

## 1Q 2025 ALA Director's Meeting 3-20-2025

The Zoom meeting was called to order by President Bernie Gracy at 7:30 pm. Present were Susan Gresser, VP & Director of Community Outreach; Gennette Carr, Treasurer and Director of Membership; Connie Jackson, Secretary; Kim Hubbard, Director of Community Science; Tim Cowan, Director of Communications; Don Tase, Director of Fundraising; and Larry Steeneck, Director of Events. Bernie called a quorum.

The first order of business was to approve the Q4-24 meeting minutes - motion was made and seconded; all were in favor.

The second item was to accept the treasurer's report: as of 12/12/24 the account balance was \$8,690.20. \$490 in donations and \$1,770 in dues were taken in; \$466.06 was expended for the annual membership drive mailing costs and our FOVLAP (Federation of Vermont Lakes & Ponds) membership fee. The account balance is now \$15,170.20. Gennette reported that we have 70 current paid member-camps, 19 people who sent in their dues have already signed up to attend July's annual meeting, and that 9 people have requested Lake Wise assessments for their waterfront properties. Motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report - all were in favor.

The first item of old business was a discussion about what is and what isn't working for the ALA as an organization. Everyone agreed that recruiting volunteers to assist in our various undertakings is our biggest challenge. We need people to: serve on the Board and/or committees; administer the Lake Greeter Program; coordinate with the MWA (Memphremagog Watershed Association) contractors re our LWAP (Lake Watershed Assessment Program); communicate with members; update the website timely; participate in wake boat hearings; participate in collecting water samples, etc. The board agreed that we need to formulate a succession plan for the eventual retirement of the existing board that will ensure continued work for the benefit of our beautiful lakes. How do we accomplish that?

We followed that discussion with a review and discussion around restructuring the ALA into a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, Averill Lakes Association, Inc. Our one-man legal committee, attorney Jim Clemons, kindly drafted bylaws for our review, as well as a summary of the pros and cons of the proposal. It is a straightforward process which will require annual filing with VT and the IRS. The advantages are that member donations would be tax exempt and there would be limited liability for directors/officers. Don Tase pointed out that organizations he has been involved with that award grants to non-profits will only donate to those that are 501(c)(3)'s. One of the primary purposes of the LWAP is to identify projects that will improve water quality in our lakes, and grant funding is often available to implement those projects.

The new structure, if adopted at the annual meeting in July, would allow more flexibility in director roles. There would be no more "Director of ..." titles, only directors and president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. We hope this would encourage more members to assume board positions and to form/join committees.

After much discussion, the motion was made to recommend and vote on the restructure of ALA as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization at the July meeting. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

Under new business: Bernie asked for a motion and second to approve funding the Lake Greeter program for 2025. Motion was made/seconded to allocate up to \$8,000 of our funds for that purpose. All were in favor.

Susan has written and submitted a grant proposal to VT-DEC for \$10,637. She expects 75% of that will be funded by the State. Last year's reimbursement covered all of our out-of-pocket expenses because all volunteer time/mileage is also counted as an expense in the grant writing. Matt LaFerrier has agreed to continue as greeter on Big Averill, Saturdays and Sundays starting in mid-June. He suggested to Susan that the board enlist volunteer greeters to work Friday afternoons in order to cover the times when many folks put in. The Augustinskis have likewise agreed to again work as Greeters at the boat launch on Little Averill (with ARCO's blessing), but they are unable to start until July. Susan stated that anyone who has previously taken the live greeter training can take a Teams update, but that anyone who works has to be trained every year. Any new volunteers would be required to participate in the 4-hour live training.

Kim has been working with Sam Mayne of the Essex NRCD (Natural Resources Conservation District) to schedule a lakeshore restoration in May, using plantings to improve water quality/reduce runoff. This is in conjunction with the Lake Wise award program, and Kim is hoping to publish an invitation to the membership to attend an "Open Yard" event later in the summer.

Kim is also on the ARCO (Averill Recreational Camp Owner's) board, elected this past September. He has agreed to act as liaison between ALA and ARCO. ARCO is a mandatory homeowner's association for the properties that were formerly Champion leases, and ARCO is required by its articles to maintain the Jackson Road (to approximately 3.7 miles from Rte. 114) and any other internal roads that service those previously leased lots. ARCO would welcome coordination with ALA, especially in light of the LWAP, which will undoubtedly have recommendations for road/culvert/ditch work.

Susan reported that enough Little Averill lakefront owners have been awarded Lake Wise property designations to qualify Little Averill as a Lake Wise Gold lake. As of fall 2023 only 5 Vermont lakes qualified for that award. She believes Big Averill needs 8 more awards to qualify.

2025 meeting: Bernie would like to step down as president, but he has agreed to stay on as President until July 2026. All directors agreed we should have a succession plan, and a nominating committee. Larry reached out prior to the Zoom meeting re logistics: food, beverages, parking, etc., and he plans to make a site visit to Averill Corp's Inn prior to the meeting day to gather intel. Our speaker will be Jud Kratzer, fisheries biologist with VT Fish & Wildlife.

Bernie thanked everyone for their time and energies! Motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 9:00 pm; all were in favor.

**Action Items:** Bernie plans to update the website this coming weekend to post the draft 501(c)(3) bylaws and Jim's pros and cons summary for membership review prior to our annual meeting in July. Susan and Kim will contact Mark Mitchell to arrange a short Teams meeting with several of the board members in order to inform the members on the results of the lay monitoring and lake tributary testing that we have been doing. Bernie agreed to compose a layman's synopsis of those results to present to the members. Gennette will survey the board via email about ticket prices for our awesome raffle donations.

