

## Summer Quarterly Meeting – July 9, 2023, Lenny’s Camp – Holland, Vermont

**Attendees** – Ed Guest, Michael Chernick, Paul Trojano, Cathi Brooks, John Predom, Beth Barnes, Sue Winsor, Kevin Williamson, Angela Smith, Lenny Targonski, Nancy McClellan, Alison Selle (& Luluher dog), Bart Selle, Steve Farrow, and Jeff Morris

**Call to Order & Welcome** – NEKGMC President John Predom convened the meeting at 12:54 P.M. John

spoke of being away in California, and his recent clearing of Iris plants at Wheeler Pond with other GMC

members. At the Main Club Annual Meeting, it was announced that former Judge Howard VanBenthuyzen has retired early as GMC President due to health reasons. GMC Vice President Nancy McClelland has assumed the GMC Presidency. Nancy was present at today’s NEKGMC meeting to introduce herself and present a GMC President’s Award to NEKGMC’s Trail Adoption Coordinator and GMC Publications contributor, Kevin Wiliamson. The call of a loon beautifully punctuated the opening of the meeting.

**Secretary’s Report** – NEKGMC Secretary Michael Chernick summarized the minutes from the 2023 NEKGMC Annual Meeting held on March 26, 2023.

MOTION [Trojano/Brooks] to approve the Secretary’s Report of the 2023 NEKGMC Annual Meeting Approved unanimously

**Treasurer’s Report** – NEKGMC Treasurer Angela Smith presented the following report on the section’s finances:

Northeast Kingdom Section ~ Green Mountain Club

Quarterly Financial Statement

As of July 7, 2023

Operating Account

Beginning Balance (as of 03/25/23) \$4,964.66

Income

Dues Sharing

Feb (04/07/23) \$45.00

Mar (posted 07/03/23) \$161.25

Apr (posted 07/05/23) \$413.75

May (posted 07/06/23) \$76.25

Expenses

Cathi Brooks (Shirt Shipping) \$33.00

John Predom (Reimbursement Website) \$137.14

Victor Caamano (Chainsaw Course ½) \$110.00

John Predom (Reimbursement Gift Card) \$100.00

Ending Balance \$5,280.77

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Certificate of Deposit

CD#1 ....4489/Matures 01/12/2024 @.40% \$1,598.44

CD#2 ....3785/Matures 06/27/2024 @.40% \$1,757.40

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Grand Total All Monies \$8,636.61

Angela Smith ~ Treasurer

The Treasurer's report was accepted as filed.

Angela raised the issue of securing a debit card at Passumpsic Bank (PB), where the NEKGMC maintains

an account. The lack of a debit card is causing logistic issues in purchasing transactions.

MOTION [Farrow/B. Selle] That the NEKGMC Treasurer be authorized to secure a debit card at PNB with

the following restrictions .Any purchases of \$50.00 and above must receive EC approval. Cathi Brooks will retain possession of the card. All paper and digital receipts must be submitted to Angela Smith as treasurer.

Approved unanimously

**Main Club Report** – These highlights are from the June materials submitted to the GMC Board prior to

the June Annual Meeting in Craftsbury at Sterling College. John Predom attended in lieu of NEK's GMC

Board Director Cathi Brooks, who was out-of-state at a family wedding.

Fiscal Year 2023 – May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 ended with a net deficit of \$129,281. The Club was able to use surplus funds from FY 21 as well as a portion of the working capital fund to bring the deficit down to \$45,000. The working capital reserve is currently at \$131,000 or 5% of the budgeted expenses, our target for the reserve fund. During the coming year we will decide to retire the deficit in the near future.

