**Branch Leadership Committee Retreat Action Notes (+commentary). 26 September 2020, 7:45 to 12:10**

**Attendees:** Peter Hendrickson (VP Branches), Bob Keranen (OLY), Neal Kirby (OLY), Curtis Stock (TAC), Cheryl Talbert (FTH), Debbee Lynn (KIT), Gretchen Ta (KIT), Bill Ashby (SEA), Jared Pearce (SEA), Elaina Jorgensen (EVT), Jack Duffy (BHM), Gabe Aeshliman (VP BOD), Becca Polglase (Staff), Sara Ramsay (Staff)

**Note:** Elected but not present among Chairs and Chairs Elect/Vice Bruce Wolverton (EVT), Alan Davey (FTH), Benjamin Morse (FTH), Natalia Martinez-Paz (TAC), Scott Carlson (OLY). Chair Elect positions to be filled: BHM, EVT, SEA. **ASK** indicates requests for retreat preparation.

**Governance**

>>Welcomed BOD Vice President Gabe Aeschliman, chair of the BOD Governance Committee, to our conversation. We seek a BLC/BOD partnership.

* Governance Committee is looking to BLC for input on how to drive consistency across the club via charters, etc.
* Board recruitment – BOD Goverance Committee does a needs assessment and seeks candidates to fit thpse needs. Considering an application process for candidates to identify themselves. Provides opportunity to publicly announce what qualifications the Board is seeking.
  + Could also use application process to help match candidates with other open positions at the branch level.
  + Recent Ad Hoc BLC High Risk Committee has at least one application
* Are Robert’s Rules a must or a best practice?
  + Provisions for informal/relaxed decision making. Removes requirement for overly formal motions.
  + Benefits: All voices can be heard. Actions of importance, for the record have a clear path
  + BOD by laws and most branch charters call for RR.

**ASK**>Please have e or hard copy (preferred) of your Branch Charter in hand. Done, clearly several close reads of current documents. Peter supplied telegraphic XLS of charter elements for comparison across branches—largely but not completely accurate (appended below).

**ASK**>Are there elements we think should/could be common across branches?

*Note: Peter has taken editorial liberties with “may,” “suggest” and “strongly” language below to frame further discussion and decision making ahead.*

* Action Item: Consider renewing branch charter to fit current practices.
  + May include formalizing a three year chair cycle, if applicable.
  + May include appointment of Safety officer.
  + Continue two year Secretary and Treasurer terms (elected)
  + Suggest including who is responsible for making decisions (make-up of branch council), who comprises executive committee to make quick decisions?
  + Strongly suggest term limits, even if they aren’t followed exactly. Less intimidating for candidates considering position.
  + Suggest including who leads behavior complaint investigation, helpful to have that ready to go when needed.
  + Suggest address participation in Summits.
  + Suggest approval of new committees include draft charter and indication of commitment by some number of members. Strongly suggest committee disolution process is stated.
  + Suggest clarify how activity committee chairs are approved by branch council.
  + Strongly suggest quorum requirements clearly stated at each level of goverance
  + Strongly suggest at least quarterly branch council meetings
* Election logistics support from staff is most efficient if all branches are on the same cycle. Strong support for aligning with fiscal year (1Oct – 30 Sep). Even better if align with BOD elections – asking BOD Governance Committee to consider moving to August/September elections. Note that September can be a busy time with activities.
* Staff can offer support for committee charters. In addition to the existing template, staff can create a baseline charter for any committee, then work with the chair to customize it. This can significantly reduce the amount of tedious work for a committee and make charter creation less onerous.
  + Charter template: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k_PWIUqNDTuYj_GCqR_wKXxj1n_VkQOygDsJPYxGeCI/edit>
* Olympia includes committee charters as sub chapters in branch manual for quick reference, and to keep housed all together in one document.

**ASK**>Scroll through each activity committee in your branch to determine state of charters (Yes, No, Other)

* Ask for branches to put together a dashboard of which activity committees have charters. Do a whip around every other BLC meeting to check-in and track progress. Sample from SEA is posted in BLC Basecamp.

