

Snowmobile Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Bangor – DACF Conference Room
July 12, 2016
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Participants

Council Members:

Marie Candeloro, Chair, Kokadjo Roach Riders
Terry Hill, Co-Chair, Bowlin-Matagamon S.C.
Frank Clukey, E. Millinocket, Millinocket, Medway Director of Recreation
John Monk, MSA, Paul Bunyan S.C.
Bob Hansen, MSA
Richard Merrill, Snow Valley Sno Goers
Steve Edwards, Big Valley Sno-Club
Jim Yearwood, Forks Area Trails Club
Matt Stedman, Irving Woodlands, Ashland S.C.
Donald Berry, Tri Town Snow Riders

Not present:

Ron Hunt, BPL Acting Operations Manager

Guests:

Bob Meyers
Maurice Marden

Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office Staff:

Scott Ramsay, Director, Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office
Joe Higgins, Snowmobile Club Grant Coordinator, Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office
Lana LaPlant-Ellis, Senior Planner, Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office

Scott opened the meeting at 8:30 A.M. Introductions were made. Scott announced that the meeting was being taped as this is the first time through with this new process and we don't want to miss anything. Asked questions for clarity. Introductions were made.

Agenda Item: Approval of previous minutes from the July 8, 2015 meeting.

John Monk made a motion to accept the August 12, 2015 minutes, Richard Merrill seconded. Vote: 8 (unanimous) motion carries.

Agenda Item: Snowmobile Advisory Council Terms

Scott – Received clarity on interpretation of the term of members. Terms begin September 15th and run for three years with the potential of remaining for another term of three years. A person who completes another former member's term may remain on the council for the second three year term at the Commissioner's discretion. All members serve at the leisure of the Commissioner. All were asked individually if they would like to remain on the Council. Terry- yes, Marie - yes, John- yes, Bob- yes, Dick- yes, Steve- yes. All responded yes with an exception, Frank Clukey who will retire in September. Jim Yearwood's second term ends in September. Scott will let the Commissioner know of the member's interest and of the vacant positions to be filled. Don Berry was not present at the time in the meeting. He

will just be confirmed. The purpose of the council is to get opinions and advice from all members representing different areas.

Agenda Item: Capital Equipment Grant application reviews, scoring discussion and revisions for future years.

Scott suggested that we turn the meeting over to Joe and Lana who examined the applications scored by the SAC members and put together questions regarding inconsistent scores interpreting questions/answers. Marie - Thanked all members for the time/effort scoring the applications and we won't make everyone happy, but this process is so positive to get capital equipment grant under control. Computer issues will need to get worked out and communicate. The importance of the question's scoring review is very important to who dictate who gets funding. Do we massage questions or point structure, as the scoring varied, for the future? Joe - may want to look at all applicants because of the scoring discrepancies.

If members want to change their scores during the meeting, they must change the score on their score sheets. Score sheets are public information. Joe - may want to look at all applicants as the scoring varied.

Members decided to review all questions for clarity first. Terry- some questions could be scored by the ORV Staff without council scoring the questions. Scott- if you see misinformation Lauri and Joe checked our records and noted that on their forms. Richard - Do we only answer the questions that are interpretative. If we come up with different scores it can stay in this room. Scott- no the information is public. Two issues do we (ORV) put the scores in for known entities or do we put a column beside if for state use only. How they interpreted the question would be consistent through the whole process the scoring should be the same. Matt- For example in interpreting the questions and reviewed scoring come up with clarity in the question. Scott- ORV will make language changes for questions for council review and final agreement. For question 1A, Is it important to you that we know all years or just the most recent year? Discussed and agreed that the most recent year was important.

1a. Has this club participated in the Capital Equipment Grant before? If yes, what year(s) were grant(s) approved? After discussion, council agreed to change the question to ask only for the last year the applicant was approved for a grant year like 2015-2016.

1b. Have you ever been denied a request for a Capital Equipment Grant? If yes, in what year(s)? Pretty much scored unanimous. Scott- Point structure, is it important to make a difference? Worded right for this year. Discussed and agreed to change the question to list only the top three denied years and that an application would score more points if denied previously. All scores are included as those who already scored. Scores may be changed by those who already scored based on interpretation of the question, but those who did not participate in scoring cannot score now. Majority agreed. Terry- Has anyone worked on scoring this way? RTP grants are scored this way. Scott, Joe, Lana, and Bob Meyers had experience. That is why this is mirrored this way. Land and Water Conservation use this method a number of years. Consistent trends. ORV staff was asked how they scored and answered very similar. This discussed for discrepancies in office too.

