Board Meeting Minutes

Our Mission

We advance responsible alpaca ownership and breeding through our world-renowned registry, comprehensive education, leadership, and vibrant member community. We build a community, *through member and volunteer support,* where we ensure the long-term sustainability and success of alpaca livestock for current and future generations.

Our Vision

To be the definitive livestock model and global leader advancing all aspects of alpaca ownership—from breeding and health to fleece utilization and business development—while growing a thriving community that champions the alpaca industry's future.

Board of Directors

Jennifer Hack, President
Brian Houchin, Vice-President
Jason Gill, Treasurer
Michael Livingston, Secretary
Gina Glasscock, Director
Scott Miller, Director
Sharon Milligan, Director
Jay Penica, Director
Mike Walsh, Director

Executive Director: Robin Gifford

Meeting: Video Board Meeting
Monday, October 27, 2025; 4:00 PM Pacific/7:00 PM Eastern

Summary:
This Board of Directors meeting focused on financial analysis and 2026 budget planning. The board reviewed the organization's current financial performance, which showed a year-to-date deficit of $2,999 with projections indicating a much larger deficit by year-end. The 2026 budget draft similarly projected a loss, prompting discussions on cost-saving measures and revenue growth strategies. The board unanimously approved implementing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to better monitor membership, registration, and financials using a red/yellow/green tracking system. A significant decision was made to skip the National Education/Fiber Conference (NEFC) in 2026 and integrate its educational components into the National Show. The board also began venue selection discussions for the 2027 National Show, comparing Fort Wayne's proven $80,000 average profit history against potential new locations like Loveland and Tulsa to expand market reach.

Additional topics included an AI policy review, membership retention strategies targeting a 90% retention rate (above the 75-85% industry average), and plans to transition from the Proteus system to Grassroots by October 2026, potentially saving approximately $40,000 annually.

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1.0 Meeting Opening Call to order: 6:02 Central — Hack

2.0 Consent Agenda — Hack

September minutes email approval, Executive Director's Report, Dashboard, Social Media stats and committee Reports NOT needing discussion or action.

Motion to approve: Miller, 2nd: Gill. Approved with one change to September minutes.

***Upon review, the rule changes were correct as posted, approval of Rule 1, Deny of rule 2.

3.0 Financial Report — Gill

Document reference: September Financials, Year-to-date Financials, Executive Financial Summary

- Budget deficit currently, with projected budget shortfall in 2026
- The board will review the budget again next month, with hopes of a balanced budget.
- Board, staff and more will have to be onboard to hit the aggressive membership goals in 2026.

4.0 Strategic Goal 2: Fortify AOA's Financial Position — Gill

BUDGET 2026

- The board voted to add Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for membership, registration, and financials to the budget and monthly financial reviews. Jay made the motion, Scott seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Membership:

- Three-year membership plan presented with current estimates at 1,583 members for 2025. The plan aims to retain 90% of existing members (5% above industry norm), add 125 new members, and win back 280 former members.
- If successful, the membership strategy would reverse the current trend of losing 200 members annually to instead gain 200 members, increasing financial projections from $170,000 to $196,000 (approximately $30,000 improvement).
- Hack questioned how realistic the 90% retention goal is, noting that industry average retention in associations is 75-85%, with 90% considered excellent. She suggested it should remain a goal but might be optimistic for budgeting.

Technology:

- Moving from Proteus to Grassroots system on schedule (by October) could save approximately $40,000. Current monthly Proteus cost is $7,800 versus projected $2,800 for the new system, representing about $5,000 in monthly savings.
- Bank service fees (primarily credit card processing) were discussed as a significant expense. Gifford noted there are technical limitations with the current Proteus system for passing along these fees, but this could be addressed with Grassroots.

NEFC:

- Gifford explained venue challenges: Kentucky (which was free but difficult to book) is unavailable for 2026, and the planned St. Louis location at the Missouri farm (a free venue) was damaged by a tornado and hasn't been rebuilt.

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- The event requires over 100 hours of staff time that could potentially be redirected to membership recruitment and other activities with more direct budget impact, especially given current priorities to increase revenue.
- Glasscock expressed concern about staff bandwidth, stating she didn't see how staff could manage NEFC with their current workload, and that canceling NEFC for the coming year would be more beneficial to the organization.
- A formal motion was made by Scott and seconded by Gina to move the educational component of NEFC to the national show, which was unanimously approved by the board

5.0 Strategic Goal 1: Leverage Marketing Houchin, Livingston, Miller

No report

6.0 Strategic Goal 3: Enhance Member Value Gill, Glasscock, Penica

No report

7.0 Strategic Goal 4: Alpacas as a True Livestock Model Walsh

No report

9.0 Other Business Hack

9.1 National Show 2027 Venue discussion 2

- Miller proposed having a dedicated meeting to "reinvent the 2026 national show."
- Gill emphasized the benefit of attracting non-exhibitors to the national show, suggesting this would increase auction participation and help transform the event into more of a "jamboree" with multiple activities beyond just the show.
- Glasscock presented a new option in Tulsa at the Arvest Convention Center.
- Financial analysis revealed Fort Wayne has historically generated approximately $80,000 average profit versus $44,000 at Denver locations. The board is weighing operational efficiency of a familiar venue against market saturation concerns.
- Miller emphasized the importance of hosting the alpaca show in different locations across the country rather than always in Fort Wayne, noting they have an obligation to proclaim the greatness of alpaca to all parts of the country.

Miscellaneous:

- Penica reported reaching out to Havelock in Reno, Nevada, a company that manufactures wool insulation for homes and RVs. He requested assistance contacting the CEO to explore using alpaca as an alternative to imported wool.

10.0 Adjournment Motion to adjourn: Gill 8:09pm Central Hack

Next regular meeting: November 24, 2025