

# *Helena Vigilante Runners*

## *Board Meeting #46*

### *Meeting Minutes*

*November 19, 2018*

*-- action items bolded below --*

#### **I. Call to Order**

Patrick Judge called to order the 46<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Helena Vigilante Runners at 7:03 pm on November 19, 2018 at 107 W. Lawrence, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room.

#### **II. Roll call:**

The following 14 board members were present, making a quorum:

Pat Judge, President  
Jeff Thomas, Vice President  
Sarah Urban, Secretary  
Ann Seifert, Treasurer  
Julie Ackerlund, Board Member  
Jason Brown, Board Member  
Sean Connolly, Board Member  
Beau Downing, Board Member  
Joel Harris, Board Member  
Erik Makus, Board Member  
Rebecca Shaw, Board Member  
Christy Stergar, Board Member  
Jesse Zentz, Board Member

Regrets:

Shiloh Hernandez, Board Member  
Lila Thomas, Board Member

Guests:

Em Thiessen, Board Member Elect

#### **III. Minutes**

Jeff Thomas moved adoption of the August 14, 2018 minutes, with one edit (noting the approval of the 4 x radios purchase). Julie Ackerlund seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. East Helena High School Mascot**

It's unfortunate that "Vigilante" was picked as the mascot for the new East Helena High School, as it can create confusion (especially with our youth teams). **Pat will organize a delegation to seek a diplomatic sit-down requesting they be cautious about colors, fonts, logos. We may need to re-brand our runners someday "HVR" or "VIG" or something.**

V. **Financial Report (Ann & Pat)**

- Checkbook Balance: \$16,992.15 (more or less, with a few additional recent transactions)
- Record Breaking Summer Fundraiser: \$6347.53 (so far)
  - average gift is bigger (as suggested in the appeal) -- but more value this year too
  - **still hoping to break last year's record of 85 contributors (83 so far)**
  - Pat & Ann still need to send out some thank-you cards /letters
- Reimbursements
  - Em & Ann insisted that their contributions (MT Cup related & postage) be considered donations -- thank you!!
- Equipment
  - Jason moved that the club take advantage of the November deal being offered by strikenow.com to obtain two new tents + walls for approximately \$2000
  - Rebecca seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously
  - the custom tents will include the logo and web address
  - **Pat will get back to the board with a specific quote**
  - additional equipment will be obtained next year in time for the HEAT Meet
- 2019 "Big Ask"
  - **Sean Connolly will submit the following request to BlueCross BlueShield:**

1) HEAT Meet	\$1000
2) August Trail Race	\$500
3) Mount Helena Run	\$500
4) Sun Run	\$500
5) Montana Cup	\$500
6) JOXC / Vig Fall Classic	\$1500
	=====
	\$4500
  - this grant proposal is usually submitted early in the new year

VI. **Jesse Reports**

- a record 65 runners signed up for youth XC, 55 of whom registered for JOXC
- the JOXC state meet / Vig Fall Classic was a resounding success, with 167 total runners (Liza Dennehy normally times that event, and will again next year)
- five boys (ages 11-12) will be competing in Reno at USATF XC Nationals (this is the first time that Helena runners are attending that meet)
- 12 Junior Vig runners also competed in Boise at NXR, where Kylie Hartnett finished 34<sup>th</sup> out of 1000+ girls (5<sup>th</sup> freshman)

VII. **Julie Reports**

- HVR club membership renewal is live now. There's been a good response to Julie's initial email. **We will submit the final roster to RRCA just after January 1.**
- HVR youth club members are covered separately, through USATF insurance.

VIII. **Joel Reports**

- Speaking of Running: The group expressed enthusiasm for the idea of a **Film Night**, maybe in January, and maybe with a guest speaker following the film (Walmsley!)

