

Alberta Conservation Association

Minutes of the December 10, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting



Via ZOOM
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

PRESENT: Bill Abercrombie (Chairman) – Alberta Trappers Association
Robert Gruszecki (Vice Chairman) – Alberta Hunter
Sandra Mellon (Treasurer) – Public At Large, NW Region
Ken Ambrock (Director) – Public At Large, Northern Alberta Board Liaison
Mark Boyce (Director) – ACA / U of A Chair in Fisheries & Wildlife
Fred Calverley (Director) – Trout Unlimited Canada
Randy Collins (Director) – Alberta Fish and Game Association
Brian Joubert (Director) – Nature Alberta
Perry McCormick (Director) – Pheasants Forever Alberta Council
Matt Mellon – Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta
Chuck Priestley (Director) – Public At Large – NE Region
Travis Ripley (Director) – Alberta Environment and Parks
Jeana Schuurman (Director) – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
Richard Stamp (Director) – Public At Large, SO Region
Brent Watson (Director) – Alberta Bowhunters Association

Todd Zimmerling – President & CEO, ACA
Debora Dueck – Recording Secretary, ACA
Lori-Jeanne Edwards – CFIO, ACA

REGRETS: Robert Grandjambe (Director) – Indigenous BOD Liaison
Vacant - Treaty 8

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bill Abercrombie called the meeting to order December 10, 2020 @ 9:04 AM
Chairman Bill Abercrombie welcomed the board members to the meeting, round table introductions were made of those participating in person and via ZOOM.

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2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MEETING TIME LIMIT

9 e. BOD Matrix

MOTION # 32/20

Moved by: Robert Gruszecki
Seconded by: Randy Collins

Move that the December 10, 2020 agenda be accepted with additions.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting is anticipated to conclude by 4:00 PM.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. August 19, 2020 Board of Directors' Meeting – Electronic Motion: 31/20EV
(Attachment A – Minutes of the August 19, 2020 BOD Meeting)

MOTION # 33/20

Moved by: Sandra Mellon
Seconded by: Perry McCormick

Move that the ACA Board of Directors' agree that this is an accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify Electronic Motion: 31/20EV stating: "Move that the Minutes of the August 19, 2020 Board of Directors' meeting, be accepted as presented".

MOTION CARRIED

5. BUSINESS ARISING

a. Review of Action Items
(Attachment B – Action Items)

Action Items were reviewed and updates were provided.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Chairman / Executive Committee

Bill Abercrombie, Chairman, provided a report to BOD:

- Hope that BOD Members and organizations are managing this situation well without too many issues.
- Hope that if there were any issues, that your organizations could take advantage of ACA's funding help.
- It has been a great fall, hopefully everyone had success and enjoyment out in the field with your families.

- ATA – is hanging in there amidst all the struggles. September 2020 they became to owner of a registered trapline (for trapping and training programs, etc.) Thank you to Travis Ripley and Minister Nixon for helping bring this to fruition.

b. AEP Representative Report

(Verbal Report)

- Provincial Fisheries Regulation Changes - Highlighted several amendments including the guide license creation; removal of ice fishing shacks; tiger trout; license changes and invasive species (crayfish).
- Mule Deer Advisory Committee – Committee continues to meet and will be focusing on management planning and CWD.
- Upcoming engagements – online (virtual) engagements are being planned for early in the calendar year to begin to assemble feedback on hunting and fishing.
- Trapping policy – continuing to work on preparing a draft policy for engagement and review.

c. President & CEO

(Attachment C)

The President & CEO report was reviewed and highlights were discussed and noted:

