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Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 19, 2025, 6:30 – 8:30 pm via Zoom

Vision
United by our passion for equines, we foster an inclusive community where everyone thrives together.

Mission
AEF supports Alberta's equine community through programs, education, and resources that promote horse welfare, sustainability, and meaningful connections among members.

Five - year goal
By 2030, AEF will strengthen its financial foundation by growing revenue streams, increasing membership value, and establishing reserves to support future programs and community initiatives.

1. Call to Order
Jason called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. He also read the AEF Land Acknowledgement aloud and asked the Board to declare any conflicts of interest with regard to any of the agenda items. None were heard.

In Attendance: Jason Edworthy (President), Jennifer Dimopoulos (President Elect), Sandy Bell (Past President), Ally Penic (Secretary), Brooke Hartwick (Treasurer), Cailin Kopetski (Director), Kate Wood (Director), Louise Caplan (Director), Lindsay Seidel-Wassenaar (Director), Anne Stone (Director), Pat Buffalo (Director – joined the meeting at 6:37 pm), Sonia Dantu (Executive Director, non-voting) and Flo Scherpenisse (Recording Secretary, non-voting)
Absent with Regrets: Claire Goddard (Director)

2. Agenda – Motion to approve – June 19, 2025
Due to logistical and unintended technological challenges related to the Treasurers report, Jason proposed that agenda item #5 (Treasurers report) be moved to later in the agenda between items #7 (Business Arising) and #8 (New Business).

MOTION: Jennifer moved to approve the June 19, 2025 meeting agenda with the amendment.
Kate 2nd. In favor (10); Against (0); Abstain (0). Unanimous. Approved.

3. Minutes – Motion to approve – April 26, 2025
Flo advised that in section# 8 (Board Member Orientation), page 3, paragraph 1, last sentence should be corrected to read, "…AEF's role is to ***educate*** (not education) not regulate."

MOTION: Ally moved to approve the April 26,2025 meeting minutes with the noted amendment.
Pat 2nd. In favor (11); Against (0); Abstain (0). Unanimous. Approved.

4. President's Report
Jason highlighted the following points in his Presidents Report:

- In May, he participated in numerous meetings and calls with Equestrian Canada (EC) and other Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSO). He also attended EC's AGM on May 27, 2025 as one of its voting members.
- There have been numerous administrative tasks and forms to sign in relation to the upcoming Casino in December 2025 and the Government of Alberta (GOA) core ADP grant.
- The AEF made the decision not to attend a United Conservative Party (UCP) fundraiser despite a possible opportunity to speak with the Minister for Forestry and Parks, Todd Loewen.
- He has continued supporting the Recreation Task Force (RTF) and Kelsey Noland (Chair of RTF) with regards to finalizing the Trails Manager Proposal in the Panther Corners Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ).

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- June was less hectic with attendance at the Bragg Creek Trails AGM. Here, AEF was recognized as a special guest. Of note, in their annual report, the AEF was thanked for their financial support through donations for the Boundary Horse Trail.
- He also suggested that the AEF consider tracking the volunteer hours worked by AEF volunteers and perhaps implementing a merit badge recognition system for their contribution. This would demonstrate the importance of the volunteer community to the AEF.

MOTION: Kate moved to accept the President's Report as verbally presented.
Ally 2nd. In favor (11); Against (0); Abstain (0). Unanimous. Approved.

5. Treasurers Report

a. May 30, 2025, Financial Statements

Brooke provided a high-level overview of the May 30, 2025 Comparative Income Statement:

- Revenue: The majority of the revenue categories either indicated the AEF was on track or showed a deficit. This was largely due to timing in that it is still early in the season.
- To date, the AEF's forecasted revenue for 2025 is $1.3M.
- Expense: Similar to revenue, the majority of the expense categories were similarly underspent. Again, this was largely due to the timing of events in that it was early season. Of note, operating expenses were on track.
- To date, the AEF's forecasted expenses for 2025 is $1.37M.

Take Away Messages:

- Key Financial Metrics: (i) Current Ratio (goal is = ≥ 1.0): To date the AEF's current ratio is just < 1.0. This means the AEF has a decreased ability to pay for its expenses and meet its short-term obligations. (ii) Revenue to Date (goal ≥ 1.0). To date, this has somewhat increased due to the payout of the ADP grant. (iii) Cash Reserve (goal is a 3–6-month operational reserve). To date, the AEF is well below this margin and would be unable to cover even one month of operational expenses.
- At the previous board meeting (Red Deer), it was anticipated that for 2025, the AEF would be in a net negative of approximately $31,000. However, to date, it was forecasted that in 2025, the AEF's actual net negative would instead be approximately $41,000.
- As such, the AEF cannot sustain the anticipated loss despite the possibility of further decreasing expenses and/or additional donations.
- As such, AEF should be looking for sustainable long-term structural changes for the remainder of 2025, into 2026. Perhaps this may include raising membership fees. At present, the AEF continues to lose money on every membership.
- In parallel, Sonia continues to conduct a review of AEF's investment funds. There is a possibility of needing cash in the AEF's term deposit when it comes due in the fall of 2025 to cover the anticipated financial shortfall. However, this is not a favorable option.
- These financial-related issues pose serious concerns for AEF and moving forward, it is imperative to determine how to navigate and manage this matter.

