



VMBA Board Orientation Packet

Mission Statement: To ensure the sustainability of mountain biking in Vermont and thoughtfully promote exceptional riding experiences for all through advocacy, education, and community-driven stewardship

Vision Statement: A future where mountain biking is at the center of healthy, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable communities throughout Vermont, with well-planned, accessible, and progressive trail systems state-wide.

How:

- Developing key relationships
- Advocacy/lobbying
- Collaborating with chapters & their boards of directors
- Growing and actively engaging the membership
- Developing and effectively utilizing the VMBA Board of Directors
- Supporting the executive director & office staff
- Creating strategic partnerships & sponsorship
- Innovating programming

What:

- Trails
- Experiences
- Events
- Relationships
- Increased volunteerism
- Measurable community outcomes

Why:

VMBA creates and develops vibrant communities that are emboldened by outdoor recreation and a connection to natural environments in support of outcomes that benefit the world:

- Access to family recreation
- Help to ensure that individuals are physically and emotionally healthy
- Dedicate resources to diversifying mountain biking participation
- Illustrate the need to lift the value of volunteerism
- Build grit, character, and focus through spending time in the woods
- Embolden Vermont's business and entrepreneurial opportunities

Guiding Values:

- Fostering the development of purpose-built, sustainably constructed, and open-access trails
- Preserving Vermont's landscape through an aware and connected riding community
- Maintaining excellent working relationships with land managers, communities, sponsors, and partners
- Representing the interests of riders through both our advocacy and the trail projects we pursue

Historical Perspectives:

VMBA was founded in 1997, but mountain biking predated the creation of VMBA by many years. For decades, riding in Vermont was characterized by a combination of rogue building and limited connection to public land managers. The riding culture in Vermont is deeply rooted and among the very best in the country.

VMBA hired its first executive director in 2007, which marked the first time that riders had a voice of advocacy. At that time, VMBA was developing relationships with public land managers and involving more chapters. From 1997 to 2013, chapters were not collectively represented and operated in isolation. The board of directors was comprised of all the chapters' presidents, and membership hovered around 1,200 riders.

In 2014, VMBA launched the statewide membership model, which included the add-on platform. This shift has meant amazing things for the association:

- Membership reached 9,000+ since 2020
- Grew to 28 Chapters, seven trail-based organization Add-Ons, 5 Community Builder Add-ons, and 5 all-season resort partners
- VMBA has developed multiple [programs](#) including the [community builders](#), [Naming Grants](#), and [Trail Grants Programs](#)
- Umbrella 501c3 status & insurance for Chapters and their directors
- Membership services including: increased member benefits, customer service, member materials packing/ mailing which include Chapter's materials, database management, and a VMBA mobile app with access to all member benefits
- Tax reporting
- Event support for chapters

VMBA at a Glance:

- **Founded in 1997**

- **Impact:**
 - Directed nearly 90% of membership dollars to Chapters in direct and indirect support
 - Annually, oversee more than 26,000 hours of volunteer labor in support of trail stewardship
 - Chapters Steward over 930 miles of public-access singletrack
 - Employ more than 35 individuals across our central office and Chapters at the peak of the summer season
 - 120 Trail Grants have been made to 27 Chapters, with more than \$530,000 going towards improving the quality and quantity of riding in Vermont
 - Directed over \$190,000 in Naming Grants to Chapters
 - Supported development of the Velomont Vision Plan, engaging stakeholders and communities as this 485-mile hut-supported trail corridor takes shape
 - Invested over 200 hours in meetings with legislators, providing testimony, and partners to lay the groundwork for the advocacy goals laid out in our 5-year Strategic Plan

- **Position in the competitive landscape** - VMBA views other trail-based nonprofits in Vermont and beyond as allies in advocacy. The largest source of competition is the fever pitch over sponsorship and grant dollars in Vermont.

- **Key Staff:**
 - Nick Bennette, Executive Director, hired in 2021
 - Strategy
 - New Initiatives
 - Team Direction & Management
 - Review & signoff
 - Advocacy
 - Public land manager relations
 - Major Partnerships
 - Trail Stewardship Oversight
 - Joe Gaynor – Programs and Partnerships Manager, hired in 2021
 - Partnerships
 - Sponsorships
 - DH in VT
 - Reward Volunteers
 - Member Benefits
 - Retailers Alliance
 - Regional Alliance
 - Events (co-managed)
 - Amy Potter – Operations Manager, hired in 2022

- Membership
 - Oversee Database and Fulfillment
 - Chapter Support
- Office Administration
- Chapter Resource Library maintenance
- Chapter Admin. Support
 - Taxes
 - Compliance
 - Insurance
- New Chapter start-up
- Insurance
- Payroll
- Accounting
- Fundraising
 - Little Green Light Management
- o Dean Havelock – Marketing and Communications Manager, hired in 2025
 - Marketing & Communications
 - Ambassadors
 - Website
 - App
 - Fundraising
 - Events (co-managed)
- Financial data can be found on the [Association Documents Page](#).

