

Draft Minutes - Subject to approval at December Committee Meeting

AUSTRALIAN FLYBALL ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
5th November 2007 BY TELEPHONE HOOKUP.

Present: Glenn Pritchard, Eric van Zuyden , Jenny Millar, Rosie Milton, Leoney Pritchard , Dot Baverstock, Pat Byrne, Brian Lindsay, Clair Ellis, Lyn Clyde, Joanne Drake, Catherine Saberton and Amy Williams.

Apologies: Terry Hunter, Kylie White, Justin Allen

Meeting Opened at 7.35 pm.

ITEM 1 - "Starred" Items.

The following Items were 'starred' for adoption without discussion:

- 1) Minutes of 8th October 2007 Meeting;
- 2) Correspondence Listing; (Schedule of all correspondence in and out)
- 3) Accounts Payable
- 4) Treasurers Report
- 5) New Memberships
- 6) Renewal of Memberships
- 7) Change of Clubs

Moved and Seconded that the above Agenda Items be adopted without discussion. CARRIED

ITEM 2 - Sanctioned Events adopted.

Demo – CDC – Sunday 21st October – Lake Burley Griffin, Rond Terraces.

Demo – Tassie Flying Paws – 3rd November 2007- Cambridge

Demo – CDC – Sunday 18th November – Lake Ginninderra

Training Day – Mock Comp. – Norwest - Saturday 12th January 2008 – Castle Hill Showground dog complex.

Competition – Berwick- Sunday 10th Feb 2008 – Berwick Highland Gathering

Competition – Norwest - Sat 1st March 2008 – Hounds in the Hills – Castle Hills Showground

Demo – Eastside flyers- 6th April 2008 – Ferntree Gully Rec. Reserve.

Competition – Bellarine – 17 May 2008 – Flyball At Geelong – Geelong Showground

Competition –Sutherland– 9th August 2008 - Southerly Muster – Waratah Park Sutherland

Competition – Bellarine - 16th August 2008 – Flyball Geelong – Geelong Showground.

ITEM 3 - Administrative Matters.

a) Development of Protocols for computer back up –Noted Justin had submitted email comments re backup but in view of Justin’s absence and fact that we were now backing up daily to an external disc drive Item was deferred to next Meeting.

b) Group email software acquisition – again matter was deferred till next Meeting

c) Secretary reported on his further enquiries re member Personal Accident Medical Expense cover. Secretary advised that our Broker indicated they do not arrange such cover because of the cost involved. Enquiry with another Insurance Broker indicated cover was available but even with a high deductible it was likely to cost AFA around \$25 per member which was the total of our membership fee. In view of the cost Secretary suggested we could not afford cover and we should inform members of the limited extent of our Personal Accident Insurance cover so that they are aware of situation.

d) Supervisory Judge reported following members had successfully completed the Stewards Exam :

Jo Slade Qld , Rachael Fagan S.A .and Trent Shepherd St.George

e)Process for advising dogs names for Title certificates

Following discussion the Committee agreed to the following:

CRNs must appear on all AFA Certificates in order to identify the dog but can be shown before dogs name if Member so wishes,

At owners request AFA will include nominated Titles as part of the dog name. (Note - Only the highest title in each discipline should be shown).

In future Treasurer will send Terry an actual copy of the Title Application form so name can appear exactly how member nominated.

ITEM 4 - Matters arising from AGM.

a)Update of Rules and Policies Documentation

The updated Rules and Policies document had been formatted by Webmaster and placed on the AFA Web. The New Policies Section of the Web had also been updated with all of the adopted Policies removed. The only “New Policies” left were the 3 linked to the Breakout Rule , the Aggressive Dog Policy and the Training Day Policy, which had been omitted from the 2007 Member ballot.

Treasurer asked how many hard copies of the Rules should be printed. Following discussion it was Moved and Seconded that each Club be issued with a copy, all Judges be sent a copy, all AFA Committee members to get a copy and new Members to get a copy. On that basis 200 copies should be printed. Purchase price of copies set at \$6, which includes postage.

b) Measuring Sub Committee.

Eric reported the Sub Committee had meet by phone hook up and had started to gather data re measuring options, including the approach used by U-fly. Next Meeting scheduled for 15th November.

c)Engraving of Equipment Holdings.

Eric indicated that he and Terry had not yet discussed this matter. Deferred to next Meeting.

d)Investigation of laminated membership cards. Treasurer reported card layout was finalise and covered up to 5 dogs and all AFA qualifications (such as Judge, Steward, etc). Separate cards would be produced for Junior and Associate members. The only thing still required was the AFA Logo design to allow production. Treasurer asked when she needed Logo in order to ensure cards available for 2008/09 renewals. Treasurer indicate preferably by end February at latest.

e)Discipline Protocols.

