# **Meeting Minutes**

Governor's Snowmobile Advisory Council February 15, 2019 ~ Holiday Inn Hotel, Spearfish, SD

## Call to Order

Chairman Gary Ulmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

#### Roll Call

Members Present: Bruce Hintz, Dave Kennedy, Al Nagel, Russ Johnson, and Gary Ulmer.

Members Absent: Todd Wilkinson, Scott Erstad

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

# Adoption of the Agenda

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

### **Approval of the Minutes**

A motion was made by Nagel and was seconded by Johnson to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2018, meeting. **Motion Carried.** 

# **Public Comment Period**

No comments were made during this meeting.

# **Legislative Update**

Senate Bill 91 was a bill that impacted public meetings that take place with all state agencies and advisory groups or commissions. Raynor stated this particular meeting has already been practicing the items that were updated in this bill. Those practices include posting meeting minutes and agendas to a Commission and Boards website for public to view and having a public comment period during these meetings.

The last bill Raynor discussed was Senate Bill 110 which proposed to increase the amount of Gas Tax to all SD counties from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million. This bill did not leave committee and was deferred to the 41<sup>st</sup> day.

## **Black Hills Update**

Percy gave a brief update on the snowmobile season stating it had been a busy and crazy season so far. The leased sleds came in later than normal along with the new Sno-Cat which had come in mid-February. Percy stated he had to close trail 5T recently due a sink hole that had formed in the middle of the trail. Percy will be working this summer with Wharf to try and fill this in, or reroute around this cavity.

Unfortunately two more differentials had recently gone out. Percy stated he's just dumbfounded as to why this keeps happening and stated they are switching back to 4:10 gears. Kennedy asked what the issue is and what brand of differentials are you using? Percy stated we currently have all Dana brand differentials and pinon bearings are heating up and failing. Both Percy and Raynor stated the customer service of Track has been adding to the frustrations as well. GFP hopes to have a conversation with Tucker Manufacturing this summer about the poor service.

Percy also discussed how the new cat arrived with differential locks. Differentials were not spec'd by GFP as we have a major concern that serious damage could be done by an operator who fails to operate the differentials appropriately. Percy stated the state will not be paying for the differentials and it could be decided that Track wants to remove this option from the groomer. More discussion about locking differentials will take place later in the agenda.

#### **East River Update**

Raynor stated this season has also been a major challenge for clubs and groomer operators. Most Sno-Cats did not run the previous year and some have gone multiple years, without turning a track. Adding to this were deep drifts with no trail base as the first snow hit over the holidays, colder than normal temperature and high winds that always came with the falling snow. Raynor stated the groomer operators have worked tirelessly to keep the trails groomed and have done a great job, tackling an impossible task with weather conditions. Raynor shared a series of photos detailing the major breakdowns groomer operators had seen, including a track where 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of it ripped off, a groomer that got stuck in a slough, and a groomer that hit a solid chunk of frozen mud that forced the track and carrier system to go vertical.

Raynor gave Jim Weaver, groomer operator from the Aberdeen Snowmobile club a chance to discuss his concerns with grooming in the conditions they saw this year and whether or not lockers should be considered. Jim shared his experiences of getting stuck over and over and how it's tough to maintain trails when the deep drifts exist without a trail base. Weaver stated lockers put on by Track would cost around \$6,000, or \$4,000 if he installed. Weaver stated he really didn't see any issues after the trail base was established but wanted to know if lockers were a possibility in the future to help alleviate these conditions. Both GFP and Weaver agreed getting lockers would be expensive and scares operators and managers because of the damage that could be done with inexperienced operators. After further discussion both the council and GFP agreed the conditions we seen this year, are for the most part, uncommon and that no further action was necessary at this time.

#### SDSU Veteran's Affairs Snowmobile Ride

Raynor shared with the council a thank you letter written by Connie Johnson with the SDSU Veteran's Office. The thank you is copied and pasted below.

Thank you so much for all you have done and all the collaboration efforts from everyone with the snowmobile Association. I want everyone know to know about the wonderful impact this is doing for South Dakota.

- 1. We had 9 Army Veterans, 5 Marine Veterans, and 9 service members who are still serving through National Army or Air Guards. All of the veterans that came with us have been on a deployments to countries of Iraq, Afghanistan, Poland, and Syria. In some cases for some of them, multiple times. The veterans that were serviced on this retreat have awards such as Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbons, Navy Achievement medals, Sea Service Deployments Ribbons, Army Accommodations Medals, and Combat Infantry badges just to name a few.
- 2. While one group was sledding the other group was meeting with mental health provider, Jessica McLaughlin MA, LPC-MH, QMHP (Iraq War Veteran), and 2 veterans that had met with her asked for follow up regarding their mental health once back on campus. That is huge!!
- 3. We had 100% positive feedback regarding the event.

Our mission is to continue changing the lives of veterans through outdoor activities and finding available means to do so. This retreat idea won the best session for the South Dakota Higher Education conference and was presented at the National Level for the Military Connected Symposium for NASPA and we shared specific information to 4 universities across the country.

Thank you ALL so very much for everything you have helped to make this possible!!!

After further discussion, the group agreed it was an event that we were all proud to be a part of and look forward to next year.

# FY '19 Budget Review:

Raynor shared a budget summary with the council which showed expenses through February 02, 2019. **Total expenditures** for the snowmobile program total **\$421,448** out of \$1,312,098 budget authority.

- Salaries and Benefits \$152,046
- > Travel \$4,231
- ➤ Contractual Services \$52,157
- ➤ Supplies and Materials \$104,342
- Grants \$46,676
- Capital Assets \$61,996

Raynor stated a large chunk of expenses still hadn't come out of the budget since we just received the groomer for the year. If you include those figures, Raynor stated our expenses line up closer to our revenue earned which was just over \$530,000

# FY '19 Revenue Report:

Raynor gave a brief review of revenue received through January 31st, 2019:

- Gas Tax \$382,935 (10,941 registered sleds for FY19 which runs July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019)
- ➤ License Fees \$54,559
- > 3% Excise Tax \$78,445
- ➤ Interest \$13,249
- > Other \$9,088
- > Total \$538,276

#### Safety Report

Raynor mentioned 16 accidents had been reported with 3 fatalities, one of which was a heart attack. Raynor stated of the accidents 10 were rental sleds. Percy mentioned that 3 more reports had recently came in which gave us a total of 19 accidents to date.

No snowmobile accidents have been reported on the eastern side of the state.

Raynor mentioned that a couple safety courses had taken place but hadn't received any certificate requests from any clubs yet.

#### Governor's Snowmobile Ride

Percy gave a brief description of the ride selected for tomorrow's event, which included leaving Hardy Camp, and going north through Trailshead with the first stop being at the school house shelter. The ride will continue on 4A towards Spearfish Canyon Lodge where a temporary hut with heat will be setup in Spearfish Canyon. Group leaders have the ability to turn around in cold weather persists or continue on the longer route which includes trail 6 and back over on 2A.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 11th, 2019, at the Capitol in Pierre.

# Adjournment

A motion was made by Nagel and was seconded by Hintz to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. Motion Carried.