

## 2014-04-07 AMRG Board Meeting

Present: Ben, Chris, Keith, Matt (Scott's proxy), Jen, Don, Joe.

### 1. Board officer elections

- Board President
- Vice-president
- Secretary

Nominations:

- Don for Chair (Keith, Ben)
- Chris for Vice-chair (Keith, Joe)
- Jen for Sec (Ben)

**Slate unanimously passes.**

### 2. Determine the Board meeting schedule for the year

- There is a proposal from the Officer Meeting to move to bi-monthly Board meetings and to hold them on a different night than the regular group meeting/training to allow more time for discussion.

**Moved: Meeting to be the 3rd tuesday of every other month, starting June 2015, Interim meeting to be determined. Don will work out arrangements.**

**Unanimously passes.**

### 3. Fellowship Nomination vote for Ken and Heather.

- See the [full nomination document](#)

**Keith moves, Ben seconds**

**All in favor, except Matt abstains on behalf of Scott**

### 4. Review and approve budget

- Executive Director will present basic budget

**Moved: Approve once funding for canine insurance fund (\$2287.19) and professional development fund (according to previously accepted plan), and a grant budget shall be prepared**

**Passed unanimously**

- Associated discussion items to discuss are:
  - Approval of larger purchases, including jackets and other equipment

**No action on this at the moment - added to the agenda for the next meeting.**

- What to do with the donations from the Kochu family

**Discussion about what happened with recent training.**

**Keith - It looks inappropriate that we accepted money after training at a location requested by the family. Note: letter specifically mentions us searching north park.**

**Moved: check to be returned with an appropriate letter.**

**Aye: Ben, Keith, Don, Joe**

**Abstain: Jen, Chris, Matt**

- Proposal to provide all new members with an AMRG t-shirt once they pay their dues.
  - We stopped buying FTM manuals for new members at the beginning of the year, but we did not adjust the dues amount.
- Approval of fundraising/grant activities to support the purchases
- Discussion of a [corporate sponsorship proposal](#) from Amanda and what AMRG is comfortable doing in terms of recognizing donors.

**No action taken to address the above - added to the agenda for the next meeting.**

5. Keith: Ken was removed from Board email list prior to April 1st, cutting him out of board discussion. Heather has requested a disciplinary hearing.

**Keith Moved: Institute disciplinary hearing against Chris Ruch for removing Ken Chiacchia from the board email list prior to the end of his term. Ben seconds.**

**Aye: Ben, Don, Keith,**

**Abstain: Chris, Joe, Matt, Jen**

**Motion to adjourn (Ben, Keith) Unanimous.**

**Remainder of agenda will be taken up at the next meeting.**

1. Outstanding Budgeting proposals:
  - Approval of larger purchases, including jackets and other equipment
  - Proposal to provide all new members with an AMRG t-shirt once they pay their dues.
    - We stopped buying FTM manuals for new members at the beginning of the year, but we did not adjust the dues amount.
  - Approval of fundraising/grant activities to support the purchases
  - Discussion of a [corporate sponsorship proposal](#) from Amanda and what AMRG is comfortable doing in terms of recognizing donors.
2. Update on the status of AMRG's Pennsylvania Sales Tax Exemption renewal
  - Scott and Chris to update on the renewal process
3. Canine Training Standards proposal

4. See the [full nomination document](#)
5. New PA state background check requirements for working with children
  - There is a new state law that went into effect on December 31 and that AMRG needs to be in compliance with by July 1st regarding background checks for people volunteering with children, as well as mandatory reporting requirements and mandatory training for healthcare providers.
  - Details of the new law are available at:  
<http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/forchildren/keepkidssafepa/index.htm>
  - And a new portal to manage the background check process and trainings will be coming up in a couple days at:  
<https://padhs.blob.core.windows.net/cwisselselfservice-maintenance/index.html>
  - This clearly has some impacts for us. All of our members who are EMT's and above are definitely covered by the mandatory reporting requirements and will need the training. Its not as clear for our members who are not DOH certified, but it looks to me like all of our members could be considered as mandatory reporters, so we should probably add this 3 hour class to our CQ requirements.
  - For the child abuse clearances, that is less clear for how it impacts us. It seems that people participating in our Hug-a-Tree program and dog visits in schools and pre-schools are going to be required to have the full child abuse clearances now. For our work outside of schools and child care situations, it is not clear that full child abuse clearances are legally required. But having different levels of background checks required for our members may be more trouble than its worth. The full child abuse clearances will cost about \$30 more per member than our current \$10 state police background check.
6. PSARC has entered into an agreement that will allow AMRG to nominate several people to become NASAR instructors/evaluators. Possibilities include
  - 2 SARTech Evaluators
  - MLPI Instructor
  - Canine SARTech Evaluators
  - We need to discuss how we will select and nominate AMRG members for these positions

