

Lake Vermillion Trail Joint Powers Board
Wednesday, August 9, 2023
Via Zoom or teleconference

Joint Powers Board (JPB) members present:

Tim Johnson, Cook, Chair, via Zoom at 5:15

Cathi Hiveley, Beatty, via Zoom

Roxanne Tea, Vermilion Lake via Zoom

Steve Lotz, Vermilion Lake alternate, Treasurer, via Zoom

Carol Booth, Owens via Zoom

John Bassing, Greenwood via Zoom

Ross Swanson, Kugler, via Zoom

Absent: Bois Forte & Tower

Guests: Lee Peterson, area resident

Secretary Cathi Hiveley called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm. The agenda was accepted.

Approval of minutes – Motion by Cathi Hiveley, Beatty, second by Roxanne Tea, Vermilion Lake, to approve the June 14, 2023 meeting minutes as previously distributed, five ayes, no nays, three absent, motion carried.

Reports of Officers & Committees:

Treasurer's report – Steve Lotz reported a balance as of July 31, 2023 of \$3,361.49 after receipt of 2023 dues from Owens. The Treasurer noted he had not received any new information regarding Bois Forte's Vermilion population and would be sending out the Greenwood and Bois Forte dues invoices. Motion by Carol Booth, Owens, second by John Bassing, Greenwood, to approve the Treasurer's report, five ayes, no nays, three absent, motion carried.

Business

East segment – Mesabi Trail expects to designate a route into Tower this fall.

Grant writing – the IRRR grant writing grant funds are to be spent by the end of the year. Carol Booth has spoken with Whitney Ridlon who indicated this could be sorted out in November or December.

Tim Johnson, Cook, joined the meeting (approximate).

Mesabi Trail coordination – Carol Booth, Nancy Salminen, Roxanne Tea, and Carol Burr developed draft language to send to Sarah Ciochetto of the Mesabi Trail to discuss options. The three options listed were:

1. A contractual agreement for some, but not all, of the steps to develop the Lake Vermilion Trail. In this case, we understand that the Joint Powers Board would pay the Mesabi Trail organization for the development or maintenance steps needed at specific points in time.

2. An agreement to complete the section of trail from Tower to the Y-Store intersection. This section is flagged, landowners have been contacted, and wetlands and archaeology work are near completion. Completing environmental analysis, grant applications, easements, engineering, and contract preparation/administration would be needed. Under this option, the Mesabi Trail would add segment 7 to their trail system and take over the costs associated with development and maintenance.
3. An agreement to develop and manage the Lake Vermilion Trail. We understand that this would mean the Lake Vermilion Trail would become a spur of the Mesabi Trail. All costs associated with the development and maintenance of the Lake Vermilion Trail would be the responsibility of the Mesabi Trail organization. The role of the LVT JPB in relation to the Rail Authority would need to be redefined. The role of the Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail would need to be modified and their fund-raising activities would continue.

Cathi Hiveley spoke in favor of option 3. Motion by Carol Booth, Owens, second by Cathi Hiveley, Beatty, to send a letter to Mesabi Trail asking to meet with Mesabi Trail to discuss Mesabi Trail's takeover of the LVT. Discussion followed. John Bassing was concerned by a loss of autonomy and suggested following option 1. Cathi Hiveley said Mesabi Trail was better equipped to develop the LVT. Roxanne Tea suggested a letter listing all three options. Tim Johnson agreed. Lee Peterson asked if this would go to the SLC Board. Carol Booth said any approval would come from the Lake and St. Louis Counties Rail Authority. Tim Johnson noted that Paul McDonald supported the LVT. It was suggested that the letter should invite other options in addition to the three listed. Motion by Carol Booth, Owens, amending her motion to be approve sending a letter listing the three options while also inviting other options, second by Cathi Hiveley, Beatty, accepting amendments, Beatty, Cook, Kugler, Owens, & Vermilion Lake ayes, Greenwood nay, two absent, motion carried. Tim Johnson said he would try to attend the meeting with the Mesabi Trail. Carol Booth suggested that since John Bassing had concerns he should attend. John Bassing reported that Greenwood wanted to get off the JPB as there is not the needed funding and that he would not attend. There was additional discussion of personalities and route feasibility ending with Tim Johnson, Carol Booth, and Steve Lotz offering to meet with Sarah Ciochetto. The Chair thanked all for their candor.

Friends update – work continues on membership management software and a generic grant narrative.

Next meeting is set for October 11, 2023 at 5:00 pm via Zoom.

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Steve Lotz, Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail Secretary