- Bob Hayes documentary would be good
- Eric Peterson films, like the one with Mike Wolfe
- Run Wild Missoula just had a film festival -- see what they did
- check in with Benji at Myrna Loy
- may have to go with a free space
- need permission to show a video (Fire on the Track) if no admission charged?
- **Joel will be interviewing Alan King for the Montana Cup website**

## IX. Race and Event Reports

- HEAT Meet (Thursday, 5/30/19) – Sean
  - Rebecca volunteered to help
- Governor's Cup (Saturday, 6/8/19) – Jesse
  - early registration is live now (and VERY affordable)
- Augúst Trail Race (Thursday, 8/15/19) -- Pat
  - adjust the course to avoid congestion, and also to stay away from SML
- Mount Helena (Saturday, 9/21/19) – Erik
  - attendance continues to grow, albeit slowly
  - facebook is the most effective way to reach people
  - nobody missed having water at the summit
  - the trailhead aid station is popular, due to enthusiasm, cowbells, music
  - will stick with 10:00 am start time
- Sun Run (Saturday, 10/5/19) – Pat gave report for Shiloh
  - this year's event was highly successful, but also a TON of work
  - the committee was waffling about the wisdom of continuing it
    - but it will probably continue (MREA will be a partner again in 2019)
  - possible beneficiaries are the ReStore, Red Alder Housing Development, the new Helena elementary schools, or Helena College
- MT Cup (Saturday, 10/27/18, Great Falls) -- Pat
  - very fun & successful
    - defended womens masters cup
    - defended mens masters cup
    - lost the mens open cup to Missoula by 1 point
    - 3-time individual mens masters champion: Jesse Zentz
    - individual junior mens champion: Jonah Fisher
    - 6 of the 7 "All Montana Cup Junior Division" runners, both F & M
    - the youth really enjoyed that meet, and it's good for them to interact with the adult runners
  - next year's event will be 11/2/19 in Kalispell
  - Competitive Timing will be the host (Matthew Smeltzer & Garrett Bloom)
  - may try to save money next year by renting 15-person vans instead of a bus, or maybe just carpool and reimburse drivers of personal minivans (~\$150 per van at Hertz?)
- Trail Group -- Beau & Jason
  - Beau & Jason can represent HVR on the Helena Area Trails Committee
  - 10 Thursday trail runs this year, averaging almost 10 people per run
  - start next year's season the same time as Tuesday-at-Noon (mid-March)

- Beau wants it to be "ultra-inclusive"
- keep the distance 3-5 miles
- keep up the practice of making sure everyone makes it out ok
- use the Aspen, Birch, Cedar system with group leaders, to make sure no one gets lost, but also to allow for different overall speeds
- could also mark the course ahead of time with survey flagging on clothespins
- discussion of Helena's debate over trail issues (mtn bikes, hikehelena.org, etc.)

**X. Closing Items and Adjournment**

- Photos -- the group has photos posted at various locations, and should maybe work to consolidate those on our facebook account (or maybe a new Instagram account - Jesse said he could set that up)
- Christy offered to host a holiday party at her house: Tuesday, December 11 (6:30-9:30).
- Next meeting is currently scheduled for February 18, 2019. The following 5 board members confirmed are seeking re-election at that time:

Julie Ackerlund  
 Beau Downing  
 Joel Harris  
 Erik Makus  
 Christy Stergar

Additionally, Rebecca Shaw indicated that she is resigning from the board 12/31/18. Em Thiessen has been appointed to this position, effective 1/1/19.

- Pat adjourned the meeting 8:42 pm.

Minutes prepared by Sarah Urban and Pat Judge.

**XI. Addendum (special meetings of the board took place at 7:00 pm, 107 W. Lawrence)**

On December 27 (following a special meeting of the board on December 26\*), the HVR board emailed a letter to the East Helena Superintendent and School Board members expressing its concerns over their initial choice of "Vigilantes" for their mascot (and also their choice of similar colors). The board requested that they reconsider this decision and make a different selection. Beau Downing made the motion to send the letter, and the motion passed with additional support from Julie Ackerlund, Jason Brown, Joel Harris, Patrick Judge, Ann Seifert, Jeff Thomas, Lila Thomas, Sarah Urban, and Jesse Zentz. There were no opposing votes.

\*The purpose of the December 26 meeting was to discuss this issue and work on the draft letter. No formal action was taken. In attendance were: Julie Ackerlund, Jason Brown, Beau Downing, Joel Harris, Shiloh Hernandez, Patrick Judge, Ann Seifert, Jeff Thomas, Lila Thomas, Sarah Urban, and Jesse Zentz.

