

5/9/26 MINUTES

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 9:30 by President Ruhl with the following present: Ryan Ruhl, Jordan McGinnis, Mike O'Brien, Joe McCall, Neal Graves, Jimmi Miles, Nick Bohms, Emma Hatfield, Kent Weil, John Fink, Bobby Collins, Todd Broge, Marty Hatfield, and Mark Hebert.

SECRETARY REPORT

O'Brien presented the previously emailed minutes from the January 26th and February 23rd meetings. Motion was made (Weil) "Accept the Secretary report". Second (Graves). Passed unanimously. O'Brien asked for a variance for return of the minutes from this meeting due to being out of town. Variance was approved by unanimous consent.

TREASURER REPORT

Ruhl presented the previously emailed Treasurer report. Net increase in funds of \$2598.12. Total balance of \$58,050.98. With this report, Andy Day tendered his resignation. It was noted the length of time that Andy served this association tirelessly. He will leave a large void both with his knowledge, experience, and general positive demeanor at meetings and events. The Board wishes him well in his new endeavors. Motion was made (Graves) "Accept Treasurer report". Second (Weil). Passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

O'Brien agreed to take over updating the website. Lisa has indicated she would send materials to make this happen. Ruhl to verify when this will take place. Adding podcasts is a consideration, but will come at a later time. With Day's resignation and O'Brien's involvement with the website the Social Media committee is changed to McGinnis, Bohms, and O'Brien. Creating and updating a pay wall within the website and other IT challenges will require professional assistance. Motion was made (Fink) "Provide up to \$2000 for IT support and website maintenance from

Realistic Technical Solutions LLC". Second (Hatfield). Passed unanimously.

Ruhl to meet with Day in the next week to get updates on the non-profit status. O'Brien to reach out to Hinshaw Associates. Hatfield to get information from a tax attorney.

Lifetime monies tabled at this time.

Electronic Communication since last meeting:

2/6/26 Motion (O'Brien) "Approve \$1000 for merchandise purchases". Second (Scifries). Passed with 6 emailed, and 3 texted "yeas".

2/10/26 Motion (Broge) "Approve a \$250 sponsorship to the NTA national convention as \$150 (sponsor individual demo from one of our members) and \$100 (add association name to official T-shirt)". Second (O'Brien). Motion passed with 10 emailed, and 2 texted "yeas".

3/22/26 Motion (Weil) "Buy a table for \$400 at the May 2nd IFOR banquet". Second (Collins). Passed with 9 emailed, and 1 texted "yeas".

Ruhl to try to locate Policy/Procedure #7.

REPORTS

FTA- Nothing to report.

NTA- 2026 convention will be in Richmond, IN July 23-25. 2027 convention will be in Tennessee, probably Cookeville, most likely July 15-17. It is rumored that Ohio will be bidding on 2028.

IFOR- IFOR's annual banquet was held on May 2nd. ITA purchased a table and again wasn't able to fill it. IFOR has been a great partner with the ITA and we need to make a better effort to be present. Weil presented a handout of what IFOR has done for the sportsmen of Illinois over the last year, as well as bills of interest to the ITA. So far, we have been successful in our endeavors legislatively. A change to the maximum jaw spread for a foothold in water has moved through the senate and is currently in the house.

MERCHANDISE- Fink presented the previously emailed report. We have had almost \$12,000 in sales since the creation of the merchandise coordinator position. Fink is now looking into full zip hoodies, stocking caps, and long sleeved shirts. Motion (Fink) "Approve \$4000 for merchandise purchases". Second (Weil). Passed unanimously.

ELECTION- President, Secretary, as well as board positions occupied by Broge, Corgait, Scifries, and Vose are up for election this year. Motion was made (O'Brien) "Appoint John Fink as interim treasurer to a term set to expire in 2027, when the election for a permanent treasurer will take place per the constitution". Second (Broge). Passed unanimously.