Questions from the Floor: Is there any way to unrestrict deferred funds? No. Donations marked as deferred funds are designated for a specific purpose. These donations do not come directly from the individual per se, but rather, are issued from individuals or various Foundations by the GOA.
Is the AEF in overdraft? No.

MOTION: Ally moved to approve the May 30, 2025 Comparative Income Statement as previously circulated.
Louise 2nd. In favor (11); Against (0); Abstain (0). Unanimous. Approved.

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6. Operations Report

Sonia presented a high-level overview of the Operations Report with focus on the following areas:

- She expressed that considerable time and effort has gone into drafting this important report and emphasized the relevance of its content for the board to review in preparation for board meetings.
- Association Development Program (ADP) Grant for 2025: The GOA has changed its reporting process and while it is very labor-intensive, this change has also aligned nicely with AEF's fiscal year. A significant amount of time, reporting and administrative work is required to fulfill the requirements of this process.
- The first installment of Core GOA funding has been received in May 2025 ($40,850). The second installment remains pending the final reporting, but we will see the funds much earlier than October (which is generally when they are received).
- Donation Fund Program: The AEF has received two significant donations totaling $562,000 from the Raymond James Canada Foundation and the Calgary Foundation. These funds are deferred funds.
- Overall, other general donations received to date have remained low. The board was encouraged to consider possible fundraising strategies. Support would be needed for the Rider and Educational Scholarships and the Trail Supporter Program.
- Casino Fundraising Event: Special thanks was expressed to this event's key volunteers. This event is the AEF's most significant annual fundraising event. More importantly, it is also a significant way to demonstrate not only the board's commitment to their governance role, but also, in support of the AEF's strategic commitments and its mission.
- Membership Overview and System Modernization: As of June 2025, active memberships are slightly lower as compared with the same time in 2024.
- The previous My Members platform has been replaced successfully by Horse Reg. The transition is expected to be completed by early July 2025.
- Social Media: There was a slight uptick in social media traffic due to Pride month.
- Competitions & Events: To date, it is still early in the season for competitions. Staff, Jason and Kelsey have already attended some events. Where possible, the board is encouraged to attend events in order to engage with the membership and represent the AEF.
- 2025 National Coaching Symposium: This important event has evolved somewhat in collaboration with EC. Much activity and preparation continue surrounding this exciting event scheduled for Sept 8-12, 2025.
- Safe Sport Strategy Update: Sonia and Gavin Pearson (Project and Event Coordinator), attended sessions with the Alberta Sport Leadership Association in relation to Safe Sport and found them to be very engaging and informative. In terms sustainability, it is hoped that GOA will be committed to fund the Independent Third-Party Mechanism (ITPM) for years to come.
- Organizational Policy Alignment and Development Update: Work is ongoing with regards to this initiative and it is hoped that this policy suite will be available shortly.

Questions from the Floor: When does the Alberta Bits two-year contract expire? End of 2027.

MOTION: Anne moved to accept the Operations Report as previously circulated and as presented.
Louise 2nd. In favor (11); Against (0); Abstain (0). Unanimous. Approved.

7. Business Arising

a. Committees/Task Forces – Volunteers

- Jason advised that most board members have signed up for various committees and TFs.

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- The board was encouraged to perhaps consider signing up for two committees or TFs, but at the same time, cautioned to not overextend themselves.

b. Committees/Task Forces – TOR Reviews

- Jason advised that all committees have Terms of Reference (TORs) that require annual review. All committees are encouraged to discuss this matter in upcoming meetings.
- Specifically, all TORs need a clearer definition of "staff liaison." At present, Sonia is working on a template for this.
- Reporting on this matter will occur during the Sept 2025 board meeting.

c. Meet a Horse – Update

Louise provided an update on the Meet a Horse initiative and advised of the following:

- To date, not much progress has been made in this regard. This was due to the fact that although contact with the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) outreach team has been made, their response has been slow. Likely, this is due to the spring/ summer period. Another upcoming meeting is anticipated. More to come.

d. Casino Dates and Volunteers

Sonia provided a brief update with regards to the casino fundraising event:

- The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) has provided the AEF with dates for our casino fundraising event. The dates are Dec 3-4, 2025.
- At present, approximately 22 volunteers are required.
- The board has the first opportunity to sign up for volunteer opportunities with general recruitment outside the board to start shortly.

