**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, October 4, 2023**

**7:00-8:30 PM**

Members Participating:

John Haile, President

Glen Gordon, Vice President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

Janet Robinson

John Contas

Nananda Coll

Tom Allen

Vytas Marciulionis (Vic)

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The meeting commenced at 7:05pm.

1. Welcome
2. Minutes: No new minutes to approve; an informal in-person pot-luck meeting was held at 656 River Road on Wednesday, September 6 attended by Glen Gordon, John Contas, Nananda Coll, and John Haile. It was delightful, and these Board members discussed some future ideas.
3. Old business
4. Treasurer’s Report: Prior to the meeting Chip presented financial for the year to date. SMSKM has $6108 in its checking account and $14,827 in CDs. CDs have renewed at higher interest rates, yielding $201 YTD compared to $43 in all of 2022. The membership shortfall continues; the total reduction from the same point last year is 43 memberships which represents a net loss of $774. Janet commented that SMSKN is losing members because of SMSKN was not staying in contact with them. Glen explained that members go into limbo when they don’t renew their memberships on Meetup. 80 members are in non-renewal limbo now. Glen said he had been sending messages to members whose dues had lapsed and who had not been in contact for more than a year. Jan noted that the Meetup app gives new members a 14-day grace period to pay membership fees, so people forget to follow through. John H. said he would try to adjust payment settings in Meetup to eliminate the grace period.
5. Storage “network” for members without a place to store their boats: The Board discussed whether to make this a SMSKN goal for 2024 and ultimately decided to table it.
6. Tide Race newsletter update: John H. reported that Joe Herlihy is working on a new issue of the newsletter and is asking for input. John asked Board members to send ideas to Joe within a week. In response to Janet’s question, John H. said that he would have Joe send the draft newsletter to all Board members for review prior to publication.
7. New Business
8. Skills Committee update: Tom reported that the committee set up an active schedule of skill sessions this year but had some misfires due to low attendance or cancellation. The committee will look at the reasons for that at its next meeting. Tom said he wanted to offer skill sessions throughout summer, rather than just during May and June. Board members expressed support for this. John C. asked if offering skills sessions only on weekday afternoons was a problem. Vic acknowledged that it is a problem for members with weekday jobs.
9. “Boat length” question in SMSKN materials and message to new members: John H reported that he had removed language about a specific boat length requirement in his message to new members. His new language emphasizes safety: paddlers in SMSKN trips must bring a sea kayak with a deck, sealed bulkheads, static deck lines, and use a spray skirt and PDF. Janet defended the 16-foot boat requirement, saying that it provides an easily understood and appropriate standard of what is needed for ocean-going kayaking. Other Board members noted that certain shorter kayaks can meet safety requirements and are more appropriate for certain conditions (e.g., surfing). Moreover, trip leaders have authority to judge kayak safety based on trip conditions and participants’ skills and experience levels. Nananda moved that the Board approve John H.’s language. The motion carried by a vote of 7-2.
10. The Rotnem Scholarship Fund: John H. reported that the July 22 gear auction and sale raised $1700 for the scholarship fund. The Board reviewed John’s draft plan for implementing scholarship grants. Tom suggested that grants be available to members who already had done some professional training, not just those who had never had training. He observed that an initial training session often motivates paddlers to seek more advanced training to strengthen their skills. The Board agreed, while emphasizing that first priority should be giving to those who had never received training. John H. said he would revise the draft and send it to the Board for further review, and would do an article for the newsletter. The Board discussed various aspects of the grant program and decided to carry over the discussion to the next Board call due to the lack of remaining time on this call.
11. Pool session review and plans for 2024**:** Vic reported that Riverton pool would be closing for 6 months for repairs and maintenance and would likely not be available for pool sessions during the winter. Nananda said she would find out whether the Bath pool could be made available for more SMSKN sessions. Janet offered to see if the South Portland recreation center pool could be made available. Chip asked to be involved in setting up sessions so he could develop a budget with accurate costs.
12. Xmas party dates: The Board accepted Nananda’s offer to host the party at her house in Georgetown, and decided to hold the event on Sunday, December 10 at 4:00pm. John H. said he would give Joe a “save the date” blurb to put in the newsletter.
13. Upcoming Monthly Membership Programs:: Tom offered to do a program on the Baja kayaking trip he organized, or on the Casco Bay intensive skills program that he participated in. The Board accepted Tom’s offer to talk about the Baja trip in November and encouraged him to consider doing a presentation on the intensive program later.
14. 2024 Board: John H. asked Board members who would like to leave the Board after the 2023 term to let him know before the next Board call. If people want to leave the Board, there will be a need to identify new candidates.
15. Website Update: John H. asked Vic take down the language on the SMSKN website advertising the now-closed SMSKN T-shirt sale. Janet asked that Vic upload the new Event Organizer language that the Board approved.

Closing and action items:

* Board members to provide Joe Herlihy their suggestions for items in the next newsletter as soon as possible.
* John H. to ask Joe to send the draft newsletter to all Board members for review prior to publication.
* John H. to revise the draft guidelines for the Richard Rotnem Scholarship Fund, send it to the Board for further review, and do an article for the newsletter.
* Nananda to find out whether the Bath pool could be made available for more SMSKN sessions, and Janet to see if the South Portland recreation center is available.
* John H. to give Joe a “save the date” blurb for the December 10 Xmas party to put in the newsletter.
* Tom to organize a Monthly Membership Zoom program in November on the Baja kayaking trip he organized.
* Board members who would like to leave the Board after the 2023 term to let John H. know before the next Board call.
* Vic take down the language on the SMSKN website advertising the now-closed SMSKN T-shirt sale and upload the new Event Organizer language that the Board approved.

The Board call concluded at 8:35pm.

**Next call: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 @ 7:00 PM**