

**Hancock Trails Club  
Board Meeting Minutes  
February 17, 2026**

**Attendance:** Jay Green, Eric Watkins, Brett Hauswirth, Mark Roberts, Mark Klein (via Zoom), Nate Laakonen, Murphy Mallow, Ian Helman (via Zoom), Mare Grohowski, and Keith Meyers. Absent: Dean Woodbeck. Guest: John Diebel and Larry Zurawski (via Zoom)

Jesse Wiederhold has submitted his resignation from the board.

Jay called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Agenda:** No changes

**Minutes:** Jay indicated that the mechanic's premium should be reflected as plus \$4.00/hour. Mark Roberts moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Eric supported the motion with a second. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Groomers Report:** Mark Roberts reported that the trails, including Barkell, are being groomed as needed. Tracks have varied, but there have been no problems. There have been minor equipment issues and those have been addressed by M & M, as necessary. Kyle has been good about staying on top of maintenance. No volunteer groomers have been out in the last two weeks. Kevin is doing the most grooming. Kevin attended groomer training in Ironwood. Eric noted that he had not heard from him. There continues to be issues with walkers on the trails as well as snowmobilers on St. Urho's and dog poop on the trails. John Diebel will order signs at a total cost of \$260 (about \$27/sign). It was discussed that we need to be clearer about grooming conditions. Nate asked about how many grooming reports we have done this year compared to last year. Larry brought up how Swedetown additionally utilizes Nordic Pulse for grooming reports.

**Public Comment:** None

**Treasurer's Report:** Brett reported that approximately \$2,500 in members and donations have come in since the last meeting. The \$2,500 down payment has been made to Zech. Equipment repairs have been around \$1,000. There is approximately \$215,000 across all accounts. Eric noted three payrolls totaling about \$1,100, \$1,900, and \$1,000. James entered payroll information incorrectly which will be corrected. Murphy noted that the bill from Level UP should be coming in soon. Mark Roberts moved acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. Mare supported the motion with a second. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Executive Committee:** Jay reported that the nine-acre land purchase from Hancock Township closed on February 5<sup>th</sup>. We will pursue the tax exemption next through the Hancock Township Board of Review. The Wuebbens have requested an easement at the common corner between us, them, and the Carlson properties. Jay noted that this area is flat, and they have asked for a 100' wide easement. John indicated that Jed is interested in establishing access. Jay will write a letter

saying we will walk the property and then talk. On landowner letters, Jay asked for edits on the draft letters, one to landowners with ski trails and the other an introductory letter to those with bike trails. Jay noted that Dean had asked for Mary Babcock to be removed from the letters. On the upcoming annual meeting, Jay noted that Mark Roberts, Mark Klein, and Nate Laakonen's terms are up. Jay comes off the board in 2027. Jesse Wiederhold's position will need to be filled. Keith suggested that the board consider Andrew Grohowski as a replacement for Jesse as he was a candidate in the last election. Mare will check with him, and we will discuss this at our next meeting.

**Finance Committee:** The city budget meeting is coming up on March 4, and we will want to have a representative there to submit our request through the Recreation Committee budget for the 2027 budget which goes into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We will have recommendations for operations and capital expenditures. Expenses were discussed across three categories including wages, gas, and repairs, specifically: groomers for four months at \$3,500/month; fuel at \$110/week; maintenance at \$5,000/year. Three trailhead toilets from A-1 should also be included for Christensen Road, Creekside, and Tomasi. The remaining checking account for KNSC was discussed as totaling \$186 and it was decided to maintain it for another six months before closing it. Brett discussed that reimbursements should be completed on the drive and not by email. Brett will outline the process.

**Trails Committee:** Nate noted that much has already been covered earlier by Mark Roberts. Nate indicated that there are signs available that address walking and snowmobile traffic. Mark Roberts indicated that the groomers got the message to put them up. Nate asked Mark to follow up with the groomers on this. Having a paid snow bike groomer was discussed as there are some needs when Nate and Mark Klein are not available. Eric suggested offering hours to the current groomers. Nate will follow up with the groomers and create a task list for summer work. The Lake Annie Trailhead was discussed as a future parking space need. Nate noted the downpayment to Zech for the Creekside Park work. Mark Roberts brought up the need for railings on the upstream side of the swamp mat bridge on the Creekside Connector Trail and a warning side for the curve. The Keweenaw Land Trust will pay for the materials for the 2027 Long Bridge replacement. The Churning Rapids land transfer will take place in the next six to eight months once a legal description issue is addressed. Mark Roberts discussed the meeting that he and Keith had with Pat and Jill at the KLT and their concerns regarding liability. John Diebel discussed a call the city received from Charles Miller regarding the possibility of a walking trail for older/disabled individuals. Mark Roberts suggested that we look at developing such a trail. John will follow up and let them know we will be working on it. The Trails Committee will discuss this.

**Events Committee:** Mark Roberts reported that the Twilight Ski went well and that the Heikinpaiva Parade was cancelled. Twenty-five participated in the KLT event and seventy-five in the Barnelopet, with temperature being a factor with the latter. The Hok ski event came up quickly and worked out well, resulting in good publicity for the trails. Five skiers and two snowshoers participated in the Retro Ski. The Glide N Gorge is coming up on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed at the Chalet which is reserved. We need to get the banners up. There will be three Queen City running events on Thursdays. Nate suggested providing courses. It was

noted that the website calendar is out of date. Jay suggested that Communications and Outreach look at this, which Ian indicated he would do.

**Communications and Outreach Committee:** Ian noted that he sent out a report to the board. Packages have been delivered to 95% of our sponsors. All good feedback. Mare and Mark Roberts both reported getting good feedback. Chris Schmidt will be contacted regarding the development of a logo for the bike park. Ian requested that board members send him topics for the newsletter.

**Organizational Committee:** Eric reported that revisions are continuing to the MOU and that liability is being reviewed. Grooming equipment storage was discussed, but okay for now. Improving the Chalet was raised, but it was noted that Dean has indicated that this is more of a city project. On 2026 grants, a decision by Copper Shores regarding the Snow Rabbit is expected soon. There is a March 20<sup>th</sup> deadline for the next round should we not receive it this year. Visit Keweenaw has a Destination Development Grant opportunity that closes on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Trail counters were discussed as a potential direction with that grant opportunity. Eric noted that he is troubleshooting James' payroll issue and getting the sick leave plan worked out. The Unemployment Insurance number is still in process. Keith discussed his contact with the state, which did not consider it an issue, but still asked him to follow up with a hard copy of the application even though they acknowledged having received his fax.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.