8. New Business

a. Other Committee Reports

Jason invited Pat to speak briefly about the Wild Horses of Alberta Society (WHOAS) and the reintroduction of wild horses on First Nation's land. Pat shared that twelve mares and one stallion have been installed. Pat also shared the spiritual significance of the horse emphasizing that we (humans) are an integral part of nature in terms of our relationship with the land. In doing so, Pat referenced the Ojibwe Spirit Horse as a symbol of hope and resilience.

i. Equine Emergency Funding

Jason shared an update on the Equine Emergency Disaster Fund (EEDF) TF on behalf of co-chair, Claire. He shared the following from her report:

- The TF's first meeting was held on May 27, 2025 where consensus was met with regards to the purpose of the EEDF. As of June 2025, the balance in the fund was noted to be at $29,267.87 due to donations received in 2024. To date, four applications have been granted and paid out.
- The TF specified the expense reimbursements covered and noted that they were to be the result of general or regional disasters. At present the fund would not to be considered for individual disasters.
- The application period was opened on Jun 15, 2025 and will close on Sept 30, 2025. Promotion for EEDF online applications are to be advertised through the usual channels.
- The next meeting along with first round of disbursements is expected to be in mid-July 2025 or as the needs arises based on the number of applications received.
- Sandy commented that this TF involves very fulfilling work.

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ii. Recreation Task Force

Louise provided an update on the RTF's activities and highlighted the following:

- Trail Supporter Fund: This fund provides critical funding assistance to member clubs and business with regards to construction and/ or maintenance of equestrian trails, trailheads, or horse camping sites for public use. To date, funding has been awarded to three applicants.
- Collaborative Insights: The Alberta Snowmobile Association has shared aspects of their journey in becoming recognized trail managers. Their experience and the information provided has served as an invaluable guide to the AEF in its endeavor to also become designated trail managers.
- AEF Trails Manager Proposal: This proposal has recently been submitted. The proposal focuses on the Panther Corners PLUZ area and addresses the ongoing challenges with regards to trail access and safety with long-term sustainability. Specifically, this document was intended to (i) improve trail maintenance and infrastructure; (ii) develop stronger stakeholder engagement and (iii) facilitate future trail designation and expansion.

b. Strategic Planning and Board Meeting – September

Jason advised the following:

- The September in-person board meeting will be held in Calgary and is scheduled for Sept 20-21, 2025. It will consist of two parts: (i) a board meeting and (ii) an annual required review of the AEF's strategic plan and goals.
- Funds are available for this through deferred funds for leadership development.

9. Adjournment

Jason advised that the AEF has been invited to address the Minister for Forestry and Parks, Todd Loewen, on Parks Canada's ten-year plan. This important meeting will take place on June 24, 2025, in Edmonton, AB. It is an excellent opportunity for the AEF to promote equestrian advocacy and trail access. One of the key messages to be conveyed from the Economic Impact Study a couple of years ago is that the equestrian industry in Alberta contributes approximately $1.3B/ year to Alberta's gross domestic product (GDP).

Jason recognized National Indigenous Peoples Day on Jun 2, 2025, and wish all meeting attendees a good summer. He also inquired about any final questions or comments. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Ally moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

2025/2026 Board Meeting/Event Dates

NOTE: *Meetings are subject to change due to inclement weather and/or the urgency of issues. As much notice as possible will be provided.*

September 20, 2025	9:30 am – 4 pm	In Person, Calgary - TBD
September 21, 2025	9:30 am – 12:00 pm	In Person, Calgary - TBD
November 6, 2025	6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Board Meeting, Zoom
February 19, 2026	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Board Meeting, Zoom
March 5, 2026	6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	AEF AGM, Zoom

ALBERTA EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

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Land Acknowledgement

The Alberta Equestrian Federation humbly acknowledges that what we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many diverse original peoples, who have lived on these lands for generations. As we make our own footprints and hoofprints, we recognize those who have cared for these lands for centuries. We are grateful to live upon this territory together. We pay respect to the Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We are thankful to learn from all the original peoples of these lands as we move forward together in reconciliation.

Summary of the Board of Directors Code of Conduct

(Full policy available on pages 15 & 16 of the Board Policy Manual)

The AEF Board of Directors is committed to upholding the highest standards of accountability, integrity, and respect. Directors are expected to:

- Act with impartiality, professionalism, and in the best interests of the Federation.
- Avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest and disclose any potential conflicts.
- Maintain confidentiality and comply with all legal and ethical obligations.
- Foster a respectful, safe, and inclusive environment free from discrimination or harassment.
- Refrain from using their position for personal gain or speaking on behalf of the Federation unless authorized.