Total operating revenue for the year was \$1.96 million, up substantially from last year, reflecting, in part, the additional work that was done on the trails funded through fees for service funds and grants. Revenue in this area was down from the budgeted amount this year due to changes in the work plan for the field season after the passage of the budget. Contributions came very close to budget and up significantly from the previous year, due in part to a successful Long Trail Day fundraising event. Previously the funds from this event went into the Capital Campaign, but now are directed to operating revenue. Membership was steady from last year's amounts, but at 91% of the budgeted amount. Thanks to the development staff for their monumental effort in bringing additional funds in the last 2 months of the year. Some personnel expenses as well as building supplies and lumber were reduced due to the change in field work plans, but many aspects of the summer field work were increased when inflation took off in July 2022).

Vehicle costs, contracted professional services, and office expenses were all over budget. Staff and volunteer support was over budget with quarantine costs due to COVID. The staff worked hard to hold down expenses, especially late in the fiscal year with a freeze on expenditures and holding off on rehiring when vacancies occurred.

Non-operating income was up substantially from the previous year from \$362,399 to \$440,603 with the increase in the distribution from the endowment and distributions from restricted funds due to the successful capital campaign.

New efforts to contact lapse members and urge membership renewal have proven successful, resulting in 312 renewals and \$18,000 in revenue.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget – May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024

The drafting of the FY 24 budget began in December and worked its way through the Finance Committee and the Executive Board to be presented at the Board meeting in March. However, as we approached the end of FY 23, it became clear that adjustments would need to be made, recognizing current economic realities. The budget being presented is version 3 and reflects those adjustments. Though this budget is less than the approved FY 23 budget, there is growth from last year's final

figures.

On the revenue side, this budget continues to take advantage of federal funding opportunities to collaborate with a variety of partners on the Burrows Trail Restoration Project. The goal for contributions continues to grow. The membership goal is higher than the actuals for FY 23 but reduced from the previous budget. Total operating revenues are projected at \$2.15 million and non-operating income from the endowment, restricted projects, and the Northern Trail Capital Campaign funding of \$390,000 for a total of \$2.54 million. Total operating expenses are projected to be \$2.53 million. There will be 3 Long Trail crews. The base rate of pay for seasonal staff has been increased to \$15/hour and as

well as increases to HQ staff salaries as the Club works to be the Employer of Choice and remain competitive with other organizations. There is a decrease in contract and professional services as there will be no airlift this year. Transportation/vehicle costs have increased with inflation. Interest expenses have increased for short-term borrowing with the increase in interest rates. There will be ongoing challenges. The Club will continue to face inflation and economic uncertainties as we move ahead as well as a competitive employment market. With its dynamic staff leadership, the Club is in a good position to meet the challenges.

Overview of FY 24 Budget Revised – Adopted at June Board

The FY24 budget version three is a revised budget for the fiscal year that just started, addressing the previous year's reality and providing additional financial stability moving forward. The fiscal year just closed reflects the areas where the organization could hold or cut costs, the significant increase in work completed and related expenses, and the impacts of growing inflation and market turmoil.

We will continue facing tight fiscal operations as we spend more money and complete more in the field and across the organization than in previous years. An increasingly competitive employee market and an unstable economic outlook add pressure. The rising cost of goods and services has also put a strain on our budget. This updated budget reduces income projections, cuts back on some non-essential items, and finds ways to reduce our costs in other areas. A tight budget environment will persist through FY24, impacting our operations.

The revised FY24 budget reduces income by 100k and expenses by 78k while maintaining a balanced budget (surplus of 10k).

Strategic Plan- A draft of the GMC Strategic plan, a document periodically updated, is close to completion. The GMC Board will review and possibly adopt it at the September GMC Board meeting.

Code of Conduct – GMC continues to revise a new code of conduct addressing all aspects of the Club's activities. Concerns have been expressed regarding its length and a summary document may be included in the final proposal presented to the GMC Board.

Membership, Development, and Communications Activities – Aside from the successful renewal drive, the GMC conducted a reception for its Ridgeline Society contributors, held a LT sign auction that raised \$9,596, and completed a highly successful multi-media platform Mud Season Information campaign that reached a broad audience. The Club's About GMC messaging has been standardized for all platforms, the grant application procedures have been modified to maximize effectiveness, and plans are proceeding for the 2023 Long Trail Day fundraiser in August.

