

Anchorage Rowing Association

Date: 2/16/26

Attendees: Marietta “Ed” Hall, Kate Gilling, Terry Carpenter, Stephanie Tasker, George Bryson, Sofie Chisholm,

Absent: Izzy Halcomb, Erica French, Sandra Rudd

Guests: Mike Chriss

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve Kate, seconded Terry

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve Stephanie, seconded Terry

Quick recap

The board meeting focused on reviewing and approving several key policies, including a new coxswain volunteer program with a punch card system for fee waivers, and updates to the team management plan for 2026.

The board discussed fee structures for the upcoming season, with concerns raised about pricing accessibility while maintaining profitability, particularly for masters and junior programs. They also reviewed outside racing opportunities and the survey results, which showed limited interest in RowFest but stronger enthusiasm for regional races like Green Lake.

The board approved changes to the 4-over rule language and agreed to update the newsletter format to provide more comprehensive information about the team's activities and new initiatives.

Financial Report

- The only transaction in 2026 is the \$15K Vespoli Deposit
- Discussion of Vespoli purchase: Vespoli is sending the financing schedule.
- It has not been received yet but the plan is to make payments in May and November for 5 years @ 6%.

Budget Review and Fee Adjustments

- The board reviewed the budget, which included a 4% fee increase proposal and discussed the need to cover equipment costs, particularly to pay new for new boats and accumulate a fund for a new boat at a regular interval.

The group compared fees to those of other local sports and recreational programs, finding that their prices were generally lower.

Rowing Club Membership Pricing Strategy

The group discussed pricing strategies for rowing club memberships, with Terry and Sophie suggesting keeping prices attractive to encourage new members while George emphasized the importance of maintaining affordable rates. Kate proposed creating an all-inclusive summer membership package that would include Learn to Row and novice rowing classes, aiming to improve conversion rates from introductory programs to full memberships. The discussion highlighted the need to balance affordable pricing with covering costs, particularly for equipment upgrades, while maintaining reasonable rates that won't deter potential members.

Rowing Program Fee Restructuring

The group discussed restructuring membership fees and bundles for different rowing programs. They considered a bundle option for the summer season, with the possibility of a discount for signing up for the whole bundle.

- Marietta will develop a proposal for this new fee structure.

They also discussed the profitability of masters programs compared to other rowing classes, and the high conversion rate of juniors to full season rowing. Stephanie suggested promoting participation in out-of-state regattas to increase continuation rates for Learn to Row participants.

Some comparison data for fees:

- Swim America: \$28/hour per person
- Anchorage Women's adult hockey league: \$25 for 2-hr clinic
- Dimond West Little League: \$275 for ages 12-13 season length May-June
- Cook Inlet Soccer: \$175 – 225 per 6-week session
- Skinny Raven Running Club: \$140-\$175 for 6-week marathon training
- APU Masters Ski Team: \$1500 October to April

The board focused on junior programs and seasonal rates. Marietta noted that previous attempts to include race fees in junior memberships had low attendance, and the group agreed to maintain current junior rates while exploring ways to increase masters membership.

Punch Card Volunteer System Implementation

The board reviewed a proposed new cox policy that would offer fee waivers after 5 cox events and full fee waivers after 20 events, with additional punches for leading volunteer activities. They also discussed the need to finalize class schedules by early March.

The board discussed a new punch card system for coxing volunteers, where coaches will sign off on coxing shifts and board members will sign off on leadership roles and maintenance tasks. The system will offer fee waivers after 5 punches, with monthly fee waivers for coxing 5 times and annual membership waivers after 20 punches.

The board agreed to try the system without carryover benefits for the first year, though they may revisit this policy based on member feedback. They also discussed the need to better communicate volunteer opportunities through Boathouse Connect and traditional methods like whiteboards.

Rowing Policy and Management Updates

- The board discussed and approved the Coxswain and Volunteer Hour policy
 - Moved by Terry, seconded by Stephanie

They reviewed and approved the Team Management Plan for 2026

The agreed to modify the 4-oar rule language to remove specific distance requirements while keeping the close proximity language. Changing the reference in the team management plan and will look for other references including the printed version at the lake.

Racing Events and Boat Transport

- The team discussed the results of a survey about outside racing events, with limited interest shown in Rowfest but more enthusiasm for shorter, local races like Green Lake.
- Marietta suggested sending the survey again to increase response rates, while George emphasized the importance of attending Rowfest for boat preparation.
- The group explored options for transporting boats to the West Coast, including a potential May trip with help from Vespoli and local college teams.
- The Board agreed to make a decision about the trailer trip by March 1st, with plans to prepare the trailer for a 3,000-mile journey and coordinate vacation requests from team members.

Racing Events and Season Planning

- Moose Nugget race proposed for July 18, and board agreed to communicate race dates early in the season to encourage participation.
- They reviewed plans for a season newsletter to provide more detailed information about the team, including updates on new coaches and boats.
- The board also discussed upcoming coffee chats, with March's topic set to focus on new boats and membership growth.