CONSTITUTION- O'Brien presented Article 12 of the constitution reviewing how the constitution is amended.

RULES- Nothing to report.

AWARDS- Deadline for nominations has generally been August 1st.

SOCIAL MEDIA- McGinnis proposed creating a parallel facebook page that would be open to the public and will be updated with an ITA itinerary. It will not be open to posting, but will be shareable to anyone who wishes.

OUTREACH&EDUCATION- Gardner camp was again a huge success, with Mike Vose heading this camp up. Mike has taken this camp to a point that it needs to be duplicated elsewhere in the state.

Neal Graves hosted an educational seminar with Joe McCall at Jim Edgar Panther Creek. It was attended by 20 young, eager future trappers. Ryan Ruhl donated 6 dozen traps on behalf of the ITA. The seminar was very well received, and we've been asked to come back.

11:45 Fink left. Ten minute break.

GRANT WRITING- The "Becoming an Outdoor's Woman" program spearheaded by Lisa DeMule is a huge hit at Siloam Springs. The ITA is the affiliate for the trapping portion. We need to use our grant writing opportunities as they become available.

LEGISLATIVE- Nothing to report.

RAFFLE- We have spent \$3500 of the \$4000 budget. We have all the tickets and prizes paid for, as well as \$275 set aside for card raffles at the

convention. With monies collected today, we will be over \$1000 in sales. O'Brien thanked everyone for selling tickets.

MEMBERSHIP- 514 at the last meeting, Hatfield estimates that we could be in the 700-750 range at this time. He asks for patience as he streamlines the transition to the membership director. Hatfield has every intention of continuing to have membership breakfasts monthly through the convention. NOTE: 5/22 membership updated to 608.

CONVENTION- We will be offering sponsorships for the convention this year. We will be having banners made and displaying them for all sponsors. Motion was made (Weil) "Include advertising for the convention in the Illinois Outdoor News for 2 issues". Second (Graves). Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion was made (O'Brien) "Appoint Emma Hatfield to the position of Official ITA Photographer". Second (Hebert). Passed unanimously.

ITA family day will start at 11AM on June 20th at Kickapoo Creek Park in Lincoln with food served at noon.

We look to have a good turnout at both the NTA and FTA national conventions.

Our ability to have a presence at Stink-O-Rama is still up in the air as many will be preparing for our convention the following weekend.

Bohms and McGinnis to inquire about pricing for plastic kids' traps.

O'Brien presented proposed changes to the constitution each proposal was discussed and voted on. The overview and result are as follows:

"Youth members shall not be allowed a vote"-----NOT APPROVED

"Increase President's spending limit to \$350"-----APPROVED

“Additional Secretary’s responsibilities shall be: #1) Record all electronic votes into the written minutes----APPROVED. #2)Provide all new Board members with a copy of the constitution, Board directory, and minutes from the last 12 month’s meetings within 10 days of their appointment/election.----APPROVED. #3 Shall follow up on all Board directives to ensure completion in a timely manner.----APPROVED. #4 Record treasurer report with amounts into the written minutes,---APPROVED”.

“Treasurer to deposit all monies generated by the ITA into an FDIC approved bank and be the prime contact on any additional bank accounts.”---APPROVED

“Self nominations for consideration in an election shall be accepted from June 1 through June 30”.-----APPROVED

“Notice of an election, and members’ ability to secure mail in ballots shall be posted on the website and social media accounts by July 15th. Notice shall be submitted to the next available official ITA publication”.----APPROVED

“Combine the “Rules” and “Constitution” committees into one committee”----APPROVED.

Motion was made (O’Brien) “Approve constitution changes as described”. Second (Weil). Passed unanimously.

Note: These are brief descriptions of the changes that were brought to the Board. Please see the attached copy of the proposed new constitution for exact wording.

BOARD ROUNDTABLE– Hatfield wanted everyone to be aware of the IL Land Institute and their practices involving land acquisitions. And to stay aware of lifetime membership pricing.