Visitor Centers & Herrick Construction – A new Visitor Services Manager, Emily Mosher, has been hired. She will be responsible for overseeing operations at both the Waterbury and Barnes Camp Visitor Centers. The long-planned construction of a new Herrick Building, to house the Waterbury Visitor

Center, among other functions, has begun. The current Visitor Center will become additional office space.

Field Operations – The seasonal crews are planning on a 30-project week (approximately 7-month season). The multi-year Burrows Trail project on Camel’s Hump is continuing as is construction of

the Beaver Dam (Jean Haigh) Camp. A new AT Management plan for the GMC’s (Vermont) segment of the AT has been submitted to the Appalachian Trail Conference for approval. Work will start on examining a new route for the LT on Mount Belvidere. The seasonal crews are fully staffed.

Camps- For the latest quarter Hadsel Mares had a 71 percent rental capacity. 31 percent of the guests were GMC members. The other camps were closed for Mud Season.

GMC President – Nancy McClelland, the new GMC President, spoke to the section. She thanked everyone for the invitation to attend and offered memorable comments on the late Jean Haigh. Nancy spoke of the success of the \$ 4 million Capital Campaign and mentioned that long-time GMC and

Burlington Section member and leader, Dot Myers, died in her mid- 90s. Nancy referenced the women of the NEK. She is willing to learn and welcomes everyone to contact her. Nancy is very dedicated to her

new and unexpectedly early role. She presented a GMC President’s Award to Kevin Williamson for his long- standing coordination and implementation of the section’s trail adoption program , noting he has volunteered 100 hours to the Club. Another role has been his leadership as a publications’ contributor and distributor. Kevin is also an explorer of old trails.

NEKGMC Bylaws Revision – NEKGMC Secretary, Michael Chernick, in response to a request from NEKGMC President John Predom, drafted an NEKGMC Bylaw Amendment to update a provision that requires the membership application to be written (with no digital option). Michael submitted the text to GMC Executive Director Mike DeBonis for comment. Mike replied that review of the various sections’

bylaws had found inconsistencies on membership language. He also identified other bylaw provisions in

conflict with the GMC Bylaws. Rather than adopt a new provision, Mike DeBonis will explore the adoption of a GMC Membership Bylaw that will cover all sections. He will also work with the GMC Executive Committee and Board to address the inconsistencies in sections’ bylaws on other topics.

Consequently, the NEKGMC will presently take no further action on an NEKGMC Membership Bylaw Amendment.

**Volunteer Appreciation Day-** At one time, Andrea Kane was assuming the lead on this idea, which for now is being deferred.

#### **Upcoming Events –**

Bald Mountain July 15 (Cate Bishop) Long Pond Trail Sat

North Branch – Stat July 15 Beth Barnes

Steve Farrell Haystack Mountain – August 12 (Sat)

**Long Trail Day –** Aug 19 John Predom asked for volunteers to lead a team (Kingdom Express) John Predom was thinking of hiking the two side trails on Belvidere. This would be an approximately 8 -mile

hike

Cathi Brooks agreed to offer another Sentinel Rock hike for a date to be determined.

**Position Vacancies –** In light of her resignation as Newport City Mayor, Beth Barnes has graciously agreed to remain on as the Newsletter Editor. Her relinquishing of the Membership Coordinator’s role remains unchanged, and a successor is needed.

**Next Meeting –** The NEKGMC Fall Quarterly meeting will take place on Sunday October 15, 2023 at the

Burke Mountain Clubhouse in East Burke. The specific time and an any associated hike will be announced at a later date.

**Adjournment-** At the sound of thunder, the meeting was quickly adjourned at approximately 2:20 P.M.  
Submitted by Michael Jay Chernick – NEKGMC Secretary