2a. How many pieces of power equipment does your club have? How many drags? Did not find information on equipment because they had sold it. Which changes their answer to 2a and 2b. The information was found later in the form. Others went back to change the scoring or noted the new information of what scorer learned. One club counted equipment leased. Some noted that equipment was counted that wasn't used for grooming, was sold before or bought after the grooming season. Did they already sell equipment they will be replacing? Council members changed their scores after reading

all the individual club's answers. ORV will try a language change to be reviewed/agreed to by the council. This would be applied to the future. What was the count before the new purchase? Was it all equipment or just grooming equipment? Since the last grooming season? What was the count before the new purchase? Since the last grooming season?

The first question should be re-worded, replace the word 'power' with the word 'grooming' and the time defined. Will message the language? Yes.

2b. List all grooming equipment the club owns? In the case of a drag only, how old is it? Discussed and agreed to change the question to list only grooming equipment used in the past snowmobile season before their new purchase as that was only relevant. John changed his score to a six for Airline Riders as their groomer was leased equipment and had been added in as owned. Scott- make changes on your form, your piece of paper is part of the public record. If there is an appeal we need to show this stuff.

3. Will you be replacing any of this equipment? Big problem as adding more equipment for the same amount of miles. Machine gets older it is worth a lot less. It was agreed that there were many ways to answer that could affect the scoring. How many hours or miles are on the equipment replacing? If you traded you would have more money now. Adding get more cost, insurance.. How many pieces of equipment does a club need for fifty miles? Do we need it yes, but can we afford it?

3a. If yes, which one(s)? Please provide a brief description of the reasons why the club is replacing or adding to the fleet this piece(s) of equipment. Discussed and agreed that not answering the question equals a zero score. Was the equipment junk? Should we have a point structure on this question? Joe- An explanation for adding to the fleet may be a good thing. Airline Riders, that the club is adding miles to groom, leasing or borrowing equipment currently. Some trails may need a different piece of grooming equipment appropriate for a trail type, miles of trail that are club vs. ITS, equipment owned is too expensive to keep or not dependable. Airline Riders are taking on more miles that were groomed by the State. Final agreement on question 3A was reached to change the question to answer what are the reasons the equipment needs to be replaced or added. *3b* Another question of why are you adding to your fleet.

4. Did you sell a piece of equipment to another club in Maine to help finance this purchase? If yes, to what club? The markets vary with timing of sales for scoring. Selling equipment in Maine may not be possible. Money may be better elsewhere. Discussed and agreed that the question should be eliminated.

5. How many club groomer operators are certified through the DACF? How many total groomer operators does this club have? Discussed and agreed that the question reads better in the reverse order.

6. How/where is the equipment stored during the summer? Undercover/garage? Outdoors? Question okay as is.

7. Has this club provided the Maine Snowmobile Program with GPS data of the club's current trail locations? If yes, what year was this done? Joe- GPSed mapping is important as it is hand-in-hand to landowner permission for the use of their property. Should we make it mandatory to GPS trails and trail changes? This would require a rule change. As club grants are paid based on the number of miles groomed is this important enough to make a rule change? Should we require a list of landowner verbal permission or written permits for grants? Question is worth 15 points, good incentive. Discussed and agreed to leave the question as is except to clarify 'all' trails have been GPSed and the data files need to be recorded with the ORV office.

8. How many weeks on average, after December 15th per year, over the past 5 years was this equipment you seek to replace been in operation? A member questioned the number of weeks a specific club used the equipment last year. Were the weeks interpreted as weeks doing trail maintenance or just grooming

weeks? How does a club come up with the number for a piece of equipment? Discussed and agreed to change the question to how many weeks on average over the past 5 years did the club groom trails and take out equipment. Did they buy it new? The number of weeks the equipment was in operation is not relevant. Joe suggested that we could add a column for the number of weeks to the worksheet ORV has begun using to track the grooming hours per club collected from the grooming logs. Until the information is known we will have to rely on the clubs for the number of weeks.

9. Describe the equipment you seek to purchase: Equipment Type, Make, Model, Year, Serial Number, HP, Provide the hours/miles on any used equipment that you seek to purchase? Seller? Purchase price (excluding sales tax)? Joe stated that the scoring was inconsistent. It was stated that the data is important, but without why it is appropriate for that club, makes the question irrelevant. Questions posed: is it the club's economics; what are the trail characteristics winding/straight, wide/narrow, is the use specific to an area and why, ITS/club trail; how many miles of trail does the club have; is the number of volunteers important to the purchase; if purchased from a club member why wasn't it purchased directly by the club and then sold to the club. The equipment must be used to groom. The club must provide vital information for the council to score. The council agreed to create a two part question. Describing the grooming equipment to be or already purchased for ten points and why it is appropriate for the club for ten points. It was suggested that a letter of explanation might be included with the application. The scoring will be based on what has been put in writing.

