

**Hancock Trails Club
Board Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2026**

Attendance: Jay Green, Eric Watkins, Mark Roberts, Mark Klein, Murphy Mallow, Ian Helman, Mare Grohowski, and Keith Meyers. Absent: Nate Laakonen, Brett Hauswirth, Jesse Wiederhold, and Dean Woodbeck. Guest: John Diebel

Jay convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Agenda: Resolution and KLT were added to the agenda.

Public Comment: None

Minutes: Jay noted changes that needed to be made to the Executive Committee and Finance Committee reports and a name spelling correction under Trail Updates. Mark Roberts moved that the minutes be approved with these changes. Mare supported the motion with a second. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Groomers: Mark Roberts reported that the groomers are working as hard as they can. Kyle worked seven hours today and seven hours yesterday. John Pekkala is no longer grooming for us. Mark indicated that the board should write a thank you letter to John for his service to the Club. Jay indicated that he would write the letter. It was noted that John may be back at some point. Mark noted that the Defender has maintenance issues with the pods.

Treasurer's Report: No report with Brett absent, but he will be sending one out.

Executive Committee: Jay reported that the closing date on the property will be February 5th and that we need a resolution that Jay can buy the property on behalf of the Club and can sign for it. Jay read the resolution. Mark Roberts moved that the board approve the resolution. Eric supported the motion with a second. The motion was approved unanimously. Eric indicated that the board should vote to approve the groomer pay rates, highlighting Kyle and Kevin at \$20/hour as Groomers. The Head Groomer rate would be \$23/hour. A mechanical differential would be \$4/hour. Returning Groomers could be increased at the discretion of the committee, but at rates below the Head Groomer. It was noted that Kevin has not answered if he wants to be the Head Groomer. We will not have a Head Groomer for now as long as communication works. Eric moved that we approve the rates as discussed. Mare supported the motion with a second. The motion was approved unanimously. Mark noted that James is being talked to as an additional groomer, highlighting his mechanics background.

In the interest of acting on new business while we still had a quorum with Murphy present, Mark Klein discussed the Creekside Bike Park Skinny Zone \$5,000 grant from the Keweenaw Community Foundation. Mark Klein moved that the board authorize a \$2,500 downpayment to Zech for this work which will total \$11,270. Murphy supported the motion with a second. The motion was approved unanimously.

John Diebel noted the need to recruit more volunteers for Barkell.

Going back to the Executive Committee report, Ian and Nate took the initiative to draft a letter to Giving Tuesday contributors and addressed the envelopes.

We received an email from Pat Toczydlowski at the Keweenaw Land Trust indicating that they want to meet with the board about our relationship as they are going to be the owners of Churning Rapids and would like more say regarding the two conservation easements. Specifically, they would like to discuss the structure of insurance and liability to make sure it is set up correctly.

Finance Committee: Jay is still working on the budget. John Diebel indicated that we should close the KNSC checking account which has a balance of approximately \$600. Mark Roberts suggested leaving it open for another six months and then closing it.

Trails: Mark Klein noted that the bike park Skinny Zone had already been addressed. The need to establish equipment and repair authorization was discussed. The winter map has been updated online with the snowshoe trails added. We will need to update signs for the map changes. We will do this in warmer weather so they will stick to the signs. Mark Klein noted that he has been working on the recovery of the Basswood Trail. It was noted that the Bliss Lake Trail has been addressed. No Walking signs have been posted at High Point Road, but signs need to be put up at other locations. John and Mark Roberts have talked to Steve Jordan who would be a volunteer. Mark Roberts indicated that he would like to extend an offer to James Mateeva as a Groomer who is an experienced mechanic. It was noted that Kyle's brother-in-law Jake wants to volunteer. Mare asked who was managing the groomers. Jay noted that he is messaging the group. Jake will complete the volunteer form with the City. We will have James get with Eric on payroll. Mark Roberts moved that we bring James in as a Groomer at \$20/hour. Eric supported the motion with a second. The motion was approved unanimously. Mark Roberts is currently serving as a liaison with the groomers. Servicing authorizations was discussed. Eric moved that service costs less than \$500 would not require approval. Service costs \$500 or more will require the board liaison's approval. Service costs of \$2,500 or more would require board approval. Mare supported the motion with a second. The board approved the motion unanimously. The board will make hiring decisions. The board discussed the equipment blend as 3 UTVs and 1 ATV, unless we are successful in getting the Snow Rabbit, in which case we would run with that along with 2 UTVs and 1 ATV. The board discussed getting snowshoes for the machines so the groomers would have them in case of a breakdown. Jay will look into what is available. Mark Roberts expressed his opposition to selling the Defender as all the machines need service. The board also discussed blazing snowshoe trails. Keith described how this is done for the Chassell Snowshoe Trails.

Events: Mark Roberts reported that 287 people and twenty-four dogs participated in the Luminary Ski. \$187 in donations were received. The pizza cost \$50, cookies cost \$140, and the Gazette advertising cost \$180. There was question whether the advertising cost was worth it. The Milwaukee Skiers went well. Twenty-three participated in the KLT Twilight Ski for which there were no expenses or donations. The Heikinpaiva Parade is this Saturday at 11:00 a.m. Keith will get with Rob Handler on the Barneloped banners and will check with Jim Kurtti has him doing

with his position in the parade. The Retro Ski will take place on February 14th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wayne needs more volunteers at Barkell. The Copper Country Barneloped will be on Saturday, February 7th. Glide-N-Gorge sign up is now taking place on the website.

Communication/Outreach Committee: The trifold came to \$320 along with the banner. The merchandise has been produced for the sponsors. The website needs to be updated. The banner is updated. The winter newsletter had a 50% open rate which is considered good. Zoom participation will be possible from the Keweenaw Community Foundation

Organizational Committee: Eric will be sending out a draft landowner MOU for the board's review. It will address the scope of application and define the parcel of land and trail. Not sure about GIS data. It will discuss landowner responsibility, permitting trail signage, notification of ownership changes, planned signage (e.g., hunting, and potential re-routing), trail maintenance (within ten feet of trail), special event insurance, and notifying them of events. There was a discussion about event insurance, and it was decided that we do not need it since events are not paid. The first payroll was successful. We are still waiting on the state for our unemployment insurance number and rate. There was discussion about formally limiting snowshoe trails to single-track trails.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.