*(Additional items to address, if there is time.)*

7. Board voting procedures
  - AMRG currently does not have a policy allowing the Board to vote by email. There is has been a growing uneasiness with the amount of business transacted by email and speed at which new policies are being approved. The proposal is to stop all email voting.
  - Additionally, there has been discussion about establishing timeframes for how long before meetings policy proposals must be submitted for consideration at Board meetings and Group meetings -- 2 weeks has been suggested.

8. From the Officers meeting a proposal to change the format of the monthly meetings will change to remove the vast majority (all) of what was done as the business meeting and spend almost the entire time on training.
  - The Bylaws require a business meeting every 3 monthly. Proposal: “Effective after the April 2015 regular Group meeting, future AMRG group business meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of March, June, September, and December. The group will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of every month, but the focus of these meeting will primarily be training, not Group business. Consistent with the Bylaws, the Executive Director may call special Group meetings on the training nights to conduct specific business if needed (such as membership and certification votes).
9. Update for board liaison positions
  - Two of the board liaison positions are currently vacant (Training and Cave)
  - The board members in the two remaining positions (Canine and Vertical) have questioned the need or value in continuing to have the liaison positions
  - Have the liaison positions/transition plans met their goals?
    - What has the feedback from the membership been on the liaison and transition plans.
    - What have the effect of the transition plans been? Have they encouraged or discouraged participation by our members.
    - Effects on the election. Compare turnover of elected positions with transition plans to those that do not have transition plans.
    - Should this program be maintained, modified, discontinued, or extended to additional positions like Commander, Ops Officer, Board members, etc?
10. Update on Canine Bite Reporting/Aggressive Behavior policy
11. New member attendance policies
  - There has been various discussions via email about changing the attendance for new members, and canine handlers in particular.
12. Policy procedure to allow operational canine handlers from other teams join AMRG
  - There are certified operational dog handlers from several other teams who are regularly attending our trainings and may be interested in leaving their current teams and joining AMRG (there are a variety of reasons for this, best talked about in person).
  - However, our current policies do not provide a clear path for doing this. Our policies are all built around a brand new member joining and developing all of their skills and certifications over time. For a certified operational handler who can already respond to searches and who AMRG already calls in for and fields at searchers, we have no way for them to actually join our team and keep their operational status, largely because of the minimum 1 year of AMRG membership before being able to be an operational dog handler.
    - Proposal: Individuals who, at the time of applying for AMRG membership, are already currently operational canine handlers with

another team, may become temporary operational canine handlers with AMRG if they meet the following requirements:

- Meet all normal AMRG membership and Callout Qualified requirements.
  - At the time of applying for AMRG membership, are already currently operational canine handlers, with a valid external canine certification recognized by AMRG and a valid PA DCNR Field Team Leader (FTL) certification.
  - Receive the recommendation of the AMRG Canine Officer and be proposed to the Membership
  - Receive a majority from the Membership at a regular or special group meeting
- The temporary operational canine status will be valid for one-year, and the individual will be treated as a normal operational handler during that time. By the end of the year, the handler must complete all of the canine checkoffs needed for their canine specialty and successfully achieve AMRG/ASRC FTL certification. Upon meeting these criteria, as verified and documented by the AMRG Canine Officer, the individual will become a normal operational canine handler. Failure to meet these criteria by the one-year deadline will result in the individual losing their operational status.

13. Discussion about 3/24 officer's meeting.

- General evasion when Paul asked what problems were attempting to be addressed by new policies (verbal vs emailed communication)
- General ineffectiveness of board at addressing issues promptly
- Remarkable level of discomfort among attendees.
- Analysis of institutional trust in AMRG leadership.