will be conducted, just discussion and brainstorming.*
- Relations with MARG
 - The relationship with MARG is strained, with a number of symptoms such as:
 - They did not respond to invitations to participate in AMRG's cave rescue training this month or the joint FTM weekend with NW several months ago.
 - The canine incident between a MARG handler and an AMRG handler
 - MARG nearly backing out of co-hosting the AGM
 - We had a lengthy discussion about the causes and potential ways to address it
 - Matt, as Executive Director will reach out to Paula at MARG to discuss and get more information
- AGM canine biting incident
 - It has been 3 months since the incident with the canines at the AGM has been reported to the AMRG Board of Directors, but no action has been taken. Members are asking what has come of it and the Commander is waiting for a response to the written report.
 - All agree that there should be an official Board response and the Board should take responsibility for the investigation and communication of the outcome , though it wasn't clear what the outcome should be and the whole Board needs to weigh in on it.
 - Matt is to write a motion suggesting next steps for the Board
 - Joe suggested that we create a new policy that will specify the timeframe that the Board will take action when complaints are forwarded to it.
- Board Member communication and roles and responsibilities

- We had a long discussion about how we can do better as a Board communicating with each other, particularly around contentious issues.
 - Two main issues were discussed:
 - It is sometimes not clear what the background or motivation for some policy change proposals is or why they are being made
 - There is tension and conflict within the team between people who come to many trainings and PR events and those that don't. Both team members and Board members.
 - Proposal: Create a standard template for new policy proposals that includes the background and intended outcomes. This should be in google docs or something similar and we should track changes there, instead of lengthy email exchanges. Ben has a minor policy proposal around the background check policy that he will submit in this new way as a test.
 - Proposal: We need a job description for Board members and what is expected of them in terms of participation, access, communication, skills, etc. Chris provided an example of another organization that has this. Since our bylaws have two type of Board members (certified and not certified) we should have a job description for each one.
 - Proposal: Joe proposed that we make Board meeting minutes public so that the team has a better idea what we are doing. All agreed in principle, but we needed to be sensitive to personal and disciplinary information. So something along the lines of a Board meeting report, rather than the unedited meeting minutes.
- Direction and feedback for officers:
 - The Executive Director said that he doesn't know how the Board feels about the job he is doing and that the Board has not provided goals.
 - We told Matt he is doing great and we are happy with the job he is doing. One area for improvement identified was more focus on fundraising/grant writing.
 - We also agreed that we should provide better directions and specific goals for the Executive Director. Things like fundraising/grant award goals, target # of PR events, target # of new members, etc.
 - This isn't just confined to the Executive Director, the other Administrative officers also need direction and oversight. Examples were ASRC, PSARC, MRA reps, making sure we are represented at meetings and the Board should be giving them issues that are important to the team to talk about with the umbrella organizations.
 - Also talked about direction and goals for the operational officers. Earlier this year we started quarterly meetings with the operational officers to talk about training plans, number of trains, track progression of members getting certifications, etc. But more needs to be done here -- Joe said he would like more direction as the Vertical Training Officer

- A general comment that came out of the feedback discussion:
 - AMRG as a whole does not do a good job of providing positive feedback to its officers. People hear much more negative feedback than they do positive. We need to do a better job on how we provide feedback.