**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, January 3, 2024**

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

Members Participating:

John Haile, President

Glen Gordon, Vice President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

Cathy Kimball

Ellen Gluckman

Nananda Col

Tom Allen

Vytas Marciulionis

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The Board call commenced at 7:03 p.m.

1. Welcome. John welcomed new board members Cathy Kimball and Ellen Gluckman, and thanked Nananda Col and Bob Arledge for hosting the SMSKN holiday party and AGM.
2. Approval of minutes from 12/6/2023 meeting: the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the December 6 Board call.
3. Old business.
   1. Pool sessions: Greg asked for advice on managing the upcoming January 14 pool session. Vick said he would provide a briefing by e-mail. Cathy asked if participants could share boats; Vick said yes. John said he would draft wording for the Meetup notice regarding the session, including language on sharing of boats. John said he would also confirm with Janet Robinson that she could host the February 4 pool session at Westbrook. Tom offered to be backup, and Casthy said she might be able to do one of the February sessions at Westbrook. Vick confirmed that he would manage the February 18 session at Westbrook. For the three pool sessions in Bath (February 25, March 10, April 14) John said he and Nananda would coordinate on managing them. Ellen offered to be backup.
   2. Joe Gugliemetti Fund-raising Paddle. John tabled this item until the next Board call, saying he had not yet connected with Joe to arrange a discussion of this proposal with the Board.
   3. Membership Manager: Ellen volunteered to take this on. She will talk to previous Membership Manager John Contas about the job’s responsibilities. Vick said he would arrange access to the website database for Ellen for this work.
   4. Call to MITA: John reported he had not yet called the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) to discuss a contribution or increased membership level as thanks for using MITA’s offices for the January 17 and 24 skills training. The Board discussed whether increasing its membership level to $250 would be sufficient in lieu of a contribution, obviating the need for a call. Ultimately John decided to make the call and discuss options with MITA staff.
   5. SMSKN dues increase? Greg noted that in light of SMSKN’s large reserves at present, it would be hard to justify a dues increase now. Glen pointed out that SMSKN had drawn on reserves to cover its 2023 budget deficit, and continued drawdowns night require another look at a dues increase down the road. Tom said he would like to see more funds available for professional training, and to double the subsidy (from ten percent to twenty percent) for SMSKN members who sign up for paid training. John said he was open to using invested funds for activities. Board members agreed not to pursue an immediate dues increase.
4. New Business.
   1. Skills Committee: Tom said he would like to be able to tell the Skills Committee that if they need more money to meet their goals for SMSKN training sessions, they should ask the Board for it. Board members agreed with this approach, provided the committee could combine its requests into an overall funding amount for budgeting purposes. Tom said he was in the process of talking to coachers and ascertaining the availability of SMSKN members to run skills sessions. The Board also discussed whether it would be appropriate for SMSKN members who are paid for doing training sessions for Portland Paddle should be paid by Portland Paddle for training conducted for SMSKN events. The Board concluded that they could be paid for SMSKN events as long as they are not members of the Skills Committee and not part of SMSKN’s decision-making process for training events.
   2. 2024 Programs: Members discussed the following ideas.

* John proposed a tour of the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College. John will contact the museum to set this up.
* Nananda proposed a session with an expert on sharks. The Board discussed whether this would interest or alarm members.
* Tom proposed a Zoom discussion to follow up on the Casco Bay Intensive informal group training that four members began in 2023. John suggested keeping this in reserve for now.
* John mentioned that members had liked last year’s “Pimping Your Kayak” session and suggested that it be done again in 2024.
* Friends of Casco Bay (FOCB) briefing on the state of the bay: Greg will coordinate with Chip on asking FOCB to do a Zoom presentation in mid-to-late February.
* Marine Mammals of Maine: Tom said this organization focuses on seal rescues and has broad expertise. The University of New England has marine mammal experts as well.. Nananda will check with both organizations about a March or April presentation.
* Ellen proposed a session on kayak safety around fishing boats and ferries. John liked the idea of a panel of experts. Nananda will explore the topic with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other organizations.
* Nananda proposed a session on wild mushrooms. John suggested that she pursue this as a paddling session with an expert.
* Cathy proposed a session on making and using a short tow (contact tow) rope. John suggested that she combine that with a skills session on towing. He left it to Cathy to determine the timing.
* Tom proposed a session on gel coat application and repairs. John said he would talk to Joe Gugliemetti about doing this.

1. Closure and Action Items:
   * John to talk to Joe G. to arrange a discussion with the Board about Joe’s paddling fund-raiser proposal.
   * John will also ask Joe G. if he could lead a session on gel coat application and repairs.
   * Ellen to talk to previous Membership Manager John Contas about the job’s responsibilities. Vick to arrange access to the website database for Ellen.
   * John to call MITA to discuss options for compensating MITA for use of its office.
   * 2024 programs follow-up:
     + John to contact the Peary MacMillan Museum about a SMSKN tour.
     + Greg to coordinate with Chip on asking FOCB to do a Zoom presentation in mid-to-late February.
     + Nananda to check with Marine Mammals of Maine and UNE about a March or April presentation.
     + Nananda to explore a session on kayak safety around fishing boats and ferries with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other organizations.
     + Cathy to combine a session on making and using a short tow (contact tow) rope with a skills session on towing, timing TBD.

The Board call concluded at 8:16pm

**Next Call: Wednesday, Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 7:00pm.**