**ASK**>Prepare to discuss succession planning for your branch at executive committee and activity committee levels

* Many committees are moving towards integrated succession planning via Chair Elect cycle.
  + Tacoma, Bellingham, Everett do not.
* Mountaineers Bylaws do not dictate a term length for branch Board rep.
  + Discussion to have a 3 year term that mirrors the term of at large Board directors.
* Many branches have found success with a search committee to identify new candidates and fill vacant positions.
* Branches have a mix of social chairs, events chairs, communications chairs to plan/run banquets, events, newsletters.
* Make up of branch councils varies widely -- is there a need or reason to standardize?

**ASK**>Prepare to talk about onboarding new branch leaders, mentors… (Tabled)

**ASK**>If you haven’t, please complete the Branch/Committee Chair Training,

[**ChaireLearning**](https://www.mountaineers.org/about/vision-leadership/board-of-directors/committees/elearning/about/vision-leadership/board-of-directors/committees/elearning/course-templates/Branch_Committee_Chair_Training_eLearning_Course/Branch%20Committee%20Training%20eLearning%20Course)

**Summits/Activity Standards**

**ASK**>Please review the current undated Activity Summit Checklist [**SummitChecklist**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_g04nT0qv2Wv2fy5rTszgVBRD7rtOO93IDQuoBOjo6o/edit)

* Action Item: Sara/Becca to follow-up with overview of staff support to specific activities and tiered structure for level of support.
  + Define annual business of summit group. (Ex: Review/update of activity standards.)
  + Define what a summit is, and how that can be a tool to meet annual business.
* Define what BLC is auditing as a part of annual standards review
* Work towards defining summit participants, voting members, role of branch chairs, role of staff.
* Swap definitions of agreement and consensus in Summit Checklist.
* Add information about place/utility of Basecamp as an in-between discussion forum.
  + Who participates (and has visibility) to Basecamps? Likely the same as summit, another reason to define participants and roles.
* Question about branches auditing one anothers programs?

**ASK**>Please review Board Policy: Mountaineers Activity Standards [**Standards**](https://www.mountaineers.org/about/vision-leadership/board-of-directors/board-policies/clubwide-activity-standards/view) The policy calls for “annual internal audit” with BLC to *“periodically initiate external audits...”*

>>Consider our BLC charter mandate to: *Ensure that organization-wide activity standards are developed and maintained, for applicable activities,* ***and audited*** *on a defined schedule.*

>>Consider “universal screens” or elements that should be in all standards, e.g. safety, navigation, first aid, stewardship, leadership growth, course/seminar development & approval…

* Safety, risk management, first aid, navigation, leadership development, stewardship?
  + Who “owns” leadership development and stewardship at the club level, as far as integration and standardization across activities?
* How to get Safety involved in summits? Incorporate a safety lens or identify a rep to attend every summit meeting?
  + Work with Safety committee to divide these roles?
  + Add a safety section to each standards?
  + Identify a set of safety topics that should be reviewed at every summit and included in all standards?

**ASK**>Consider those activities currently without Activity Standards – Safety, First Aid, Sailing, Folk Dancing, Downhill Skiing, Naturalist, various Leader and Instructor positions ... What criteria should we use to launch new standards – safety, competency, experience...? (Tabled)

**ASK>** How are we doing with our dance partners – branch activity chairs, staff, instructors, trip leaders...? (Tabled)

