

Association of National Park Rangers Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 26, 2023 BOD Meeting

Time of BOD Meeting – 4:30pm AKT, 5:30pm PT, 6:30pm MT, 7:30pm CT,
8:30pm ET

ZOOM link: Zoom Meeting Link:

Meeting ID: 835 3792 7586

Passcode: 726554

Dial In: +13017158592,,97720779489#,,,,*726554#

----- AGENDA TOPICS -----

Attendance (Secretary)

- Voting Members Present: Rick, Demmy, Meg, Elsa, Shannon, Troy, Emily, Wendy
- Voting Members Absent: Mike, Tom (will be on briefly)
- Others: Bill, Melissa

- BOD: Rick Mossman (President), Demmy Vigil (Secretary), Meg Weesner (Treasurer and International Liaison), Mike Pflaum (Gov Affairs), Elsa Hansen (Internal Communications), Jonathan Shafer (Strategic Planning), Shannon Wilson (Member Services), Troy Hunt (Seasonal Perspectives), Emily Johnson (Professional Issues), Wendy Lauritzen (Fundraising), Tom Banks (Education and Training); Non-voting: Bill Wade (Executive Director), Melissa DeVaughn (Business Manager),

Approval of Minutes from the previous BoD meeting(s) (President):

- Meg motioned to approve, Troy seconded, no discussion, all approved.

Treasurer's Report:

- (Meg) Please review the Financial Statements that Executive Director Wade sent out on Sept 20. This is a chance to ask any questions that you may have. It's important that we all pay attention to this, because collectively the Board of Directors is responsible for the financial health of the organization.

Executive Director's Report:

- (Bill) I only received a couple minor comments on the draft Membership Growth report. The only change made to the copy you have now is to add "Alternative 6 - Combine any of the aforementioned alternatives." Assuming no objection from the BOD, the next step would be to provide the report to participants at registration at the RR and have

discussions and final decision during the membership meetings. I will need three BOD members to facilitate the discussions on Saturday after lunch.

- Financial reports for September were distributed to BOD. You'll see that the \$6000+ under budget for RR registrations contributes to the \$8000+ net loss as of the end of September.

Old Business (President):

- Public Information Officer–We will discuss this at the board meeting at the Rendezvous.

New Business (President):

- [Wade] Agenda items for RR membership meetings (also we should have minutes of the meeting(s) to distribute to the members). Demmy can draft an agenda (like last year's) then you all can add to it.
 - I have asked for agenda items in the member newsletter that went out on the 24th.
- I have committed to some awards being made to give out at the rendezvous. If anyone on the board has other award nominees please contact me ASAP.
- I have called a number of you to be on the nominating committee for the election. I'm waiting to hear on the chairperson (Lauren DeGennaro agreed to be on the committee). I also have been in the process of contacting those folks that were in the last election "and lost" to see if they would be interested in running again.

We are electing these board positions for a full three year term beginning January 2024:

Education & Training

Strategic Planning

Internal affairs

Treasurer

If you have potential nominees, please let me know, and get the word out to potential candidates.

- (Banks) A representative of the "Occupational Information Network" (O*NET, or <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/onet>), working with the U.S. Department of Labor, has reached out to ANPR to get our help recruiting experienced interpreters to answer a 90-minute survey to help update their information about the "park naturalist" profession. Volunteers who participate will receive a \$50 gift card from O*Net. An innocuous request, but just the same, I'd like to ask for the Board's support before advertising this opportunity in our newsletter and at the Rendezvous. For more information, see the letter to me at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xC27VGWprsskNwqaOKY4Uljzyjo6u48n/edit> (I think this new link will work.)
- (Vigil) Melissa and I worked to get last year's and this year's approved meeting minutes onto the public-facing website.