On January 7, 2019, several members of the board attended the East Helena School Board meeting (Jeff, Jesse, Pat, Sarah, Ann, Julie, Jason, Joel, and Emily + Odessa Zentz and Frances Brown). Jeff delivered the presentation and answered 3 questions, but the board refused to reconsider the decision (or even to entertain a motion for the purpose of discussion).

On January 14, 2019, the board met again to consider next steps (Pat, Jeff, Sarah, Ann, Julie, Jason, Sean, Joel, Shiloh, Erik, Emily, Lila, and Jesse). After much discussion, Pat appointed a committee consisting of Jesse, Jeff, Em, and Jason (if he agrees) to further discuss options including:

- staying the course (indefinitely, or for a specific trial period such as one year)
- rebranding the youth club (ideally with some variation that preserves the "flying V" logo)
- spinning off the youth club as a separate organization
- rebranding the overall club (ideally with some variation that preserves the "flying V" logo)

Other voices could be brought into the committee (JV runners, coaches, and parents + adult club members, etc.). The committee should make an initial report to the board at the next regular meeting.

It seemed there was NOT a critical mass of interest to pursue further engagement with the East Helena School Board, or to further elucidate our position to the public (via op-ed or LTE).

On January 16, 2019, Pat sent the following email to the board:

**From:** Patrick Judge <[pljudge@bresnan.net](mailto:pljudge@bresnan.net)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 3:43 PM  
**To:** HVR <[hvr@npogroups.org](mailto:hvr@npogroups.org)>  
**Subject:** proposed mascot strategy

Greetings all,

Jesse and I have had some productive follow-up conversations. We arrived at the following set of recommendations for a path forward:

- preserve the status quo for the larger organization (i.e. no re-branding) — this will allow us to continue to use most of our equipment & apparel, and help preserve our history
- keep the youth program under the HVR umbrella, but re-brand in time for the 2019 XC season
- in doing so, use some variation of the "flying V" logo (with some kind of blue color palette) that continues to show the connection to the umbrella organization
- make the needed investment in new youth uniforms, tent canopy, etc. to make these changes (the youth program has had a considerable net positive effect on HVR's finances historically, so this seems like a very reasonable "ask")
- Jesse would also like to do a small fundraising pitch to current and former youth parents, and maybe a couple small businesses who might be interested in a sponsorship to help offset some of the costs. He would also like to enlist the kids in this effort.
- make sure to involve the JV kids, coaches, and parents to explain the situation and garner their buy-in, and make sure to communicate the changes to members of the larger club and the public
- no further engagement planned with the East Helena School Board on the mascot issue, and no further dwelling on the negativity of this situation (via op-ed etc.)

We're excited about this proposed strategy, which addresses many of the concerns stated at Monday's meeting. I think it offers a bright path forward that (hopefully) everyone can

get behind. Of course, there's a lot of work yet to be done on the details of the new logo and the transition, but this will (hopefully) resolve the big picture strategy questions at least.

Pat

On January 21, 2019, Jesse convened the rebranding committee (usual place, usual time).

In attendance were:

Jesse Zentz

Odessa Zentz

Peter Dan Sullivan

Luke Sullivan

Em Thiessen

Jeff Thomas

Sheila Plant

The group considered dozens of possible names, and provisionally narrowed them down to the following ten: NOVAS, VELOCITY, VALOR, VORTEX, ELEVATE, VANTAGE, VECTORS, V-RAPTORS, VENTURE, RAVENS

Following the meeting, Scott Todorovich & Jason Brown submitted input electronically.

Jason Brown suggested VALKYRIES.

Jesse prepared mock-ups of many of these names/logos/uniforms. He will give a more lengthy report at the next meeting.

On February 11, Pat Judge proposed conducting the board/officer election electronically (in order to streamline the agenda for the upcoming in-person meeting). He noted that there is nothing in the bylaws that prevents an electronic election.

With all board members responding (although some abstained from voting for themselves), the following uncontested slate of board members and officers was approved:

Board members (in addition to the ten holdover board members):

- Julie Ackerlund
- Beau Downing
- Joel Harris
- Erik Makus
- Christy Stergar

Officers:

- Treasurer: Ann Seifert
- Secretary: Sarah Urban
- Vice President: Jeff Thomas
- President: Pat Judge

There were no objections or opposing votes.

Board terms are three-years long, and officer terms are one-year long.