

**Appalachian Mountain Club – Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee
Minutes of Meeting – February 15, 2006**

Members present: Rob Robertson, Deb Levine, Cosmo Catalano, Donna Walters, Bess Dillman, Bob Napolitano, Chris Mangano, Connie Peterson, and Pat Stevenson

Robertson called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M. and read the AMC mission statement.

Minutes of the January, 2006 meeting were read and accepted.

Committee Reports:

With the exception of the Public Relations Committee, Robertson recommended that the Executive Committee focus on the AMC Berkshire Chapter Expense Reimbursement Policy and forgo all other reports at this time.

AMC Berkshire Chapter Expense Reimbursement Policy:

The proposed policy submitted by Gary Forish, Chairperson, Noble View Committee, is stated on page 2 of the agenda for the February 15, 2006 Executive Committee Meeting.

After reading and discussing the proposed policy as submitted by Gary Forish, the following changes (*italicized*) were recommended:

- Reimburse vehicle expenses at the then-current federal reimbursement rate, with no mileage limit. We encourage carpooling to minimize the waste of resources.
- Reimburse expenses to cover the *registration* cost of the *club-wide* meeting.
- Reimburse overnight lodging expenses based on *minimum cost of available lodging* (such as accommodations in a bunk room or other minimum cost shared space). The attendee may upgrade the overnight accommodation at his/her own expense. If lodging space is not available because of a last minute booking and other more expensive accommodations must be made, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the bunkroom or other minimum cost shared space.
- Reimburse meals based on reasonable costs incurred.
- Overnight lodging will only be paid when the meeting is over 250 miles *roundtrip* from *ones residence*, when the meeting is of seven hours or more in duration or the meeting is over multiple days.

Walters and Stevenson agreed to explore what other agencies, both federal and state, offer for per diem rates of reimbursement and report back to the committee at their next meeting.

Public Relations Committee Report: Bess Dillman

As the new PR person for the Berkshire Chapter of the AMC, Dillman presented a list of information that she planned to email to Executive Committee members for review and recommendations. Her focus is for specific events that are being planned such as the March 25th Annual Potluck Dinner. Other possible events mentioned were Nobleview activities, National Trails Day, a family hike, trail maintenance, etc. She also asked for recommendations for papers to target and information that should be included in the press release. Press releases for specific events should include the following:

- As much lead time as possible, two months is preferred.
- An interesting photo to accompany the release. It can be from a previous similar event or could be a staged photo. Digital is best but she has a camera and has done this kind of photography professionally.
- All pertinent information regarding the event (who, what, when, where, why).
- Especially important.....Why is this event or activity important to the readers? Think in terms of the mission statement....recreation, environment, economics, etc. The strength of this will mean being relegated to the back pages with no picture, or on the cover of the front or regional section with the picture included. Often the picture is the deciding factor.
- Any interesting background information.
- Contact person for the editor with all info including email, day and evening phone numbers if possible (editors often work into the evening), hours of availability.
- A quote from your or someone n the importance or personal significance of the event. May be from a past participant.
- Give the information in whatever form is comfortable for you...a list of items is okay. Dillman will write from whatever you present to her and will ask for more details if she needs them. Keep in mind, she may send you an email with the release to okay before she sends it out.
- **REMINDER, THE GOAL OF THE RELEASE IS TO:**
 1. Be newsworthy so the papers will run the article.
 2. Increase public awareness of AMC Berkshire Chapter in line with our mission statement.
 3. Attract new and younger members and increase renewals
 4. Increase membership participation in service and leadership.

Papers to be targeted included the Berkshire Eagle, Hampshire Gazette, Recorder, North Adams Transcript, Republican/Sunday Republican, Westfield Evening News and Advocate for Pioneer Valley.

Concern was expressed about listing hikes in the paper and getting a large response (i.e. 30 or more participants). After discussion, it was decided that, for a trial basis, Dillman would feature two or three hikes....one easy, one hard.....with leaders consent and see what kind of response we get. If a trip leader gets a strong response, backups can be called in to assist and/or break up the group into smaller groups. Walters agreed to send an email to trip leaders to find out who would be interested in having their hikes listed in the paper.

Prior to adjourning, Robertson asked all committee members to review the emails from Chris Post, included with the 2/15/06 agenda, relative to Chapters Committee Planning and bring their thoughts relative to this issue to the next meeting.

Their being no further business to report, a motion was made by Catalano to adjourn at 8:30 P.M. and seconded by Mangano.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 20, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.

Patricia A. Stevenson, Secretary