Reports:

- [NOTE: Reports should be entered by each member or committee **at least 7 days prior to the BOD meeting**. Reports should focus primarily on status related to strategic plan action

items. If any decision is needed by the BOD related to the report, it should be so indicated by:

- DECISIONS NEEDED: (with description of the needed decision) which will then be added to New Business in the MINUTES with action taken. See brief example below under the President's Report.
- All members should read this agenda prior to the BOD meeting. Reports will not be discussed at the BOD meeting except for: 1) any last-minute updates to the report since it was entered, 2) any questions anyone has about the report, or 3) any decisions needed.]
- President: See New and Old Business.
- Secretary:
 - Triad (ANPR/NPCA/Coalition) meeting on Sept 14. The following are the notes: Yosemite and Grand Canyon are the only parks to follow up with the [RISE program](#). Goals are there but there is no implementation strategy. Implementing RISE is a heavy lift for park staff. Consolidation is also going on within the Branch of HR/L&D/EEO. The employees are already over taxed to assist in implementing a “good line” like RISE.
 - Wellness coordinator positions are a positive outcome.
 - Covid hires in a large park are happening under the Special hire authority or “Emergency Hire” but they have no status; No credit for being in the NPS. When someone is hired like this they should be told what their special hiring means and what the expectations are.
 - RISE was going to be linked with Youth Partnerships and incorporated into the Fundamentals curriculum.
 - The RISE document sounds good and has all the right words, great vision. RISE has raised expectations so what do we do now? How can we (the Triad) help? There is a need for more boots on the ground. This may be happening around the service.
 - IRA ([Inflation Reduction Act](#)) was going to hire 5000 employees in a 10 year span. What is status and why isn't the hiring to NPS happening?
 - Advocating for funds/staffing NPCA does this. Coalition does not do this. Where can ANPR help?
 - Jamie is the new replacement for George McDonald.
 - Thoughts to coordinate face to face meetings with various individuals in WASO to share our voices. Possible meeting in the beginning of January with NPS officials to include NPCA, Coalition, ANPR.
 - Update on Intern reports from Tyler and PIA Intern Project. Final edits are happening; by next weekend will be on their website. The triad may send it to Regional Directors and ask to pass it to their employees/offices. Rita Moss, Glen Hooks too.

- Accountability Advisory Council with Glenn Hooks. Clara talked to him yesterday. Glen is still planning to have this council. We suspect he doesn't have an agenda yet. By next week Glen would be inviting us to a call to move forward. In anticipation of this Glen Hooks meeting we should brainstorm ideas for recruiting. What are their biggest challenges? What tools do they have at their disposal? Clara Wooden and I will draft ideas for the team to look at.
- Treasurer:
 - See comments above.
- Executive Director
 - RR registrations are well below last year and I anticipate under 100 participants, including presenters. Only five first-time attendees, including the three Supernauth Scholars. About 60% of current registrants are retirees. We have a full program and an informative, diverse one. Frank Lands, NPS Deputy Director for Operations now scheduled to present Friday evening the 20th (confirmed by email 9/26).
 - Go to this link to view the full program: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bRHymB5EK5cKXLPO5V_oiEtfjo7eUR0v/edit#gid=457120498
 - The only BOD members not registered for the RR are Hansen and Shafer, so it appears that we will have a quorum for the BOD meeting.
 - Room reservations for BOD at the Southbank Hotel (from rooming list provided by hotel):
 - Mossman - 16th through the 23rd
 - Johnson - 17th through the 23rd
 - Wilson - 17th through the 22nd
 - Lauritzen - 17th through the 23rd
 - Shafer - 16th through the 17th and 18th through the 22nd (no reservation for night of the 17th)
 - Weesner - 17th through the 23rd
 - Vigil - 17th through the 23rd (I have extra bed till evening of 19th)
 - Hunt - 17th through the 23rd
 - Pflaum - 17th through the 23rd
 - Banks - 17th through the 23rd
 - Wade - 16th through the 23rd
 - DeVaughn - 17th through the 22nd
 - We have a contingency plan for the RR in the event of a government shutdown that continues to RR time. It would affect several presenters who would be unable to travel, but we can adjust the agenda and perhaps get several local presenter substitutes, and adjust the field trips if necessary. No impact on RR registrants. The show will go on...
- Business Manager:
 - I worked on an updated Disaster Relief press release with Jamie in August and we posted online, in the magazine, and in social media; it garnered just under \$1,000.