- The fall has gone along relatively well, despite ongoing COVID concerns. To date we have not had any employee report having COVID and as such projects have continued along under our COVID procedures. Angler and hunter numbers continue to be strong, with many more people getting out and enjoying Alberta's fishing and hunting opportunities, than we have seen in a long time.
- Relationships/Partnerships: While the big corporate sponsorships are difficult to find at the moment, we have continued to develop smaller funding partnerships with a number of for-profit companies and municipalities. In addition, we continue to work closely with AFGA on habitat projects and with AHEIA on developing an MoU for the future of Report A Poacher. Discussions with AEP with respect to 2021/22 projects have been very productive.
- Sponsorship / CPIC: We recruit new sponsor/partner dollars for ACA projects with a focus on multi-year commitments as Corporate Partners in Conservation.
- Corporate Involvement in Events: Worked to maintain and increase financial, in-kind and corporate volunteer contributions at ACA-led and affiliated events. Kids Can Catch – all events for Summer 2020 have been cancelled until further notice due to Covid-19 precautions, except for Chaparral (Calgary), Grande Prairie and Taber which held their events using various modified protocols to ensure participant safety; Waterfowl Warmup – Event was held on August 20, 2020 and was sold out. (Albeit half normal capacity due to COVID-19 precautions). Alberta Environment and Parks Minister, Jason Nixon attended. All net proceeds support the Report A Poacher program. Harvest Your Own – Cooking event scheduled for the Taber Pheasant Festival was cancelled due to COVID-19 precautions.
- Grants: Business Development applies for and supports project leads in applying for grants. Summary of the grants submitted in the fiscal year, as per the President & CEO Report.

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c. Finance & Audit Committee

Financial Overview to November 30, 2020 - (*Attachment D*)

Sandra Mellon, Treasurer, presented the Financial Overview to November 30, 2020 points noted:

- Total revenue increased from the prior fiscal year by \$ 1,473,225.
- Levy revenues are \$ 1,533,551 higher than received in the prior year. Fishing license sales have increased 29.5% (approximately 69,760 additional licenses over the prior year).
- Wildlife Certificate revenue was collected during the draw season (in the past collected in mid-August – mid-September), a change over the prior year and as a result an additional \$554,272 was collected for Wildlife Certificates over the prior year, of an estimated \$40,000 is timing.
- Hunting Draw applications increased over the prior year by \$10,959 resulting in an estimated additional \$40,000 in levy, or 2.5%.
- Hunting licenses overall have increased over prior year, with the main increases being seen in the following categories: Elk Antlerless – 15.8%; Black Bear – 16.0%; Whitetail Deer – 6.7%; Moose – 9.0%; Trophy Sheep – 15.8%; Pheasant – 15.5%; Game Bird – 12.4%.
- Non-Resident License sales have been heavily impacted due to COVID, with reduced revenue year over year of \$597,000, or 62.8%.
- Partner contributions are \$ (11,792) lower than received in the prior year.
- Miscellaneous revenue includes advertising fees for the Conservation Guide, magazine, event sponsorship and raffles.

Revenue are \$ 699,949 higher than year to date budgeted amounts.

- Levy revenue was higher than budgeted levels by \$950,099, of which approximately \$40,000 is a timing difference related to Wildlife Certificate Revenue.
- Partner revenue is lower than the year-to-date budget by \$ (188,352).
- Grants and funds are under budget by \$ (237,618). The Predator Compensation revenue is included in this line and is billed on a quarterly basis. Also, Syncrude funds for Biodiversity is included in the budget but recorded in Partner Revenue.

Operating expenses (expenses that are controllable by management) were \$ (498,591) below previous year levels. ACA management is practicing constraint in spending, with an emphasis on reorganizing projects where applicable to complete field work. COVID-19 has impacted the ability to conduct projects, however as restrictions have been lifted field work has been able to be conducted. This delay in work where it made sense will create timing variances that may recover as the year goes on. Although individual expense categories vary, the overall expenditure is consistent.

The organization is \$(2,604,294) under budgeted year to date expenditures. COVID-19 has impacted the ability for ACA to conduct planned work for April, May and June, resulting in multiple categories being under budget. Field work commenced in July and through August with adjusted restrictions due to COVID-19. As the year continues it is likely that these with restrictions being lifted costs will start to catch up. Explanations of the major item variances as noted in the Financial Overview report.