**BLC--Branch Governance Elements September 2020**

September/October is the branch officer election/turnover season. The BOD Governance Committee seeks a dialogue about succession, BOD/Branch calendar alignment, staff support for elections, and charter variability across branches. Below is an attempt to layout charter governance elements bringing to light both common and branch-unique approaches. In some cases, practice may not be explicitly addressed in the charter. ***(Rev 25Sept2020/ph)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **BHM** | **EVT** | **SEA** | **FTH** | **TAC** | **KIT** | **OLY** |
| **Chair Model** | Elect, Chair\* | Vice, Chair\* | Chair Elect,  Chair, Past | Chair Elect,  Chair, Past | Chair Elect,  Chair, | Chair Elect,  Chair, Past? | Chair Elect,  Chair, Past |
| **Treasurer** | 2 year + FinCom | 2 year | 2 year + FinCom | 2 year | 2 year | 1 year | 2 year |
| **Secretary** | 2 yr + training | 2 year | 2 year | 2 year | 2 year | 1 year | 2 yr Even |
| **BOD Rep** | 2 year | 3 year\* | 2 year | 2 year | 2 year | 1 year | 3 year\* |
| **Safety\*** | NotSpecified | ? | 2 year | 2 year | ? | ? | ? |
| **ComunitySoc** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 yr Odd |
| Officer Tot | 5+Act Cmte | 5+2 | 7 | +3 At Lrg | 5 | +2 |  |
| Exec Cmte | Same | Same | Same | Officers | 5 |  | Q=majority |
| Brch Council | Same | +Act Cmte | +Act Cmte | Exc + Chrs | Officer + 5 |  |  |
| **Term Limit** | 2 yr? | 2 yr? | 2 terms Unless | 2 terms Unless... | None | None | 2 terms Unless |
| **Elections**  **Term Starts** | Sep1/Oct  Even Yrs | VoteOct  1 Nov | Vote Sep 1 Oct 1 | Vote Oct 1 Nov | Oct/Nov  >=1Nov | Sept/Oct  Mid Oct | Vote Sep 1 Oct 1 |
| **Actv Chairs** | Appoint | MayApt | Confirm | Confirm | Appoint |  | Appoint |
| **Succession** | Secty | Secty | Past Chr | ?? | ?? | Secty | -- |
| Org Chart |  |  |  |  | Yes |  |  |
| Conflict |  |  | Authority | Authority |  |  |  |
| Behavior |  |  |  | Address |  |  |  |
| Summits |  |  |  | Participate |  |  |  |
| New Cmte | Exec Create | Exec create | 20 sigs + Charter | Council Approve | Vet AttnLdr | Exec Creates | Create & Dissolve |
| Committe  Governance | Approves Cmte Elects |  | Chair, Tres, + 1 other |  |  | Approves CmtElect | -- |
| **Vote** | R’s Rules | R’s Rules | R’s Rules | R’s Rules | R’s Rules | -- | R’s Rules |
| Email Vote |  |  | Mtg+10days |  |  |  |  |
| Reserve $ |  |  | Hah! |  |  |  |  |
| Annual Mtg |  | Sept |  | No ref |  | October |  |
| Annual Rept |  |  |  |  | Sept |  |  |
| Liaison |  |  | None |  |  |  |  |
| Meetings | 6/yr | Quarter | 6/year | Quarterly |  | Quarterly | Quarterly |
| Quorum |  | 51% | 3 Ofc + 5 |  | 5 Members | 50%Exec | >=10 |
| Amend how? | Missing? | 2 ways | 2 ways | 2 ways | 2 ways | 2 ways | Many steps |
| **Last Amend** | 25Sept 2012 | 15Aug 2016 | 30May 2019 | 17 Dec 2019 | May 2015 | ?? | 31 Mar 2016 |
| **Created** | 03Feb 1983 | 1910 | 18 Jan 1907 | 2004 | 1912 | 06 Mar 2003 | 5 Sept 1963 |

**Notes**:

Some elections are aligned with Mountaineers ballot and call for staff support

Not all Branch Charters are posted as PDFs

Not all Branch Charters have amendment history; only Tacoma lists past chairs

Tacoma separates By Laws, Policy & Procedures in “Red Book” document (OLY=WA seat of gvt)

Tacoma has 4 divisions: Administrative, Climbing, Outdoor and Social

Not all operational titles match charter officer titles

Kitsap is moving towards Elect, Chair, Past model; not yet amended Charter

\*All Safety Officers appear to be appointed; Not always clear if members of ExCom

\*Chair Elect no guarantee will become chair (BHM); Confirm with vote (TAC)

\*BOD rep 3yr term required by Mountaineers By Laws? (EVT)

\*Chair serves ex officio Exec Committee when immediate past chair (EVT)