Bohms would like members to reach out more, and would like to be more involved.

Graves will be at the Illinois Taxidermy Association annual banquet in Decatur June 11-14th. We will be handing out our 2 awards, and Neal welcomes help in judging. We have been asked to do a furbearer demo at Jim Edgar over Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day weekends.

McCall recognized the exchange of ideas and camaraderie that can only happen with an in-person meeting and would encourage them instead of Zoom meetings if possible.

Ruhl spoke of Sonny Cooper. A dedicated trapper, and good individual who helped to mentor many not only in trapping, but also in being a responsible adult.

ADJOURN– Motion was made (Graves) “Move to adjourn” Second (Hebert). Passed unanimously. 1:11PM

ILLINOIS TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION AS PROPOSED TO MEMBERSHIP 2026

PREAMBLE

We, the trappers of the State of Illinois , prompted by a feeling of profound respect and gratitude towards the many valiant Fur Trappers who have gone before us, whose courageous deeds and exploits will forever embellish the pages of our State’s early history, and being duly grateful for the rich legacy of wildlife bequeathed by our predecessors, associate ourselves for the following purposes: To preserve inviolate, the freedom, privileges, and pleasures of the Trap-line for those who shall succeed us: To uphold the fundamental rights of freedom, liberty and justice for all: To perpetuate the friendships and association of the outdoors, and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of mutual assistance, this by the Grace Of God.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this Organization shall be the "Illinois Trappers Association", hereinafter called "ITA", incorporated as a (501C6) nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Illinois. The insignia of the Association shall be the shape of Illinois with a muskrat and ITA in the middle.

ARTICLE 2 - DEFINITIONS

- 1- Director shall be an individual elected by the membership to the board.
- 2- Officer shall refer to an individual elected to serve as: president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer.
- 3- Board shall be considered the directors and the officers as a body.
- 4- Member shall refer to an individual whose application has been accepted and whose current dues are paid.
- 5- Committee shall refer to special commissions created to accomplish a specific task.
- 6- The word WILL is deemed a future mandatory action.
- 7- The word SHALL will be deemed as a required or mandatory action.
- 8- The word MAY shall be deemed a permissive action.
- 9- Approval shall mean a simple majority of those voting on any topic or item.
- 10- Policy/Procedure shall be established by the board to address special and/or unusual circumstances not included in this document.
- 11- Official Publication shall be defined as a national publication, chosen by the board, in which the ITA may submit organizational information for publication.

ARTICLE 3 - GOALS

- 1- The ITA shall work to avoid conflict with the policy of any existing trappers associations, and shall aid such organizations in their endeavors.
- 2- The ITA may aid trappers in the various states to organize state trappers organizations.
- 3- The ITA shall work in the interest of conservation of all natural resources and when practical, shall work with existing agencies dedicated to such causes.

4- The ITA shall make recommendations or protestations on any existing or pending legislation to the proper legislative or executive entity upon careful examination and discussion of the facts concerning such legislation.

5- The ITA shall support and encourage wildlife harvests based on sound science.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

1- Any person who endorses the goals and purposes of the ITA shall be eligible to become a member of ITA.

2- Member shall inform the ITA in writing (electronically or fax) of any pending legislation that could be detrimental to traps, trappers, or trapping.

3- Member shall never have supported anti-trapping legislation.

4- Shall not be a member of any organization attempting to overthrow the government of the USA or Illinois.

5- Member shall be entitled to attend any and all meetings of the ITA.

6- Member shall be entitled to a single vote on any proposal presented to the membership.

7- Member shall not use their ITA membership to endorse any candidate, object, or activity as to confuse or suggest the ITA does the same.

8- No candidate (outside of the ITA itself), object, or activity shall use or list ITA as to suggest support, unless specifically approved by the Board.

9- Membership may be revoked if an individual is found to have violated this constitution.