An operating surplus (excess of revenue over expenditures for management-controlled items including actual interest revenue which is outside of management control) of \$6,308,508 exists compared to the results of the prior year where a surplus of \$4,336,692 was recorded. Part of the surplus is a result of timing of levies for wildlife certificates, which were received in June this year compared to mid-August to September in the prior year. This demonstrates the results of continued focus on expenditure reduction due to COVID 19 as well as project realignment due to COVID 19.

When adjustments are made to recognize realized and unrealized investment gains and losses, asset disposals, investment income and removing revenue from donations that was allocated to land purchases, the result ends in an accounting surplus of \$7,346,494 for the period compared to \$4,599,437 in the prior year. Management continues to focus on advertising and promotion related to fishing and hunting to increase levies.

ACA reported an accounting or total organizational surplus of \$7,436,494, an amount that included interest income, realized (actual changes from sold investments) and unrealized (changes in book value due to cost versus market fluctuations) results for investments and asset disposals that are not in management control. The realized gain on investments was \$9,252; the unrealized gain on investments was \$989,015. Investment income was \$38,647 and gain/loss on disposal of assets was \$6,023. Exchange rate gains incurred were (\$5,054).

Once these are removed from the total organizational results, the true operational surplus that is in direct control of management (including the interest revenue which is outside of management control) is \$6,308,508 compared to a prior period operational surplus of \$4,336,692.

Cash Flow Statement

- Cash flows from operating activities resulted in a cash increase of \$5,601,382. Inflows were used to maintain operating expenditure with amounts that are not restricted.
- The net cash balance after asset purchases, debt repayment and other operating cash uses is \$6,278,233. Of this amount, \$685,471 is restricted and not available for operating expenditures, which includes the In Trust, Restricted and RAP accounts. USD funds available for use are \$139,828, USD funds in the amount of \$500,000 were purchased on December 4 to take advantage of favorable exchange rates.

Statement of Financial Position

As an overview of the financial position as at November 30, 2020, ACA reports:

- Current assets have increased by 68.5% from recorded levels at November 30, 2019. Accounts Receivable is comprised of receivables from partners and contributors.
- The Endowment Fund balance is \$3,301,751 up 7.6% from last year. Part of the increase is related to additional contributions made in the year. These contributions include: \$131,400 ALT Grant in June 2020. \$558,900 ALT Grant in November 2019. Half of the increase in the fund on a yearly basis due to interest and gains (not including increase because of additional principle investment) is directed towards enhancement and/or management of ACA lands, and half is retained to grow the fund on an annual basis (to allow for monies to be removed from the fund the interest and gains retained must at a minimum match the rate of inflation for the previous year).

- Equipment purchases this period were \$117,216. Land was purchased in the amount of \$461,250 (HSF Enviro Can \$425,000, \$36, 250 Scheerschmidt) related to Timber Ridge Expansion.
- The total fair market value of the investments is \$3,464,536 representing an increase of 6.9% over the fair market value at November 30, 2019.
- The Habitat Securement Fund had a balance at prior year end of \$243,347. A transfer of \$200,000 at fiscal yearend March 31, 2020 was made to replenish the fund increasing the balance to \$443,347.

d. Communications Committee

Randy Collins, Committee Chair provided update, points noted:

- Thank you to President & CEO and the Communications Team for getting all information out and available in various formats.
- Review of the Communications update included in the President & CEO Report.

e. ACA Grants Program Committee

Randy Collins, Committee Chair provided update, points noted:

- For this cycle most of the adjudicators on the list have agreed to participate.
- The adjudicators list used for random selection should be reviewed prior to the next granting cycle.
ACTION ITEM: Administration to forward current list of adjudicators used for random selection to the BOD requesting that additional names be submitted.
- Adjudication meeting will be conducted mostly via ZOOM.
- Granting documents – not changes were brought forward, any changes were made prior to the application process.
- List of Research applications were provided for information (Confidential).
- Chuck Priestley will act as Chair for the adjudication meetings in the absence of the Chair (Randy Collins).
ACTION ITEM: Board Members are directed to advise the Chair if they want to sit in on the adjudication process.
- Adjudication Dates: February 6 & 7, 2021 – Research Grants; February 25, 2021 – CCEG Grants.

f. Operations Standards Review Committee

No committee meeting conducted.

g. Recruitment Committee

Robert Gruszecki provided an update from the meeting that was held, points noted:

- Working on broad board strengths and weaknesses.
- Academic Representative – suggestion at the August BOD meeting to approach Brian Joubert in regard to this role.