Secretary had circulated two Protocols (explanation papers) that outlined in simple terms the AFA discipline processes for Dog Incidents and for Member Incidents. The Papers were in line with the process set down in the Constitution and the Rules and took into account the requirements of Natural Justice. He suggested that if adopted by the Committee they should be placed on the Web to act as guides for both the Committee and members who might become involved in any incident. He stressed that we needed to clearly inform Members of the Committee decision that in future Witness declarations and written complaints against a member may be released to the member under investigation upon request. Moved and Seconded that the two Protocols as submitted, be adopted and placed on the Web. Reference to also be placed on Web regarding release of Witness Declarations and Other Statements in future and this to also be added to the Witness Form. CARRIED. Webmaster to action in consultation with Secretary.

ITEM 5 - General Business

a) Report from Dog Incident Sub Committee re Black Card incidents involving Lizzie (CRN 348A), Poppi (CRN1191A) and two Member behaviour incidents at Yarram Competition .

Sub Committee had circulated a report on its investigations into the reported dog aggression incidents involving Lizzie and Poppi. The Report indicated that neither incident involved serious aggression or resulted in any injury to the other dogs involved. In case of Lizzie the Sub Committee noted she had been running flyball for several years without any other incident and this seemed to be totally out of character. The Sub Committee Recommended that Lizzie be placed on a six months suspended sentence. In case of Poppi the Sub Committee concluded that the incident seemed to be more of a loss of focus situation rather than aggression. In circumstances Sub Committee Recommended that a 6 months suspended sentence be handed down and that Poppi's handler be advised to seek assistance in training to improve focus whilst in the ring.

Both of the above Recommendations had been adopted by email vote by the Committee . Secretary advised he had written to the Members involved in the incidents advising of decisions.

The Sub Committee had also dealt with an incident at Yarram where two members had become involved in an incident involving unacceptable behaviour and inappropriate language. The Sub Committee recommended that one member be issued with a 3 month suspended sentence related to her behaviour and the other member be given a warning letter. Again these recommendations had been adopted by email and the Secretary had advised the two members of the Committee's decision.

The Sub Committee had also indicated that they were develop a "Retraining Diary" which could be issued to members who are requested to undertake retraining so that the Committee can be informed that retraining is actually being undertaken.

b) AFA Privacy Policy. Draft AFA Privacy Policy noted and discussed. It was noted that the Policy had been updated, as requested at last Committee meeting, to reflect the decision that in future the AFA would, upon request, make copies of Witness declarations and other documents available to members involved in investigations. Question raised – as this is a proposed Policy should it be placed on the Web as being a "New Policy" and then voted upon by Members at next AGM. There was general agreement with this view. Moved and Seconded that the Policy be adopted placed on the New Policies section of the Web. CARRIED. Webmaster to action.

c) Draft Committee Code of Conduct

Secretary spoke to the Code of Conduct as circulated. It was a fairly standard Governance statement that many organizations adopted as a guide to Committee Members as to responsibilities and what was acceptable behaviour when acting as a member of the Committee. Question asked was this a Policy?. View expressed that it was more of a Committee Governance document as it only applied to Committee members and as such should not be classified as a AFA Policy.

Moved and Seconded that the Committee Code of Conduct simply be adopted and placed on the Web. CARRIED.

d) Clarification of Breakout Policy wording and intent.

Supervisory Judge indicated she was about to circulate to the Committee a draft of replacement wording which hopefully clarified the breakout rule.

e) Storage of AFA archives. Update report indicating that existing boxed records could continue to be stored in Queensland and there was no need to ship any boxes to Sydney for storage.

f) Review of suggestions re changes to format of Competition Timesheets and proposed new Excel formats for draw. New Timekeeper worksheet had been trialed at Canberra competition and reports would be submitted. Pending analysis of reports Timesheets would remain on trial.

g) AFA Logo redesign. President advised he had contacted Ilona and she had agreed to arrange a new Logo design and to submit options for consideration. Hopefully designs would be available for next Meeting

h) Champion Trophy Racing Format Proposal. The planned trial of the new format had not occurred at Canberra due to rain interrupting Competition. Members asked to look for another opportunity to trial the format.

i) AFA Events Clash – submission from Central Coast Surf Stormers Club.

The AFA had received a submission from the Surf Stormers regarding the situation that the AFA has no Policy preventing a clash of dates as between a Sanctioned Demonstration and a later Sanctioned Competition. The Submission pointed out that this had now occurred and that a Club that had indicated it would support a Surf Stormers Demonstration in Newcastle on the 25th November had later withdrawn that support in order to attend a Twilight Competition sanctioned for the day before the Demo. The submission suggested that the AFA find ways to prevent this type of situation occurring in future and requiring Club's to honour earlier commitments. They suggested awarding points to dogs attending Demonstrations as an incentive.

