

VSEC Meeting Minutes

February 9th, 2022

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:07 PM by Chairman Gene Harrison. VSEC Members present were Chairman Gene Harrison, Vice Chairman John Bowling, Secretary-Treasurer Ray Sira, Member at Large Mike Rusin, Website Coordinator Gary Bush, and Vertical Workshop Coordinator Kurt Waldron, Education Coordinator Hazel Barton and By-Laws Committee Chairman Bill Boehle. Absent were, Member at Large Rachel Saker and Contest Coordinator Bill Cuddington.
 - A. **Chairman** – Gene Harrison: The BOG has reviewed Gene’s charge of harassment by Rachel Saker and declined to take any disciplinary action.
 - B. **Vice Chairman** – John Bowling: Nothing to report.
 - C. **Secretary Treasurer** – Ray Sira: 1 new member was added since the December meeting. The minutes from the December 8th, 2021 VSEC were approved by unanimous consent. It seems John Bowling was not a member of the VSEC Google Group. This has been resolved.
 - D. **Member At Large Reports**
 1. Rachel Saker - Not Present, no report.
 2. Mike Rusin –No report.
2. **Committee Reports**
 - A. **Education** – Hazel Barton: An analysis was done of American caving accidents. Between 2000 and 2020 there were 667 accidents were reported of those 195 were vertically related. Of those 132 were believed to be due to insufficient training. Exhaustion seems to be the most common problem among inexperienced cavers. The most common problem among experienced cavers was rock fall followed by pour rigging. The Vertical Training Commission now has a VTC Education Committee. Members are Hazel Barton Chair), Reilly Blackwell, Derek Bristol, Emily Davis, Jesse Houser, Jeremy Weremeichik & Tim White. The Vertical Training Commission also has a Board of Directors that is being finalized now. The National Coordinator is Ron Miller. They are currently in talks with cavers to be members of an advisory body that would review materials produced by the VTC. The charter has been sent to the NSS and over 100 people have asked to be involved with the VTC. We need to work out integration of the Vertical Sections and the Vertical Training Commission, hopefully before convention. Gary Bush has created the web space for the VTC. NOLS has given their training materials to the VTC and Hazel would like the Vertical section to do the same. Hazel sees the VS Education Coordinator position becoming a liaison position with the VTC. Hazel would not be able to do this as it would be a conflict of interest. Hazel’s position in the NSS as chair of the Safety & Techniques Committee will be going away and replaced by a liaison to the Internal Organizations, a VTC Liaison and a NCRC liaison.
 - B. **Vertical Contest** – Ray Sira: Gene will send a letter to PMI asking for a donation of rope. Gene sent Ray some photos of the facilities in Rapid City, SD and it looks like there should be plenty of room to set things up.
 - C. **Vertical Workshop** – Kurt Waldron: Kurt sent an email to a contact he was given for the convention to find out more information but has not received a reply. Gene sent them a lot of information on our requirements a few months ago but also had not heard anything. Need to send out a request for volunteers and have them contact Kurt if they can help.
 - D. **Rebelay Workshop** – Gary Bush: The gear is ready to go. Not sure of how it will be set up. Hazel had suggested using trees if they are available. Hazel mentioned that NNJG has a huge ropes course set up in trees at a member’s house. We should get them to do a presentation about it.
 - E. **Website Coordinator** – Gary Bush: He looked at the constitution and by-laws and they state that the minutes have to be in the Nylon Highways. It had been suggested to have a page on the website for all of the minutes. This may require a change to the by-laws unless we post them in

both locations. The website's membership list needs to be updated. Gary suggested having some way of indicating if someone is a new member because of the by-laws change requiring someone to be a member for 180 days before they can vote or run for office. Ray said the membership list on the Google Docs page has new members highlighted in green.

- F. **By-Laws** – Bill Boehle: Hazel mentioned that the changes need to be approved by the NSS. The IO report asks if changes were made to the by-laws but doesn't mention sending them a copy for approval. Ray stated that at the special BOG meeting the previous night it was asked what our harassment policy was. Ray asked if it would be adequate to simply refer to the NSS's harassment policy in our by-laws and they agreed it would be fine that other sections have done it this way. John was going to look into both of these issues.
- G. **Equipment** – Ray Sira: He looked in the trailer to see what ropes we have and it looks like inventory online was not updated after the last convention. We have 5 200ft ropes, 6-8 150ft ropes and 4 100ft ropes. Ray will do an inventory before the convention
- H. **Awards** – Position is not currently filled. No report
- I. **Outreach** – Position is not currently filled. No report.
- J. **2022 Convention** – Gene Harrison: There is a huge arena where the contest will be held. It is not clear what part of the arena we will be using. WE are planning on a VSEC meeting on Sunday afternoon and possibly starting set up after. Hazel volunteered to organize the VS symposium to be held after the business meeting. Geary Schindel had mentioned to Hazel that the NSS requires an accident preplan for the insurance covering the convention. Gene will look into it. We do have safety procedures that were approved by the NSS years ago. They may want us to update them. Kurt asked if the JSS has approached us about using our ropes. Gene has not heard from them. Kurt volunteered to help them if needed. (At this point Geary Schindel joined the meeting). Geary said he did not think the safety plan was a requirement of the insurance company but would help cover us liability wise in the event of an accident. He also advised we should review it every year and there needs to be a site safety officer. If there was an accident it could make it impossible to get insurance in the future and have ramifications across the NSS. Gene suggested having Jay Clark look at our liability waivers and we may want to have a local South Dakota lawyer look at them also. Geary suggested that VS members may want to look into adding a rider to their homeowners insurance to cover themselves at convention.

3. Old Business

- A. Gene Harrison brought up for review the recruitment information he put together for the upcoming elections. Hazel Barton asked if Gene would be running in the upcoming elections, as this might be considered a conflict of interest. Hazel made a **motion**: to "Create a subcommittee to Identify & recruit qualified candidates for the EC, comprised of members who are not running for elected office". The motion was seconded by Gary Bush. Motion passed 6 for and 2 against. Gene made a **motion**: "Serving on this committee does not prevent members of the committee from running for office in the future". The motion was seconded by John Bowling. The motion was amended to "Serving on this committee does not prevent members of the committee from running for office in future annual member at large elections". The amendment passed 6 for and 2 against. Hazel made a **motion**: "Serving does not prevent members of this committee from running for office in the next election". Motion was withdrawn and Gary suggested changing the **motion**: to "Create a subcommittee to Identify & recruit qualified member for the EC, comprised of members who are not running office in the current annual member at large election". The amendment passed unanimously and then the motion passed unanimously. John Bowling and Mike Rusin agreed to be on the committee and Hazel asked that a female member be added to the committee.

4. New Business

- A. **Spanish Covers Book "History of the climbing contest"** – Jesús Pérez Fernández, a caver from Spain, is putting together a book on the history of various climbing contest throughout the

world. Ray Sira sent him a copy of all the climbing records he had for the NSS climbing contest. He is now looking for stories and photos for the book. Gary Bush agreed to see what he could do.

- B. **Next Meeting** – April 13th will be the next meeting.
- 5. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 pm.