- Propose that work be completed on the TOR and the job description.
- Recruitment Committee's recommendation to the BOD that Brian Joubert be appointed to the role of Academic Representative on the ACA Board of Directors.

MOTION # 34/20

Moved by: Robert Gruszecki
Seconded by: Fred Calverley

Move that the ACA Board of Directors' accept the recommendation of the Recruitment Committee and appoint Brian Joubert to the role of Academic Representative.

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION ITEM: Robert Gruszecki and Brian Joubert will work on the TOR and job description for the position.

h. Governance Committee Report

Committee Chair Brian Joubert provided updates from the committee meeting, points noted:

- Reviewed the document tracking spreadsheet for any documents that are outstanding or requiring review by the individual committees.

ACTION ITEM: Administration (Deb D.) will forward documents requiring review to all the applicable committees.

- Diversity Statement – draft statement to be provided to the BOD for the March 2021 meeting.

i. PAL Member Committee

No meeting conducted. PAL Member quarterly reports were provided for information.

**j. Organizational Risk Report
(Attachment K)**

Organizational Risk Report was presented by Todd Zimmerling, President & CEO, no major risks were identified.

k. Northern Board Liaison Report

Ken Ambrock, Northern Board Liaison provide an update on his activities from August 2020 – December 2020, points noted:

- Lakes have risen 10 feet this year in the Northern region.
- Geese and duck populations are high.
- Cougar, bear and wolf populations are high.

- Feedback on fishery resources in the NE – people would like to see more general fishing opportunities and less draws.
- NE Board Liaison has concerns on the effect COVID is having on the ACA Programs.

I. Indigenous BOD Liaison Report

Robert Grandjambe, Indigenous BOD Liaison provided an update on his activities from June 2020 – August 2020, points noted:

- Forwarded article to the BOD for information.
- Working towards bringing in some local government to work on a pilot project at Wood Buffalo, ACA could potentially be part of the partnership and play a role.
- Trapping – very unsafe due to warm weather.

ACTION ITEM: Robert G. to forward details on the project and the opportunities for working with the Indigenous in Northern Alberta.

m. Director Emeritus Report

Director Emeritus Report submitted with activities from August – December 2020 and reviewed.

7. Old Business

a. ACA Academic Representative Appointment

Completed during the Recruitment Committee Report agenda item.

b. RAP Proposal

- AHEIA will be taking over and managing the RAP Program - ACA will provide the RAP truck, trailer, promotional items and support to AHEIA.
- There are opportunities to vastly increase the presence of AHEIA and ACA to communities and increase the efforts of the RAP Program.

ACTION ITEM: Todd Zimmerling and Robert Gruszecki will develop the MOU with regard to the RAP Program for presentation to the BOD at the March meetings.

c. Golden Ranches - Update

- Waiting on ruling from CRA regarding ECOgift portion of project.
- Currently in stand by pattern.

d. JPC / MOU - Update

- JPC meetings are going well, meeting held first week in December.
- Draft MOU is with AEP to get Minister's approval, expectation that agreements will be signed off in March 2021.

8. Reports

a. Draft Annual Operating Plan 2021-2022

The Annual Operating Plan 2021-2022 was presented for review, discussion and approval, points noted:

- Draft AOP only shows planned projects and financial overview for program allocations.
- Final AOP will include detailed finance/salary allocations to the projects.