10- A membership may be challenged by twenty (20) members in good standing, in writing, with a detailed account of the specific items to be considered. The **Constitution and Rules** committee will hear the charges and provide a recommendation to the board for action.

(See removal of officers Article 5, section 1E)

11- Membership dues will be set by the board and approved by the membership at the annual membership meeting.

ARTICLE 5 - OFFICERS

1- **Elected Officers**

A- The ITA shall have four officers elected by the membership: a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer. These officers shall be

elected by a majority of those members voting by secret ballot at the annual convention or by mail-in ballots. The president and secretary shall be elected on even numbered years and the vice president and treasurer shall be elected on odd numbered years. All officers' terms shall be two years.

B - The elected officers shall perform the duties prescribed by this constitution and as directed by the board and the membership.

C - The president, vice president, and secretary may not serve in the same office for more than six (6) consecutive years. No such restriction shall be placed on the treasurer.

D- Qualifications - Shall be a member in good standing and shall have served at least one year as a director

E- Removal of a board member (officer or director) may be achieved for non-performance and/or violation of this document. A written petition or order of complaint by 5 board members shall be presented to the full board. (Email notice is acceptable) The board will then notify the **Constitution and Rules** committee of the complaint, **which** will then conduct interviews and provide **a** report to the full board for action. The officer or director against whom the complaint has been filed will be allowed an interview, in person, at the next board meeting. The board will then discuss and rule on the complaint. A majority vote, in favor of removal, of those board members present shall be required to remove an officer or director. A new board member will be appointed as provided for in Article 8 Section 5 of this document.

F- Elected officers and directors will officially take office at 12:01 am on the Monday following the close of the annual convention. If there should be no annual convention then the officers will take office at 12:01 am on the Monday following the general membership meeting and announcement of election results.

G- Once an officer/director term expires, and/or they are no longer a board member, all items belonging to the ITA shall be returned within thirty (30) days to the ITA.

2-President - Shall preside over all meetings of the ITA, (except the chairman shall preside over committee meetings), appoint committees, and sign legal documents and contracts on behalf of the ITA with board

approval. The President may authorize expenditures up to ~~\$250.00~~ ~~\$350.00~~ per item without board approval. The President is an ex-officio member of all committees. The President shall be bonded at the expense of the ITA.

3- **Vice President** - Shall assume the duties of the president in the absence of the president. The Vice President shall perform duties as assigned by the president or board. The Vice President shall have oversight of the annual convention.

4- **Secretary** - Shall record minutes at all ITA meetings.

A- Shall send copies of the minutes to the board members for approval and or correction within ten (10) days of the meeting unless board approves variance.

B- Shall revise and redistribute said minutes upon final approval at the next board meeting.

C- Shall inform the president in advance of a meeting should they be unable to attend.

D- Shall receive nominations and cause such to be placed on a ballot.

E- Shall create the ballot for election at the annual convention. (See policies and procedures)

F- Shall record all electronic votes. The item and result shall be recorded in the next official board meeting minutes as notice to the board and members of the action.

G- Shall provide all newly elected or appointed board members with electronic copies of the Constitution, Policies and Procedures, Board Directory, and minutes of the previous 12 months of meetings within 10 days of appointment or election. Paper copies may be requested and should be made available within a timely manner.

H- Shall follow up to ensure enactment of Board directives in a timely manner.

I- Shall record the Treasurer's report with account balances within the written minutes.

5- **Treasurer** - Shall receive and ~~place all membership dues into an FDIC bank~~ deposit all funds, income, and membership dues into an FDIC institution approved by the board unless specifically directed otherwise by

the board. Shall oversee any additional financial accounts approved by the board.

A- Shall receive and deposit all funds, income, and monies from any event into the same account.

B- Shall coordinate with the president and board so as to have a representative approved by the treasurer in attendance at all ITA events that create monies belonging to the ITA.

C- Shall provide to the ITA official publication a complete list of members entitled to receive the publication.

