

Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2010

Attendees:

Ken Crews – President
Keli Harold – Past President
Fred Obenchain – Treasurer
Hank Boyd – Director at Large
Les Fuller – Director at Large
Robin Watson – Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 pm.

Discussion of Ray Tubbs Resignation:

It is with great sadness that the Board receives the resignation of Ray Tubbs as President-Elect, Youth Committee Chairman and Newsletter Editor. Ken will write an email thanking Ray for his service (the Board to approve first).

The following items were discussed:

1) The Board is empowered to fill the President-Elect office, 2) we need input from the membership to find someone to take on this large responsibility, 3) we need to hold a special election so the membership can vote on a candidate, 4) time is of the essence so the new candidate can take over as President, 5) the secretary will make up a ballot which will include a write-in nominee, 6) Les can be the inspector of elections to receive and tally ballots, 7) each nominee needs to provide a short statement.

Ken made the motion that he will put together a letter asking the membership for nominations for President-Elect and that we as a Board will approve the letter by January 6th, so that an email and letter can be sent to the members by January 11th. A second email will be sent out January 18th with a return of all nominations by January 25th. Based on those nominations, a ballot will be sent out by January 31st and returned to Les by March 3rd (30 days). Les, as inspector of elections, will count all the ballots with two other members and notify by email, posting on website and next newsletter of the outcome of the election. All were in favor with this process.

Minutes from meeting of December 7th, 2009: The minutes from the December 7th meeting were approved and unanimously accepted.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$38,500.73
Available Balance: \$35,677.41

Fred reported that the bulk of the loss for the show was a lack of sponsorships, high expenses with number of judges. We may want to consider not having a speaker next year. Les moved that we accept the treasurer's report, Ken seconded and all were in favor.

Committee Reports:

Youth Committee: No report submitted. (Need Volunteers).

Education Committee: No report submitted (Need Volunteers).

Fiber Committee: The Fiber Committee report was given to the Board in writing by B-J Ellis as follows:

Virginia's Finest/Best

1. An edited thank you note went out to last year's fiber committee; followed by a request to meet face-to-face in Ruckersville, VA, at Dee Dee Greer's studio, along with some invited guests and this year's committee. Date chosen appears to be Sat. Jan23, to be combined with a visit to the Central VA Mill nearby. Each member of the meeting has been asked to formulate how they would describe the best alpaca yarn/fiber.
2. Any responses from members concerning the original VA Alpaca Standards that might be found, need to be assembled and forwarded to us before 23 Jan. Please send to "bjellis1@mac.com."
3. B-J is typing up a state-by-state spread sheet about what all the other states are requiring for their marketing/buy-local programs through USDA.
4. Ralph Muraca of Misty Mountain, a Suri Breeder, has done a yeoman's job by introducing B-J to Liz Vahlkamp, Chair of the Fiber Committee for the Suri Network. We are still discussing points by e-mail, and hope to have a way of including the Suri fiber in the Standards, without confusion.

Other Matters:

5. The committee would like a list of any areas (covered by other VAOBA committees) that the fiber committee should avoid, so we can proceed with dividing up our primary responsibilities among the committee members. Adopt a 4-H Project has been greeted with enthusiasm. Is there a place on the VAOBA website where their proposals/requests for assistance can be posted along with specs about their particular project. This would be good training for the 4H kids to plan their project AND have assistance with proper (rather than 10% alpaca yarn at Michael's) supplies.
6. We prefer to maintain the concept of socks for Virginia Wounded Warriors, but not based on selling socks from a particular vendor. Instead, the plan is to take donations (ring-side at shows), and purchase USA/Canadian-made alpaca socks. The role of hand-made socks and quality control is still being discussed. What is the process for collecting money? Who/How?
7. Planning for NEW SHOW ACTIVITIES: adult fashion design (an ensemble) and textile design. We need a Fiber Arts show manager to help co-ordinate and join the Fiber Committee in the development of guidelines and advertising. We need to have the Board decide the cost of these entries. What information do you need from the Fiber Committee to decide the entry fee?
8. One of the responsibilities of this committee is to remind VAOBA members of fiber shows and like activities. Our Question to the Board: We have the NC Show and Palmetto Show coming up. Is it a conflict of interest for us to push these shows since one of our committee members happens to be the superintendent of both of these?