- Monthly reconciliation went smoothly. No new life members for this cycle.
 - I posted a news releases on the IRF Ranger survey, as requested by Meg
 - I worked with the web builder to create a more streamlined donations page, in which members may make all donations at one time rather than making them separate transactions.
 - I'm now on the Mailchimp account as a backup to Bill for newsletters and other information. We confirmed that if people are not getting the newsletter it is because they are opting out. All new memberships are linking to the newsletter.
 - Billing for additional advertising for the fall issue of Ranger was sent out the third week of September.
 - I helped several members with mailing address questions and encourage everyone on the board to let your fellow members know that if your address changes, you NOW HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHANGE IT YOURSELF. No need to contact us – just go into your account and update any information you need. You can change mailing address, print edition status, your park and/or title, and any other information you want.
 - I had some requests for extra copies of the magazine and mailed those out.
 - With the help of Demmy (thank you!), I have uploaded all of our 2022 through the present meeting minutes to the website. I went back in and converted the remaining 2021 minutes to PDFs and uploaded those as well. We should be up to date with the exception of the October 2021 meeting minutes, which I could not find.
 - As of 9/22, we have 57 RR46 registrants; 52 of whom as full-conference registrants. We were at 111 this time last year.
- Education and Training:
 - (Tom) Fielded several calls regarding mentorship.
 - Working with O*NET (U.S. Dept of Labor contractor) on finding interpreters for their career survey (see new business).
 - Training sessions canceled at Rendezvous due to insufficient reservations. I'm going to ask the trainers if they could do some quarterly Zoom training on their topics.
 - "Ask-a-Ranger" link on our website goes to Bill and he forwards to Tom to get help.
- Fundraising:
 - (Wendy) looking at fundraising for next year's RR.
 - Encourage participants to bring raffle items.
- Internal Communications:
 - (Elsa)I will not be attending RR this year. I have a weeklong AO meeting in Lakewood right before the RR weekend.
 - Continuing to post about Rendezvous
- Membership Services:
 -
- Professional Issues:
 - (Emily)No updates.

- Seasonal Perspectives:
 - (Troy) I am seeing increasing discontent being expressed in the social media groups about the possibility of permanent employment and/or career advancement. The dissatisfaction is being expressed to the point that there is a small, but vocal group recommending to folks early in their seasonal careers to abandon the NPS and look for work in other, more stable regions/fields. I don't know what, if anything, I can do about any of this. But I have been suggesting that ANPR membership may help to push advocacy in their favor.
 - Many folks are asking about what, if anything, can be done to strengthen their resumes to get past the initial computer screening system and into the hands of hiring agents. I wonder if we can arrange some kind of support for them where ANPR folks who are or have been in the hiring role can help mentor folks on their resumes.
 - Tom organizes Resume/Application process as BOD. Can we have a "session" on the RR schedule to officially offer this? Shannon suggests asking Tim to do an informal session on this. HR can help with general assistance when it is NOT an active application-open dates.
 - Sept 11 LE jobs opened up online. There are examples of very slow background checks to bring on Seasonals that has been very discouraging.

- Government Affairs:

Occasionally I am still asked about the status of the "Federal Retirement Fairness Act" (H.R. 4268) from the previous Congress (117th). This is the bill which proposed to allow seasonal and temporary employees to "buy back" time by making retirement contributions. This bill had bipartisan support following its introduction (reintroduction actually) in the House on June 30, 2021 with bipartisan support. However it appears to have died upon the closure of the 117th Congress in January, 2023. I can not find any evidence that it has been introduced in any form in the 118th Congress. My opinion is that a similar bill would be of great benefit to many current NPS employees. Should ANPR write a letter or letters regarding this?

