

Meeting Minutes

Governor's Snowmobile Advisory Council

February 10th, 2023, ~ Holiday Inn & Express, Spearfish, SD

Call to Order

Chairman Bruce Hintz called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Dave Kennedy, Bruce Hintz, Todd Sprang, and Gary Ulmer.

Members Absent: Todd Wilkinson, Al Nagel, Scott Erstad

Game, Fish and Parks Staff Present: Al Nedved, Matt Snyder, Shannon Percy, and Ryan Raynor.

Adoption of the Agenda

Kennedy made a motion to adopt the agenda as proposed. Sprang seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Approval of the Minutes

The meeting was cancelled in November which coincides with the state snowmobile convention. No minutes to approve.

Master Planning Update

Raynor gave a brief update stating the group has met 3 times, including prior to this meeting to discuss a wide range of topics. Topics discussed so far included a SWOT analysis, revenue, and expense history of the life of the program including other budgetary statistics and a discussion about the Black Hills.

Legislative Update

Raynor stated no bills have been introduced that could impact the statewide snowmobile program.

Black Hills Update

Percy stated things have been going very well with four to five feet of snow dropping at the beginning of the season. Southern traffic has been slow due to low snow conditions, and he's had a few operators either quit or get hurt at home which has made him short staffed. He is currently trying to hire operators to fill those vacancies.

Percy stated his traffic counts are way up in comparison to last couple years through the month of January. In 2021 we had 13,712, in 2022 we had 3,876 and this season our numbers are up to 17,400.

Percy talked briefly about equipment issues and stated we are having issues with the DEF system. This is all warranty work that Cummins will be coming up to address.

Percy also reminded the group about the 2nd tucker coming this fiscal year due to some additional funding through RTP. That groomer will most likely come in around April.

East River Update

Raynor stated it's been a phenomenal year on the eastern side of the state. All trail systems have been grooming weekly rotations for over a month now and even in places that historically don't get much snow like the southeast or central part of the state, have great snow conditions.

Raynor stated with all this snow comes its frustrations as well. Multiple groomers have been down for weeks at a time including front differentials going out and groomers getting stuck. Many sections of trail have been destroyed due to townships, cities and DOT plows clearing snow from road shoulders as well. Clubs have done a great job keeping up with smoothing out these areas, but it is challenging.

Finally, Raynor stated he's received a lot of feed back from clubs about reimbursements rates through the Grant in Aid program. Raynor stated just today, he received two text messages that if certain rates don't go up, a club could start losing groomer operators. Raynor stated over the 15 years he's been in the department; those rates have only been increased once. Raynor stated he will plan on providing a variety of information of different reimbursement rates and how that would impact the budget to the council prior to the May meeting, so it could be discussed and then hopefully approved at the August budget meeting.

SDSU Veteran's Affairs Snowmobile Ride

Raynor reminded the council this event has now been going on for 6 years. Unfortunately, only 3 out of those 6 years, have they hosted the ride portion. The first year, it was to late to rent sleds, so staff met with the group at Hardy Camp. The 4th and 5th year were cancelled due to covid in 2021 and low snow conditions in 2022. The group was very excited to be back and getting on the trails.

The day was beautiful with trails holding up and no accidents to report. Raynor thanked the Brookings club for coming up year after year to help support the event and ride to make sure the number of snowmobilers matches equally the number of new riders in the group.

FY 23 Budget Review:

Raynor shared a budget summary with the council which showed expenses through January 31st, 2023. **Total expenditures** for the snowmobile program totaled **\$583,830** out of \$1.4 million budget authority.

Raynor shared the following information breaking down by category and over a 4-year period.

FY 23 Snowmobile Expenses as of 1-31-2023				
	FY 20	FY21	FY 22	FY 23
Salaries & Benefits	\$133,733	\$141,639	\$118,219	\$222,076
Travel	\$13,219	\$20,478	\$14,851	\$17,527
Contractual Services	\$42,389	\$20,384	\$67,118	\$35,730
Supplies & Materials	\$95,490	\$60,358	\$58,465	\$135,993
Grants	\$53,011	\$50,678	\$41,517	\$50,830
Capital	\$93,729	\$204,231	\$77,484	\$121,674
TOTAL	\$431,571	\$497,768	\$377,654	\$583,830
FY 23 Snowmobile Revenue as of 1-31-2023				
	11,623	10,869	9,735	
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Gas Tax	\$406,805	\$380,415	\$340,725	\$339,920
License Fees	\$52,028	\$60,597	\$45,470	\$42,465
3% Excise Tax	\$79,400	\$109,422	\$70,078	\$58,854
Interest	\$21,585	\$24,152	\$15,635	\$8,431
Other	\$7,902	\$6,295	\$9,656	\$16,308
Total	\$567,720	\$580,881	\$481,564	\$465,978
(\$117,852)				

FY '23 Revenue Report:

Along with the expense report Raynor gave a review of revenue received through January 31st, 2023, which is shared above.

Raynor stated even with the great snow conditions across the state, we just aren't seeing the revenue trickle in like we normally would. After some discussion, it was agreed that the excise tax being down was due in large part to a lack of new sleds available at the dealerships.

As things sit at the end of January, the program had spent more money than it brought into the equivalent of \$117,852. Raynor stated a lot more time to spend money and earn money before the season ends so he expects that number to change.

Safety & Accident Report

Raynor stated 1 accident has been reported east river so far on the trail. Unfortunately, two fatalities have taken place on a snowmobile, not on the designated trail, but was on public property. 1 took place on a lake and the other on a highway.

Percy stated we've had 13 accidents so far reported, but for the most part no serious injuries.

Raynor mentioned to date, no safety courses have been reported and 5 people have been certified online.

Governor's Snowmobile Ride

Percy and Raynor gave a brief review of the plans involved with tomorrow's ride. Percy shared the map and the route and reminded group leaders about staying on the trail checking on their people as they get to trail junctions.

Raynor reminded group leaders about helping to set up the registration area, pick up snowmobile rentals and discussed other logistical matters.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 6th, 2023, at the Capitol in Pierre.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Nagel and was seconded by Ulmer to adjourn at 6:27p.m.

Motion Carried.