

American Knife & Tool Institute
Board of Regents and Advisory Board Meeting

Monday, January 18, 2010...6 p.m.
Burgundy Room, Paris Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

The Board of Regents and Advisory Board meeting of the American Knife & Tool Institute on Monday, January 18, 2010 was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by AKTI President Goldie Russell (A.G. Russell Knives). Regents present: CJ Buck (Buck Knives), Les de Asis (Benchmade), AKTI Vice President Bill Raczkowski (Gerber), Rod Bremer (CRKT), Clint Kadel (United) and Craig Green (Kershaw). Advisory members present: Jon Belniak (SOG), Bob Breton (Ontario), Mike Manrose (Meyerco). Others: Peggy Bremer (CRKT), Howard Fox (United), Jenny (Ontario) and AKTI Executive Director Jan Billeb.

These minutes are formatted on a per-subject basis, not the chronological discussion.

Administrative – Jan Billeb, Executive Director

Goldie Russell noted that the term executive committee for the joint meeting of the Board of Regents and the Advisory members was confusing. Future reference to the executive committee should refer to AKTI's elected officers and staff. Minutes will reflect the joint meeting by designating both groups.

Les de Asis moved, Bill Raczkowski seconded to approve the 2009 minutes of the May 28 and 29 meetings, May 29 Board of Regent meeting, and June 5, September 10 and October 30 Teleconference meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

It was confirmed the Blade Show meeting will be held Thursday, June 3, at 1:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta, GA, followed by the annual membership meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Jan Billeb distributed a current list of all Premier and above members with email contact information. She noted that board governance issues were reviewed with the accountant and reminded board members that they have a fiduciary responsibility to read all minutes, review all finances, and preview the 990 tax return prior to submission. Additional governance issues the board has approved and enacted are a document retention and destruction policy, conflict of interest policy, and antitrust awareness document. She reported that future tax returns will ask if the association has a whistleblower policy in place and, prior to the Blade Show meeting, she will provide a draft for the board's consideration. Another factor of good governance is periodic review of contracts. She will be preparing information for the board to review the following contracts: insurance policy, StateNet, and contract with Jan Billeb.

The 2008-2009 comparative financials were reviewed (Attachment 1). Jan Billeb pointed out that of the \$127,470 paid for legislative advocacy; \$22,500 was for the Texas lobbying effort. The \$19,700 paid in 2008 included South Carolina and Texas. Expenses under professional fees include: accounting and tax preparation, administration to Jan Billeb, fees and commissions paid David Kowalski and legal fees. The legal fees of \$53,739 were for the U.S. Customs issue (\$10,790 to Meyer-Darragh and the balance to Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg). Discussion followed on the need to not deplete cash reserves, having fundraising efforts prior to taking on legislative lobbying efforts, and maintaining a cash reserve balance to ensure general operating expenses are covered for a period of time.

Clint Kadel moved to approve the financial report, Rod Bremer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill Raczkowski provided a projected budget for 2010, noting that AKTI has not worked from a budget in the past, and that this will be a guideline to monitor financial health.

After questions were answered, Les de Asis moved, Bill Raczkowski seconded to approval the website proposal previously emailed from Jan Billeb (Attachment 2). Motion carried unanimously. Jan will proceed with implementation. Projected completion date to have the new website live is by Blade Show 2010.

Membership Committee (Bill Raczkowski, chair)

Bill Raczkowski noted that the U.S. Customs issue had superseded any membership committee efforts. CJ Buck and Clint Kadel agreed to join the membership committee. Discussion followed on how to generate membership from the various categories of: manufacturer/importer, distributor, rep group, retailer and individual. It was noted that input from a sampling of each of those groups would help generate ideas on how AKTI should approach getting more members, membership benefits, and involving those groups in AKTI projects and how they could help during legislative efforts. Rep groups specifically were discussed from the standpoint that manufacturers/importers should directly encourage their membership in AKTI.

Education Committee (Mike Manrose, chair)

Due to the time and efforts put into the U.S. Customs issue, no follow-up was done on the education committee potential projects. Other members of the committee include Rod Bremer and Morgan Taylor. Discussion on needing ideas to get the general public inspired about knives.

Review of U.S. Customs Issue

Jan Billeb distributed comments from Dan Lawson (Attachment 3) to the white paper provided by David Kowalski (Attachment 4), clarifying the inter-relationship and importance of the law firm of Sandler, Travis & Rosenburg had AKTI been required to go before the NY Trade Court.

Discussion followed on the lobbying trips to D.C., participation by various members, and need to improve on fundraising plans for legislative efforts. Jan Billeb commented she learned how important it was to know your legislators before you need to contact them. Goldie Russell noted that AKTI’s success with Texas had played a huge role in being successful with the situation with U.S. Customs. We were able to utilize the language developed for the Texas initiative.

Legislation

Jan Billeb reviewed a written report (Attachment 4) of legislative issues that have arisen. Discussion followed: CA – General agreement that AKTI did not want to expend any resources for the concealment issue reported.

NH – Rep. Jennifer Coffey would like testimony or statement for Jan. 28th hearing of Criminal Justice Committee. Jan Billeb will contact her for what expertise or direction she needs.

NY – Questions/suggestions included: Is there any timing issue involved? Should the IAMAW be polled for their possible support or position? Jim Furgal should be a good point of information for Dan Lawson for further assessment.

Other:

RI – It was noted that police department issues had been reported in RI. No details available.

AZ – Les de Asis announced that Doug Ritter of KnifeRights was introducing a pre-emptive knife law in AZ following gun law models that municipalities cannot issue more restrictive knife laws than the state.

New Business

AKTI President Goldie Russell discussed the need and importances of AKTI working meetings to review AKTI documents and discuss future plans. Les de Asis volunteered to chair a strategic planning committee.

CJ Buck moved, Rod Bremer seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Billeb
AKTI Executive Director