A bill of interest to many federal retirees, as well as current employees, is "The Equal COLA Act" (H.R. 866) which was introduced in the 118th Congress. This bill would provide FERS retirees with the same annual COLA as CSRS retirees. Currently, FERS Retirees receive a COLA that is 1% less than CSRS employees for any CSRS COLA of 3% or over. This bill was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability on February 8, 2023. No additional action that I can find documentation for. As an example, a FERS retired employees who's retirement benefit is currently \$50,000 annually receives \$500 less in a COLA if the COLA is over 3% than would a CSRS retired employee. And you can do the math if the numbers are higher or lower. Should ANPR consider writing in support of this?

Currently the projected average federal pay raise for 2024 is 5.2%. On August 31, 2023, President Biden submitted an alternative pay plan to leaders of Congress containing the 5.2% average raise. The raise will take effect in January, 2024 unless Congress enacts a

different pay scheme for 2024, and as of early September, both the House and Senate spending packages were silent on the raise, which usually indicates an endorsement of the administration's plans. It is unknown how the current wrangling over the federal budget and potential government shutdown may affect this proposed raise. If the average raise is confirmed as 5.2%, it would be the largest such raise since 1980, when it was 9.1%. The average pay raise in 2023 was 4.6% and in 2022 it was 2.7%.

The Federal Retirement COLA for CSRS for 2024 is currently projected to be 3.2% and for FERS the projection is 2.2%. The official number will be announced by the Social Security Administration in mid-October, 2023 after the CPI for September is released. The projected number is subject to change based upon the final CPI calculations. In 2023 the COLA was 8.7% for CSRS and 7.7% for FERS.

The projected Social Security benefit COLA for 2024 is 3.2%. SSA will finalize the number after the September CPI report is in and it could be different from the projected 3.2%.

As is obvious, the looming possibility of a government shutdown has major implications for NPS employees and the parks and more.

I currently plan to be in Jacksonville for the ANPR Board Meeting and Ranger Rendezvous.

- Strategic Planning:
 - (Jonathan) Mid year reviews are ongoing. Jonathan is putting together a State of the Organization type paper for RR.
 - A new PD GS-0025 PSAR position have been created. This is not a career ladder as they are GS- 4 and 5 grades. Is this a concern for GS-0025 not having a career ladder as in the past?

- IRF Liaison (Meg):
 - I participated in the Annual General Membership Meeting of the International Ranger Federation. There is a lot going on around the world. The big news is that IRF has become a registered non-profit in the US with tax exempt (501(c)(3) status. They will be vacating their registration as a "Corporation" in Australia, as they were not able to receive tax exempt status there.
 - I will be giving a 45-minute breakout session on Sunday morning at the RR. I'll cover IRF activities and the 10th World Ranger Congress to be held in Hyeres in the south of France 7-11 October 2024.
 - IRF's North American Representative Andy Wright will be attending our RR. He works for Tennessee State Parks, which has a ranger association that is a member of IRF.
 - With Wendy's permission, I will be doing a little fund-raising for WRC scholarships during the RR. I have some IRF pins and patches. For each donation to support scholarships, you will receive your choice of a pin or a patch, English or Spanish (minimum \$10).

- Membership Growth Task Group
 - See under Executive Director's Report. Thanks to Mike Pflaum, Emily Johnson, Shannon Wilson, Michelle Torok, Kevin Moses and Bob Krumenaker for their involvement in this task group.

- Ranger Museum Task Group
 - (Shannon) Yellowstone foundation will have a meeting regarding the Ranger Museum soon. Update to come.

- Harry Yount Award Task Group
 - Rick to follow up on this.

Adjourn: [7;20 mountain time] * When a finalized agenda is cleaned up and it is put into the Approved Minutes Folder.

Next meeting: Ranger Rendezvous, October 18, 2023 All Day BOD