MOTION # 35/20

Moved by: Randy Collins
Seconded by: Fred Calverley

Move that the ACA Board of Directors approved the Draft 2020-2021 Annual Operating Plan as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

9. New Business

a. Membership Application – Alberta Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Association (Attachment G)

Alberta Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Association submitted a Membership Application for consideration. As per the process, a Membership Committee is to be struck to review the application and bring back to the ACA BOD for review and discussion, and potential presentation to the Member Groups at the August 2021 AGM. Call for interest to sit as committee members; Brian Joubert, Sandra Mellon, Perry McCormick, Randy Collins, Chuck Priestley, Bill Abercrombie (Ex-Officio) and Todd Zimmerling (Ex-Officio).

MOTION # 36/20

Moved by: Fred Calverley
Seconded by: Robert Gruszecki

Move that the ACA Board of Directors appoint the following board members to the Membership Committee:

Brian Joubert
Sandra Mellon
Perry McCormick
Randy Collins
Chuck Priestley
Bill Abercrombie (Ex-Officio)
Todd Zimmerling (Ex-Officio)

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION ITEM: Administration will forward documentation pertaining to New Membership Application process to the committee members.

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b. Electronic Motion: 08/20EV – Ratification: Funding Relief for Organizations Proposal
(Attachment H)

MOTION # 37/20

Moved by: Jeana Schuurman
Seconded by: Richard Stamp

Move that the ACA Board of Directors agree that this is a accurate reflection of the votes placed and therefore ratify Electronic Motion: 08/20EV stating:

“Move that the ACA Board of Directors approve the Funding Relief for Organizations proposal, as of September 2020. ACA move forward with: 1) funding relief for organizations with approved ACA Grants in the 2020/21 fiscal year, as per the attached proposal; and 2) the ACA COVID relief fund for conservation organizations, as per the attached proposal”.

MOTION CARRIED

b. COVID Relief Fund Update – November 2020
(Attachment I)

Update of the COVID Relief Fund Results as of November 2020 was provided for information.

c. Election of Officers and Committee Appointments
(Attachment J)

For the position of Chairman

- Robert Gruszecki nominated Bill Abercrombie.
- Bill Abercrombie accepted the nomination.
- Seeing no other nominations, nominations cease, **Bill Abercrombie** is appointed by acclamation to the position of **Chairman**.

For the position of Vice-Chairman

- Bill Abercrombie nominated Robert Gruszecki.
- Robert Gruszecki accepted the nomination.
- Seeing no other nominations, nominations cease, **Robert Gruszecki** is appointed by acclamation to the position of **Vice-Chairman**.

For the position of Treasurer

- Robert Gruszecki nominated Sandra Mellon.
- Sandra Mellon accepted the nomination.

- Seeing no other nominations, nominations cease, **Sandra Mellon** is appointed by acclamation to the position of **Treasurer**.

For the position of Secretary

- Bill Abercrombie nominated Greg Shyba.
- Greg Shyba accepted the nomination.
- Seeing no other nominations, nominations cease, **Greg Shyba** is appointed by acclamation to the position of **Secretary**.

MOTION # 38/20

Moved by: Randy Collins
Seconded by: Fred Calverley

Move that the ACA Board of Directors accept the names put forward for the Standing Committees as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

d. BOD Matrix – Selection Criteria

Discussion on the use the BOD Matrix as a tool for identifying the qualities of board members for the ACA BOD.

ACTION ITEM: Administration to resend Matrix document to BOD for Review. BOD to review and provide comments to Greg Shyba, updated document to be reviewed at the March 2021 board meeting.

10. Closed Session

No closed session required.

11. Date and Location of Next Meeting

a) 2021 Meeting Calendar (*Attachment K*)

The 2021 Meeting Calendar was presented for review. Consensus that the BOD is in agreement scheduled meeting dates as presented be accepted.

The next scheduled BOD Meeting – March 24 – 25, 2021– Edmonton, AB

- March 24, 2021 (Wednesday) Committee Meetings
- March 25, 2021 (Thursday) 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Regular BOD Meeting

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION # 39/20

Moved by: Sandra Mellon
Seconded by: Fred Calverley

Move that the BOD Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The Board of Director's meeting was adjourned at 1:34 PM.



(Chairman)



(Secretary)