In discussion the Committee noted that even under the current AFA Policy on approval of Sanctioned Competitions both events outlined in the correspondence would have been sanctioned as Newcastle was more than 100 kl from the Sydney Competition venue and they were also on different days. Committee members expressed the view that a Club should not commit to a Demonstration unless it felt it could conduct the event with its own dogs if no other AFA member supported the event. The Committee did not feel it could “order” or require others to support any AFA activity. Secretary to advise Surf Stormers.

j) Submission from President of Southern Cross Club in follow up of matters associated with the Nationals Discipline incidents

The Committee noted the Letter dated 2 October from President of Southern Cross Club which raised a number of issues associated with the process of AFA Discipline and the fact that it was not clearly understood by Members. The Committee noted that many of the matters mentioned in the letter had been dealt with via the adoption of the two Discipline Protocols at this meeting.

The letter also questioned the level of the penalty imposed for the Nationals incident when compared to an earlier incidents involving a member disputing a timekeeper decision.

The Committee accepted the need to attempt to ensure reasonable uniformity in penalties for similar offences but also recognized that the circumstances of each individual incident must be taken into account. The Committee did not support the concept of attempting to develop “set” penalties for various incidents as was suggested in the letter.

Finally the letter urged the AFA to review the penalty imposed for the Nationals incident. The Committee concluded that this was not appropriate as the correct process for any review of penalty was via appeal and this had not been exercised by the member involved,

The Secretary to respond to President of Southern Cross’s letter.

Item 6 – Appeals against Dog Suspensions

a) Appeal against 12 Month Minimum Suspension of Jem (CRN 658A)

The Committee noted the Notice of Appeal lodged by Mr. T. Shepherd regarding the 12 months minimum suspension imposed on Jem as a result of the aggression incident at Kioloa. The appeal submission focused on issues of denial of Natural Justice in that Mr. Shepherd had not been provided with full copies of all Witness Declarations and other evidence re the incident. He requested that the Committees decision to refuse to provide him with full copies of the complaint, including the name of the complainant be reversed.

The Committee noted that its original decision that Mr Shepherd only be provided with an outline of the content of the Witness Statements was based on privacy

concerns that Witnesses had not been informed that their statements could be released. It had released reasonable details regarding the content of the Statements.

The Committee noted it had before it at this meeting a suggested protocol for handling Dog Incident Appeals developed by the Secretary after consultation with the President. The proposed protocol provided for the release of all evidence to both the appellant and also the members of any Appeal Panel on a confidential basis. The Protocol suggested that Panel Members should be AFA appointees who did not have any involvement in the Incident, in the Investigation process or in the AFA Committee Meeting which considered the Sub Committee report and made the decision re penalty.

In considering the Protocol the question was asked as to whether an Appeals Panel had to simply uphold or dismiss the appeal or whether it could recommend an alternative penalty (either lower or higher than the original). The Committee was in general agreement that the latter situation was the case and that this should be the AFA position re Appeals.

In considering this matter the Committee also noted a related letter from K. Smith dated 26th October and lodging an “ official complaint” regarding some of the content of the AFA’s notification letter to Mr. Shepherd.

The Committee concluded that it was inappropriate to communicate with a member regarding the content of a letter written to another member. Such correspondence was seen as private between the original two parties . However as Ms Smith raised a number of questions in her letter regarding the AFA’s treatment of her own Witness Declaration. The Secretary was asked to respond to these questions and to assure Ms Smith her Declaration was considered by the Sub Committee in its deliberations.

Moved and Seconded that the Committee adopt the Appeals Protocol as submitted to the Meeting with the addition of reference to the fact the Panel could recommend to vary the original decision on penalty This Motion was subject to considerable discussion focused on the proposal to release Witness statements and other documentation to appellant’s. The Committee noted it had already agreed to adopt this approach. Some members of the Committee however again expressed concern that this decision could result in members not being willing to submit Witness Statements in future or being in the fear of some form of retaliation. In view of these concerns President asked the Committee to formally vote on the release of Statements. Vote - 5 Members for release, 4 Members against release and 4 Members abstaining. CARRIED. President then asked Committee to Vote on adoption of Protocol. CARRIED

In view of these decisions the Secretary was asked to provide Mr. Shepherd with copies of all correspondence re the incident involving Jem.

b) Appeal against 6 months Suspended Sentence of Lizzie (CRN 348A)

The Committee noted the letter from Ms Norton which outlined the circumstances associated with the incident at the Queensland Competition on the 8th September and identified a number of mitigating circumstances associated with the incident, including the fact that another handler had brought her dog into the ring without her permission or knowledge and her claim that the incident had occurred when Lizzie was exposed to aggressive eyeballing by another dog. The letter requested reconsideration of the Suspension and was in effect an Appeal against the decision.

