**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, April 3, 2024**

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

Members Participating:

John Haile, President

Glen Gordon, Vice President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

Ellen Gluckman

Vytas Marciulionis (Vick)

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The Board call commenced at 7:05 p.m.

1. Welcome.
2. Approval of minutes from 3/13/2024 meeting: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the March 13, 2024 Board call.
3. Ongoing business.
   1. Mission statement: John presented to the Board the proposed SMSKN Mission Statement drafted by a subcommittee consisting of Nananda, Suzanne, Glen, and Greg:

“SMSKN is a sea kayaking organization providing an opportunity to meet other paddlers and explore the Maine coast. We are dedicated to inclusivity, safety, skills development, and stewardship of the ocean environment.”

After a brief discussion, the Board adopted the mission statement as drafted.

* 1. Financial priorities: The Board discussed a wide variety of ideas for using SMSKN’s $15,000 capital reserve. Greg suggested that the first priority should be a contingency reserve to pay required operating expenses if there is a sudden and significant drop in revenue. Then we could consider investments that have a lasting impact, such as better technology to live-stream and record our monthly membership meetings, and professional training that enables SMSKN members to train other members of the club. Glen said a contingency reserve equal to two years’ operating expenses should be sufficient. (Note: annual operating expenses have averaged $3,200 over the past five years.) He added that scholarships and advanced training would be good uses for the remaining funds. SMSKN could also use funds to enhance its partnerships with other organizations that have facilities that SMSKN could then utilize, such as the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) or Portland Paddle. Vick expressed support for using the reserve for activities to strengthen SMSKN’s community. John wondered whether SMSKN could obtain a group software license for a navigation app that all club members could then download and use. John also suggested that the Board identify specific targets for scholarships, such as training to become a Registered Maine Guide or achieve advanced American Canoeing Association or British Canoeing instructor credentials. He also liked the idea of having more subsidized social events. Glen noted that the North Shore Paddlers Network has several member forums on its website; SMSKN should look at creating and managing a similar tool on its own website. Vick responded that there are software solutions available for a monthly fee that we could configure for our needs, and offered to look into that for the Board. Ellen said she would like to see more training for members to strengthen their paddling skills. She also suggested organizing open paddling days where interested new paddlers without their own boats could come and try sea kayaking and learn introductory skills.
  2. Skills Committee: John said that Skills Committee chair Sieg Siegfried had given him a detailed response on restructuring pool paddling sessions. John proposed that the Board review Sieg’s response during next month’s Board call.

1. New business.
   1. Large scale training event. Following up on the Board’s discussion of this topic during its March 13 call, Board members agreed that it should be more than a SMSKN “kayak rodeo.” John proposed the following scenario: a summer weekend event at Mitchell Field in Harpswell. Saturday morning would be an introductory session for people new to sea kayaking. The focus on Saturday afternoon would be on wet exits. Sunday morning would feature a presentation and work with a professional coach. Sunday afternoon would be a paddling trip. Ellen observed that the event would require paddlers experienced in working with new paddlers, and wondered how many SMSKN members are Registered Maine Guides. Glen estimated that more than dozen members are registered guides, and John didn’t think it would be difficult to stage and staff the event. The key challenge would be to find a place and set a date. He said he would draw up a quick outline for the Board’s review, and Ellen offered to help.
   2. Community agreements. John decided to hold this topic for the next Board call, when Suzanne could present and explain it.
2. Monthly Meeting programs for 2024.
   1. What next?
   * Wednesday, April 24: Marine Mammals. John pointed out that Kennebec Estuary Land Trust hasn’t responded to SMSKN’s request to jointly present this topic, so the event is on hold for now.
   * Summer social gathering – John proposed that the Board discuss this at the next Board call.
3. Closure and action items.

* Items for discussion at the next Board call:
  + Skills Committee response on pool session restructuring.
  + Large scale training event, based on an outline John will draw up.
  + Community agreements, with discussion led by Suzanne.
  + Summer social gathering.
* Vick to begin to explore alternatives to Meetup as a forum for club communications and trip postings.

The Board call concluded at 7:58 pm.

**Next call: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 7:00-8:30 PM**