Board Discussion: Keli suggested that the Fiber Committee also look at what our AOBA National Committee has to say about standards, marketing of fiber and guidelines. Hank disagreed and stated that this is VA's finest, not national. Fred said in regards to item #8, members should go to the AOBA website to see where else to send fiber arts and spinoffs – there are also helpful hints about how to enter a fleece. All accepted B-J's Fiber Committee Report.

Industry Relations: (Need Volunteers).

Marketing: No report submitted. (Need Volunteers).

Membership: (Additional Volunteers welcome). Hank has not received any new memberships. Fred has been working with one new member that has had some problems with the website and would like to receive a refund. It was decided to refund his membership fee. The Board decided to offer a prorated partial year's membership (beginning January 1st thru June 30th) for a voting farm membership for \$50.00. All approved the Membership Committee report.

Newsletter: (Need Volunteers).

Show Committee: (Active Recruitment): The Show Committee report was given to the Board in writing by Judy Howe as follows:

I have signed the contract with the horse center for our weekend show. I will need to send them the down payment check next week. One major difference this year is that the room upstairs where we held the fleece show is not included in our rental of the building. We can rent that room, but it will be an extra fee. I will try to find out how much. Prices are up a small amount.

I have blocked 115 rooms in Lexington. I have 25 at the Best Western Hunt Ridge, 25 at the Comfort Inn, 25 at the Howard Johnson's and 40 at the Days Inn. Our weekend again is the same as VMI's parent weekend so prices are higher than they would normally be. Most rates are higher, except for Howard Johnson, who has given us a very low rate for 'show personnel'. I will put some of the VAOBA paid rooms at Best Western and some at the Howard Johnson. I will block a few more rooms at another hotel outside of town (within 15 minutes) so we can have some 'cheaper' ones on the list.

We have more positions to fill. We need the fleece show super if we are going to have our fleece show at the halter show... Also need the spin off/fiber arts superintendent if we intend to offer that as well - and I recommend we do as it is very popular. I would like to again hire Patty Fuller to do the artwork/flyers for the 2010 year. It is important that we do that soon, so she can get going on the design and we have flyers done for the spring shows. Last year she charged us \$1,000 for the year, and its for the VAOBA in general so not solely a show expense, so if you can get approval and hire her, that would get things off to a start. I believe she is also interested in the Aux Fiber Show Superintendent position. I think Ray was going to do RFPs for the 2 fleece superintendent positions.

I am going to start working on the sponsorship packages and will get it to you in January to review and provide input. I would like to get someone very active to be the sponsor coordinator

for farms. I wish Ben Rogers would do again. I want to have Brenda Breedlove do the corporate sponsorships (and I will assist her in the corporate thing) because it works well in conjunction with the vendors. Brenda has said she will again do the store, the vendors and corporate sponsors. I would like to offer her something better than a business card sized ad in the program, maybe a sponsorship. She really does a lot of work. Please give it some thought.

Sue is working the registration and certification side of things and has us up on the AOBA show website. We discuss show things periodically. It's still early, but we're on the case. If you wanted to have a separate fleece show in August in conjunction with an education weekend, that might be an interesting thing to do. Anyone interested?

Board Discussion: The Board will supply Sue Ives, Show Superintendant, with the names of four judges for consideration for VAOBA Expo 2010. We definitely need the upper room for the fleece show and banquet. The Board approved Patty Fuller to do the artwork and flyers for 2010. Fred moved to accept the Show Committee Report, Keli seconded and all were in favor.

Action Items from Previous Meetings:

Virginia Agribusiness Banquet: Keli and Dr. John Ferrante will attend the banquet on January 14th, 2010

AlpacaStreet Marketing Proposal (Status of Dan Coulter Presentation): Robin will contact Dan to find out more about his proposal for VAOBA members.

Virginia's Finest (Current Status): Meeting to be held January 23rd, 2010.

VAOBA License Plate (Current Status): The designs are in process - Ken will forward the info from Don Goble to the Board. Keli would like to see if a portion of the proceeds could go to a special interest group.

New Business:

Neonatal Class: Les stated that the neonatal class is expensive and the numbers have been down. We may have to postpone it this year or have it in the fall. He spoke to a local vet about doing the class. He would not have as much experience as Cheryl but he would not be as expensive. Suggested we think about holding the class at VA State instead of VA Tech – a change in venue may attract a different group of farms. Les will have Patti take a look at this option and get back to the Board next month. Hank suggested that VA State – which already has alpaca study grant money that must be used – could be approached to dedicate some of their grant money to our neonatal program.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Watson
Secretary 2009-2010