VMBA Board of Directors Governance:

The association has matured a great deal over the past five years. This growth can be attributed to the level of dedication among the chapters and the unrelenting effort of passionate board members.

Primary VMBA Board Responsibilities:

1. In concert with the executive director, develop organizational purpose, mission, and vision
2. Annually review key staff and board of directors performance through self and peer evaluations
3. Play a measurable role in securing financial support for the organization
4. Be accountable to peer board members by actively engaging and measurably progressing the goals of key board committees
5. Work with the executive director to approve and monitor programs
6. Engage regularly in strategic planning

Board Diversity:

VMBA is committed to building a diverse board of directors in both demographics and expertise. Board participation isn't attached to riding ability in any way. VMBA is eager to build

a board that shares a passion for the grand outcomes that accompany collective achievement.

Board Terms:

Board terms are three years, and service is capped at two consecutive terms. The executive team, consisting of the chair, vice chair, treasurer, and secretary, may not be first-year board members. Information about these roles can be found in VMBA's [Bylaws](#)

Meetings:

1. Prepare for and participate in no less than 80% of director meetings each year – we have at least 4 scheduled meetings annually, plus one annual meeting
2. Propose agenda items in a timely manner – roughly a week in advance to give the chair time for follow-up and to prepare and distribute the agenda document
3. Actively engage, ask questions that move the conversation/agenda forward, be willing to engage other board members

Committees:

Serve on at least one committee. A member of the board will lead each committee. Each committee will generate annual goals, provide meeting inputs, and seek support from the office in a manner that matches available bandwidth for the following key areas of operations or as others become necessary:

- a. Marketing
- b. Trail Grant Committee
- c. Finance
- d. Fundraising
- e. Ambassadors
- f. Annual evaluations
 - i. Key staff
 - ii. Board of directors - self & peer

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest:

1. Serve the organization as a whole rather than any special interest of isolated individual(s), groups or constituency
2. Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions and speak for the board only when authorized to do so through a united decision of the executive team
3. Disclose any potential conflicts of interests in a timely manner
4. Never accept or offer gifts to anyone or entities that do business with VMBA
5. Sign VMBA BOD [Code of Conduct](#)

Development/Relationship Building:

1. As a team of directors, participate in the annual fund by:
 - a. Establishing an annual fundraising goal as a board and creating a plan to achieve desired outcomes
 - b. Gifting cash or non-cash donations according to personal means – pursue a matching gift from employer when available
2. Work with board peers to augment the annual fund list of contacts each year

3. Agree to authentically engage, recognize, and thank current and potential supporters in acts of “outgiving our givers” on an ongoing basis – defined as:
 - a. Sharing names of potential new donors with the executive director on an ongoing basis to continually build the annual fund list
 - b. Writing and sending personalized notes of appreciation to current and potential supporters in our community each month
 - c. Share innovative ideas to thank our supportive stakeholder groups
 - d. Inviting those in your own contact list to attend special VMBA events and to give to the annual fund

The following links are excellent resources to learn more about the legal and ethical duties of a board member:

- The National Council of Nonprofits provides this rubric for [How to be a Great Nonprofit Board Member](#) plus a guide for self-evaluation.
- [Performance Expectations for board members](#) as outlined by nonprofit board development consultant, Simone Joyaux.
- [Thoughts on Fundraising and Development](#) by Common Good Vermont, the state’s resource for nonprofit organizations.
- [Legal Requirements of Boards of nonprofit organizations](#) as outlined by the National Council for Voluntary Organizations.
- [Nonprofit board governance as outlined by the Vermont Secretary of State](#) and a direct link to the [Vermont Statutes Title 11B on Nonprofit Corporations](#)
- The Vermont Attorney General’s guide for new board members, [_____ Understand your responsibilities: Guidelines for board members of charitable nonprofit organizations in Vermont.](#)
- An interesting guide for [Building an Effective Nonprofit Board](#) and establishing mutually agreed upon expectations.
- The [IRS Federal Compliance Guide for 501\(c\)\(3\) Public Charities](#) and [VMBA’s previous year’s Form 990 Income Tax Exemption Returns.](#)

Thank you for your interest in joining the VMBA Board of Directors.

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