Moved and Seconded that having just adopted an Appeal Protocol this appeal should be dealt with under that Protocol.

c) Appointment of Appeals Panel

Noted that a Panel of between 3 and 5 Members was required. Suggestion made that Amy Williams and Catherine Saberton be appointed as Members from the Committee as they did not have a direct involvement in either incident and as such were “independent” of the original decisions. Both agreed to accept appointment as a Panel Member. The President advised he would approach other independent AFA members, preferably members with experience in issues of animal behaviour ,and would establish the Panel. Agreed.

Committee considered need to appoint a Secretary to the panel who could provide technical advice to the panel but who would not in any way take part in the Panels decision process. Moved and Seconded that the AFA Secretary function in this capacity. CARRIED.

Secretary asked to prepare a Case Book of Evidence for the two Appeals and this to go to the appellants and the Panel members.

Date for appeals hearings to be set and notified to members as soon as Panel finalized.

Item 7 – Member Incidents at CDC Flyball Frolic competition .

The Committee noted the following incident reports/Witness Declarations outlining various incidents between members at the Flyball Frolic Competition:

Incident Report from judge Ron Richardson outlining a number of incidents involving himself and another member, which he considered to involve inappropriate and in his view aggressive behaviour on the part of the other member;

Witness Declaration from I.Ferguson outlining a verbal incident that occurred involving himself and another member where abusive/ offensive language was used by the other member;

Witness declaration from T.Shepherd outlining a series of incidents that occurred between himself and two other members during the Competition and containing accusations of harassment and vilification.

Following substantial discussion on a situation that appeared to many on the Committee as reflecting an ongoing saga between two Members it was Moved and Seconded that AFA attempt a process of mediation between the two members in question. The AFA Vice President agreed to attempt to facilitate the mediation process. The Committee agreed to take no further action on any of these reports at this time pending receipt of a report from the Vice President as to outcome of the mediation process.

Item 8 - Promotion and Media Marketing of AFA. President again raised issue of importance of flyball media marketing. He indicated that he would ask all Clubs to consider appointing a media liaison officer and to do more to promote the sport. He advised that he had briefed Ilona on the AFA Publicity and Marketing co-coordinator position which would link with Club contacts to obtain National exposure

Item 9 - Review of Aggressive Dog Policy and extension to better cover and explain interference, distraction, and suspected aggression. Sub Committee had meet and Supervisory Judge was in process of preparing an update to the Policy for consideration..

Item 10 Other Business

a)Insurance Provision for lights.

Treasurer asked if she should be moving now to establish the agreed 2007/08 \$3,000 Investment provision for the AFA Light sets. Moved and Seconded that the Investment Account be established. CARRIED

b)ANKC Agreement

President reported that he had been advised that the ANKC had agreed to adopt the draft Agreement with the AFA re the introduction of flyball as an ANKC discipline using AFA Rules and with both bodies allowing their members to take part in each other Competitions. Meeting agreed that we needed to ask ANKC to provide advice on the process and timeline for implementation of the agreement and then put a report to the AFA members for consideration.

C)Judges Microphone System

Supervisory Judge reported on the Canberra competition trial of the 'on loan' headphone microphone system that had been originally purchased by a member for use at the National's. Both Rosie and Ron who judged in Canberra found the system to be excellent and a great aid in organizing races . Noted that the System cost approx \$600. Following discussion Moved and Seconded that the AFA acquire two Systems to be used at major events such as the Nationals. Carried. Treasurer agreed to follow up acquisition.

d) Judges for Nationals

Supervisory Judge asked if Secretary could arrange to issue a call for expressions of interest from Judges re judging at the Nationals. Secretary agreed to invite expressions of interest.

e) Judges entering Training

Supervisory Judge indicated she had 8 possible new Judges entering various stages of Judges training. She also advised she was in process of reviewing the process for upgrading Level 2 Judges to Level 1 and would report thereon to next Committee meeting.

f) Flying Times deadline

Noted - Editors to work on deadline for input of 8th November.

Level 1 Judges Certificates

Catherine Saberton put forward the proposal that the AF issue Level 1 Judges an appropriate achievement certificate. Agreed .Treasurer offered to design.

Date of Next Meeting. Next Meeting is scheduled Monday 3rd December 2007

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10. 15 pm.

Signed as a true record

President