**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022**

Members Participating:

Janet Robinson, President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

John Contas

John Haile

Nananda Col

Vytas Marciulionis (Vic)

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The Board call commenced at 7:08 p.m.

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the March 9, 2022 Board call.
3. Old Business:
   1. Committee Updates
      1. Bath Pool Session: Nananda said the April 4 pool session in Bath (and dinner afterward) went very well, with John Haile providing excellent guidance in the pool. Participants said they would welcome another session this year, and the Bath pool contact (Sponge), said that could be arranged any time SMSKN would like to schedule it. The Board agreed that participant should pay for the next session, and accepted Janet’s suggestion that organizers accept $20 payment in cash. An online means of advance payment will be worked out for next year.
      2. Chip provided first quarter financial data prior to the meeting. As of March 31 SMSKN had $13,303 in its CD account and $5,829 in its checking account. 39 members paid dues during the quarter.
   2. Revised Participant Agreement (PA) and Fee: Janet reported that our attorney provided new language in the PA that gives the club more legal protection when cross-listing events organized by other organizations. The attorney’s fee amounted to $1,200.
   3. Summer Party: Janet said that June 26 is the probable date for the party, based on the fact that it will be high tide in late morning, a necessity for having a paddling picnic then at Winslow Park during that part of the day. She accepted Nananda’s suggestion to put out “Save the date” note to SMSKN members.
4. **GOAL #1 DISCUSSION: Encourage Diversity in Posted Trips**

Encourage diversity in members and posted trips: beginners, younger people, trip focus, trip level, other diversities.

Janet led off the discussion by observing that currently, most trips posted by SMSKN members require a level of skill and experience that discourages less experienced members from signing up. She asked for ideas on how to get more people to post trips that a wider range of members with varying skill levels can enjoy. As a member-initiated club, we want to encourage more members to post trips and more members to participate in them. Board members offered the following suggestions.

Set an example: Vic proposed that Board members need to set a good example by posting relatively easy trips themselves. Vic, John Haile, Nananda, and John Contas all volunteered to post trips.

Make it sound appealing: Board members observed that the language used to describe trips could encourage more members to post them, and to sign up. Janet suggested calling them “quiet-water” trips rather than “easy” or “low-level.”

Provide instruction and guidance to potential trip organizers: John C. suggested a Zoom meeting of organizers, to talk about posting trips. Janet said she could recast the May membership Zoom meeting as a session for trip organizers and people who want to become trip organizers. The focus would be on how and WHY to post trips, and how to conduct them. Experienced organizers would be encouraged to share their experience, including how to handle intending paddlers who don’t have the necessary skills or equipment to join a particular trip.

Partner up in posting trips: John H. suggested that organizers be encouraged to partner with another member in posting a trip. In looking for partners, members could reach out to SMSKN members who had volunteered as mentors. Janet asked John to approach volunteer mentors to find out if they would be willing to be identified as mentors on the SMSKN Meetup page.

“Seed” trips before posting: Janet observed that it was discouraging to post a trip and then not have anyone sign up. To avoid that, she had contacted members to about prospective trips to find out if they would participate before she posted a trip. That helped insure a critical mass of paddlers in on a trip.

Offer incentives: Vic suggested that Organizer status be made a privilege, by telling organizers that they need to post at least one trip a year to maintain their status. Board members expressed reluctance to penalize organizers, but suggested incentives to post trips. Frequent posters could be recognized with a special designation or gift. Nananda suggested that they be recognized at the annual end-of-year party, and perhaps be eligible for a lottery gift drawing at the party.

Offer themed paddles: John H. noted that the Skills Committee was already planning a geology-themed paddle in September, and suggested that other paddling trips with a theme would encourage a more diverse group of members to participate. John would also like to organize a trip with a birding theme, but bird expert Charles Duncan didn’t respond to John’s email inviting him to lead a birding paddle. Nananda offered to reach out to Duncan. She also suggested a paddle with a clamming theme. A SMSKN group could kayak from Five Island around to Reid State park, where a local clamming warden could give a class on clamming. Janet encourage Nananda to go ahead and organize such a trip. Nananda offered other theme possibilities such as a food-grazing trip or a literature themed trip focused on Edna St. Vincent Millay (Ragged Island) or Rachel Carson (Carson National Wildlife Refuge). John H. suggested a trash pick-up trip to a particular island.

Reach out to paddlers without equipment: Nananda noted that some members don’t have boats or roof racks to transport their kayaks to a trip’s starting point. Janet suggested that there be a separate trip organized for people without boats.

Build the SMSKN brand: John H. suggested that sell SMSKN sell T-shirts with the SMSKN logo on it. John C. suggested SMSKN hats, which could be one-size-fits-all.

1. Closure and Action Items

* Janet to post a Save-the-date announcement for June 26 members’ picnic.
* Nananda to contact Sponge to organize another Bath pool session.
* John H. to contact mentors for permission to list them on the Meetup page.
* Janet to recast her May members’ meeting presentation for trip organizers.
* Nananda to contact Charles Duncan about a birding kayak trip.

The Board call concluded at 8:41 p.m.

Next call: **Wednesday, May 4, 2022, 7 pm.**