10. Have you already purchased the new or used equipment? Discussed and agreed to leave question as is.

11. How much of the purchase was or will be financed? \$____, Years ____ Discussed and agreed to leave question as is.

Joe asked for opinions as on other grants (like federal) require letters of support? We don't have anything in ours. For each letter of support it would be worth 1 point up to a certain amount? It is on other grants. [Clubs could get municipal letter in support for their municipal grants. Business letters or another club could write in support of their clubs. Some clubs are remote while others have great support from their communities. Town liability to sign a letter? Any money from the town budget?] Members agreed that there was too much variability in the possible support to include this grant.

Five minute break.

We still have questions on scoring. [Terry- Did we determine what percentage of big groomers, sleds and drags or just by points? Points.] Four applicants (Quad County, Auburn SnoGroomers, Gorham and North Star which is Freedom) who purchased before the date this grant start date. The cutoff date in our new rules is July 1st. Some confusion among clubs and members thought the scoring was a calendar year instead of fiscal year. Members scored based on both. Quad County said they had applied the previous year. They called and asked where their check was? We did not have an application from them. Was there a copy of the application? We did not ask for it. It was asked what would happen in previous years. We would have sent the same minus the rules because the rules were the same for 15 years. Are any of these clubs in the running? None made high scores. Members decided to go with the rules date. We were very clear in our presentations. Don't pre-buy.] Agreed the clubs will be denied. Zero out the four clubs. Change your scores on your forms. What about an appeal? They can appeal to Scott, bureau director, commissioner or the governor. Have we had many appeals? One did not agree with the interpretation of the rule, appealed to Scott, we sent it to the Attorney General's office with the comments and he said we were not reading it wrong and the rule was re-worded. It was about a trade-in question.

There are two clubs Blue Ridge Riders and the Valley Riders with the application amount totaled over \$200,000. The scores could change who gets funded and who doesn't. The rule reads the purchase price of a groomer cannot exceed \$200,000. Lana reviewed the minutes. How do you perceive the rule? Is it up to \$200,000 then the club would be responsible for the rest. Or if the purchase came over \$200,000 they are disqualified. The rule does not say disqualified. Then the question became what about the purchase of a drag? Their groomer cost was under \$200,000, but their drag put them over that. The two purchases were on one application. Our intent was the total package would be up to \$200,000. It says that in the minutes. If the application said groomer and drag is it two pieces of equipment? It says that in the minutes. Rule needs to be clearer. Council agreed to give grant on the total amount of \$200,000 as it states in the minutes. Club can apply for a new drag next year if not already purchased. Can they get a new drag for this year if already purchased? No. Do we need to change the rule or tweak the language? [Did not include conversation about description of drag...aggressive kit?] May get an appeal for over \$200,000 when the groomer was under \$200,000 and the drag was separate. May get a better price on the drag and delivery if bought together.

Two clubs put in for two pieces of grooming equipment, Leeds and Ellsworth. Can we penalize them for buying two pieces when allowing a \$200,000 piece? If we allow two sleds can we allow two piston bullies next year with the total over \$200,000? Are the clubs being smart? Replacing equipment? Council can say what pieces you approve on the grant. What about one groomer and one drag, but not two pieces of power equipment in one year? What about an explanation to make the decision?

Motion made by Richard Merrill to keep question as it is, as the applications come in they can apply for two up to \$200,000. Seconded Frank Clukey? Vote: Unanimous

Some scores changed and some were added based on the above conversations and misinterpretations of the questions. The attached spreadsheet was generated (**when available**).

What do we do if we have enough money to fund at less than the agreed percentage for that year for a grant or do we have the cutoff at those that we can fund only those at the 40%? Sit on the money until next year or offer the balance to the next club on the list until the money is spent. They can drop out and the next club in line could get a grant. It was agreed to spend it all.

Do you want to have another meeting or by email, once we have the end of year figures, talk about the question of transferring funds at \$50,000 to the Disaster Relief Grant and add \$50,000 to that? There was a storm in Jackman/Parlin Pond area who will be likely be looking for catastrophic assistance. Landowners, camp owners and clubs are now looking at how to fix. Do you want to look at the package for next year, stay static on our grants, and look at the numbers of sleds, income dropped because of the numbers registered/not registered. \$1700 in sticker donations received. Last year was a disaster and next year should do better. In September discuss the new council members.

Scott asked Don Berry if he would like to stay on. Yes.

Thank you for your 38 years of service to this industry. Can you give us an update on your position? Scott- I will be done on the 29th. The position has not been posted yet, but it is in the process before I leave. Will someone from the department take over? It will it be posted outside.

Money was up because of lack of snow.

Joe asked if we could notify the clubs of the scores. Yes.

Next meeting – TBA Sometime in September

Meeting Adjourned – 11:30 a.m.