

**Appalachian Mountain Club – Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee
Minutes of Meeting - January 16, 2006**

Members present: Rob Robertson, Deb Levine, Alice Hodgdon, Alicia Wendolowski, Cosmo Catalano, Pat Fletcher, Kelly Druzisky, and Pat Stevenson

Guests present: Bess Dillman and Ellen Missale

Robertson, who read the AMC mission statement, called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

Minutes of the December meeting were read and accepted with the following changes:

A reference to November 16, 2005 minutes.....“There was a question on the amount of money for membership dues that was not able to be answered at this meeting. The *treasurer’s* report was not accepted due to this question.”

A reference to December 19, 2005 minutes Cosmo Catalano – AT.....”Cosmo said there was not much to report. The local management plan for the AT in Massachusetts has been updated, and it is the first update in 10 years. This is the manual that *the AT Committee* operates with and contains *ATC, DCR, and NPS* policies, etc.). Catalano said there would be a maintainers meeting in January, and they will create the work list for the coming year at that time. The AT Committee will meet on 1/7/06.”

Treasurer’s Report:

A question regarding the treasurer’s report was raised....specifically where does supplemental dues of \$3,000 appear as income. The amount shows under membership dues. Also, Robertson suggested adding a line under expenses for membership in a bottle.

A motion was made by Hodgdon to accept the report, seconded by Catalano.

Committee Reports:

In the interest of focusing on the topic of membership and the possibility of having an intern from UMass work with our chapter on this subject, Robertson suggested that the Executive Committee forgo committee reports and use the remainder of the meeting to discuss these issues. The Committee agreed and guests Dillman and Missale were invited to share their thoughts and recommendations.

Membership and Internship:

With regard to membership, the primary goal that emerged from all of the discussion was to attract new members and retain them. Other goals mentioned included:

- Increase the conversion rate
- Increase the percentage of younger members
- Promote service opportunities (XC)
- Develop new activity leaders
- Involve extg. members more fully – increase renewals
- Develop family leaders
- Increase public awareness and visibility

With regard to how to achieve the goals set forth, the following recommendations were made and discussed:

- Develop new member surveys to determine what people are looking for in their membership, (i.e., what activities appeal to people)
- Develop post-hike surveys for evaluation purposes
- Call non-renewing members to determine why they have not renewed
- Develop focus groups
- Increase publicity via newspapers, postings at YMCA's, grocery stores, schools, ads with photos of past activities, meet and greet socials
- Offer half-day activities that may appeal to a broader group (i.e. older population, families with younger children, dog friendly hikes, and family oriented activities.)

Guests Dillman and Missale recommended that efforts should be made to do the following:

- Gather information on our competition
- Gather information on what interests people
- Get notices of upcoming events in newspapers/AMC periodical with photos in a timely fashion
- Gain knowledge of doing a press release
- Gain knowledge of editing when sending notices to AMC Outdoors periodical
- Do press release for membership drives
- Most important, get ourselves organized with regard to what our goal(s) are and then develop a strategy to achieve the goal(s)

After all this discussion, it was agreed by all that it is not a good idea to have an intern at this time as we need to put our energy into getting organized, defining what our goals are, and developing a strategy to achieve those goals. Both Dillman and Missale advised us that interns require monitoring for the purpose of getting credits and we are not in a position to do that kind of monitoring at this time. Both agreed that, our energy would be best spent getting organized.

Robertson made a motion to create a Public Relations Committee and that the chair of that committee would be a voting member of the Executive Committee. The motion was seconded and all approved. Dillman agreed to serve as chair of the Public Relations Committee, and she agreed to do a press release for the upcoming New Membership meeting to be held on March 25, 2006.

Fleece update:

At present, there is no final number on the cost and there has been some interest by the Delaware Chapter of the AMC to place an order with ours.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:30 P.M. Motion seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held in the same location at 6:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 15, 2006.

Patricia A. Stevenson, Secretary