D- Shall keep an accurate and up to date membership list.

E- Shall provide a complete financial report at all ITA meetings.

F- Shall handle all correspondence and money matters usual to the office of the treasurer.

G- The Treasurer is responsible for all state/federal required filings and notices.

H- Shall be bonded at the expense of the ITA.

ARTICLE 6 - DIRECTORS

1- A maximum of fifteen (15) directors shall be duly elected by the membership. Directors will serve a three-year term. No more than five (5) directors shall be elected any given year. (See policies and procedures for transition years format)

2- Qualifications

A- Shall be a member in good standing.

B- All directors shall be citizens of the United States of America and legal residents of the State of Illinois.

C- Directors are required to attend a minimum of two (2) board meetings per year, (any consecutive twelve (12) month period) unless excused by the board.

D- No person unable to obtain a hunting, fishing or trapping license from the State of Illinois shall be allowed to run for or hold an elected position as an officer or director, nor serve on the board in any fashion.

E- No person convicted of a crime such as (but not limited too) domestic violence, child abuse, inappropriate sexual behavior, or other such activity shall be allowed to serve as a director or officer. Certain other convictions

for inappropriate management of finances or property owned or controlled by others may also prevent serving as an officer or director.

ARTICLE 7 - MEETINGS

1- There shall be a general membership meeting held each year at the annual convention. Should there be no annual convention, a general membership meeting shall be called by the president, approved by the board, and the membership shall be notified in the "official publication" and on the ITA website, electronically, or by standard postal service.

2- Board meetings shall be held quarterly with times, dates, and locations selected by the president and approved by the board.

3- Quorum shall be 1/3 of the board.

4- Proxy votes shall not be permitted.

5- All board members shall conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner. Repeated unprofessional, disrespectful, uncivil conduct, cursing, or other foul language will result in immediate removal from that meeting.

6- Electronic votes (~~email~~) are permitted on board topics. ~~and the item and result shall be recorded in the next official board meeting minutes as notice to the board and members of the action.~~ *(ed. note: Moved to Art 5 Sec 4 F)*

7- Conference calls, ~~Zoom meetings, or any other electronic communications~~ are allowed to conduct business. All the rules for any other meeting shall be followed. Minutes shall be taken, approved, and reported.

8- Nothing in this document prevents the board from calling special or additional board meetings should the need arise.

9- Minutes shall be taken for any and all board meetings as provided in Article 5 sect 4.

~~10- All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the latest revision of Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise delineated within this Constitution.~~

ARTICLE 8 - BOARD

1- The four (4) elected officers and the directors (all of equal rank) shall be considered the Board.

2- The board shall conduct and be responsible for the business of the ITA as directed by this constitution and the membership.

3- The board may enter into short term agreements (until the next general membership meeting) with specific individuals, facilities, or organizations for the purpose of conducting the business of ITA.

4- Board members may be reimbursed for various expenses with prior approval of the board: travel expenses to or from places representing the ITA

5- The Board may appoint vacant or unfilled positions on the board except that of president as the vice president fills that position when vacant.

6- National Trappers Association (NTA) Director shall be appointed by the president and approved by the board. NTA Director shall be responsible to provide the most current information from the NTA as a report at all ITA meetings. The NTA Director shall be a board member and shall attend the NTA board meeting and vote/comment in the best interest of the trappers of Illinois. If the NTA director is unable to attend the NTA board meeting, the President shall appoint a temporary representative (approved by the board) to attend the meetings.

7- Fur Takers of America (FTA) Director shall be appointed by the president and approved by the board. The FTA Director shall be responsible to provide the most current information from the FTA as a report at all ITA meetings. The FTA Director shall be a board member and may attend the FTA board meeting and vote/comment in the best interest of the trappers of Illinois.

8- No board member shall be allowed to promote, support, or oppose any political endeavor on behalf of the ITA, without board approval.

9- The board shall recommend membership dues to the members for their approval.

10- The board shall select the location of the annual convention.

11- The board will establish public out-reach activities such as youth camps, attending other sporting group's events, and public presentations. The ITA will not knowingly allow any representative or participant at an ITA function to be in violation of Article 6, Section 2E.

12- Should the ITA seek and receive legal counsel it is the responsibility of this board to adhere to these recommendations to protect the organization and its members from legal action and/or unlawful activities.

13- If the board and membership vote to dissolve the organization, all funds and assets shall be forwarded to the parent organization, the National Trappers Association (NTA).

~~14- All board members shall receive the most recent version of the ITA constitution and copies of all meeting minutes. (See Art 5 Sec 4 G)~~

14- A member of the association may challenge the actions of the board by submitting in writing, to the president, an exception to a specific action. The president will bring this challenge to the board and appoint a special ten (10) member committee to hear the complaint and investigate the challenge. Legal counsel shall be included (hired) to participate in this action.

15- The board will set membership dues but must be approved by the membership at the annual membership meeting.

ARTICLE 9 - ELECTIONS

1- All nominations for office shall be filed in writing with the secretary who shall place or cause them to be placed on a ballot.

2- Deadline for nominations will be July 1st of that election year.

~~Nominations will be accepted from June 1 through June 30 of the election year.~~

3- The ballot shall be completed and published no later than sixty (60) days prior to the annual convention.

4- The ballot shall be available at the annual convention to members for voting.

5- ~~Members~~ Notice of an election, and members' ability to request mail-in ballots shall be posted on the website and social media accounts by July 15th. Notice of the same shall be submitted to the next available official ITA publication. Members may ask for ballots to be mailed to them should they be unable to attend the convention ~~(procedure/policy shall be established by the board.)~~

6- No member shall be allowed to vote twice.

7- Ballots mailed to members shall be returned to the Secretary two weeks prior to the convention.

8- The Secretary shall retain them unopened and place them in the ballot box at the convention. The ballot box closes at 1:00 pm on Saturday of the convention.

9- The Election Committee made up of members not running for office shall gather the ballots and count them and record result.

10- The results will be announced on Saturday at 4:00 pm at the annual convention.

11- Should there be no annual convention the board will establish a procedure that will allow for the elections to take place otherwise in accordance with this constitution.

12- Write in candidates shall not be allowed.

13- Vote by proxy shall not be allowed.

14- When there are the same number or fewer candidates for positions open, the board shall have the authority to vote on each candidate separately at the meeting immediately prior to the annual convention, Thus confirming each candidate with one vote which all that would be needed to elect.

ARTICLE 10 - ANNUAL CONVENTION

ITA may host an annual convention. The Board will establish the date and location of each convention. The date may be the first weekend in October. Adjustments to this date may be required should there be scheduling conflicts or other unforeseen circumstances.

ARTICLE 11 - COMMITTEES

1- Standing and Special committee members shall be appointed by the president and approved by the board.

A- Standing Committees are: ~~Rules, Constitution, Constitution and Rules~~, Convention, Legislative, and Election

B- Special Committees ~~can~~ may be created as needed

C- All functions and operations of committees will be established by the board.

ARTICLE 12 - AMENDMENTS

1- Proposed amendments will be approved by a majority vote of the board.

2- Proposed amendments approved by the board will be presented to the membership as a recommendation in the form of a motion at the annual general membership meeting for a vote.

3- The President shall notify the membership via the official ITA publication, **social media**, and post on the ITA website, a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the annual membership meeting, that that constitution amendments are forthcoming and that copies of these proposed changes are available by contacting the secretary and a copy of these shall be mailed (or emailed) to any member upon request.

4- This constitution may be amended by a majority of the total membership voting.

5- Any proposed revisions or changes to the constitution at the time of the annual membership meeting, shall be considered but only when they will allow proper adherence to Article 12 of this document.

(Effective unless conflicting with Illinois Corporate Code for non-profits)