

**MINUTES OF THE WINTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SKÅL
INTERNATIONAL USA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Upon notice duly given, the Winter Executive Committee Meeting of the Executive Committee of SKÅL International USA, a professional organization of tourism leaders around the world, was held on Friday, January 19, 2018 at 9am ET at the Residence Inn, Raleigh, NC.

The following Committee Members were present at this meeting:

Burcin Turkkan – President	Holly Powers – International Skål Councillor
Lisa Conway – VP of Administration	Alton Hagen – VP of Finance
Dave Ryan – VP of Membership	Jim Dwyer – Director of Membership
Richard Scinta – Director of Membership	Steve Richer – Director of PR & Communications
Art Allis – Senior Auditor	JoAnne Ford - Junior Auditor

Staff present: Eric Braendel

President Burcin Turkkan called the meeting to order, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a Skål toast.

Vice President of Administration Lisa Conway called roll. At the time of roll call, Dave Ryan was absent. Ryan later arrived and was announced. His participation was noted in the roll call.

President's Welcome

President Burcin introduced the 2018 Skål USA Executive Committee:

- Burcin Turkkan – President
- Holly Powers – International Skål Councillor
- Lisa Conway – Vice President of Administration
- Alton Hagen – Vice President of Finance
- Dave Ryan – Vice President of Membership
- Jim Dwyer – Director of Membership
- Richard Scinta – Director of Membership
- Steve Richer – Director of PR and Communications
- Art Allis – Senior Auditor
- JoAnne Ford – Junior Auditor

President Burcin welcomed the observers in attendance and explained the goals of the Winter Executive Committee Meeting.

2017 Presidential Review

President Burcin introduced current International Skål Councillor and the 2017 Skål USA President Holly Powers to provide the 2017 Presidential Review.

Powers explained that throughout her year as president, the goals were to improve communication while retaining and growing membership. This was executed through a simple process of regular, direct communication with Skål USA Club Presidents and Representatives. This communication was sometimes the first time a club had had heard from a member of the Skål EC. Powers described that this simple step showed the Skål USA EC was open and ready to listen to clubs, and ultimately make them feel a part of their organization.

The implementation of the consent agenda during meetings streamlined the meeting process, allowing meetings to conclude in record time.

The time at the 2017 AGM was spent discussing membership and what clubs needed, which in turn produced a positive response from clubs.

Powers discussed that the largest improvement was changing the NCM from a physical meeting to a webinar. Prior to 2017, the NCM saw scarce attendance as clubs could not afford the associated costs. ABA provided the space for the EC to conduct the webinar, and the meeting lasted less than two hours. For the first time ever, 100% of Skål USA clubs participated. Skål USA plans to follow this model again, as it was determined that Skål clubs collectively saved \$59,000.

The continued goal for Skål is to make the organization relevant to attract new members. The EC should be both part of the discussion and the solution. Powers met with Director of PR and Communication Steve Richer in Washington, DC to visit with NGOs and other groups to share Skål's story. The pair met with Roger Dow of U.S. Travel Association, who gifted Skål 3 registrations to IPW, a \$9,000 gift. This was an opportunity to attend the event, meet with suppliers.

At IPW, Skål met with Jack Wirt, formerly a Skålleague with SI Orlando, who helped with opening a new club in Southwest Florida. The first meeting of this new club was held in January 2018.

The Richmond club is now a reality, after meeting with members of the Mayor's office and other individuals within the tourism industry. There is also ongoing work to open a club in Savannah.

After 17 years, Skål USA has opened two new clubs. There have been no clubs closed, even Puerto Rico after EC assisted with supporting the club with a GoFundMe page. The club now has enough funds to cover 2018 dues and looking to cover insurance and debt. The club hopes to have enough funds to attend NASC.

While the membership numbers as of November 2017 are slightly down from the same time in November 2016 (2,118 in 2017 vs. 2,205 in 2016), Skål USA is doing an excellent job with retention relative to other clubs around the world. The large bulk of those members lost were the Young Skål members of the Long Island club.

Approval of "Consent Agenda" of Executive Committee 2017 Reports

Skål USA EC will continue this year with a consent agenda. Reports will be sent directly to Lisa Conway to save time during meetings. Reports are posted online for members.

Steve Richer made the motion to approve the consent agenda for the EC 2017 reports. Alton Hagen seconded. Ayes were unanimous.

Financial Report

Alton Hagen recognized Eric Braendel, Administrator of Skål USA, for the tremendous working relationship with Skål USA. Hagen then provided a 2017 end of year financial report, stating that Skål USA is in a stable financial position at this moment.

As noted in the End of Year Financial Report posted on Skål USA's website, the amount of Skål USA dues collected in 2017 was 6%/\$8,530 below 2016 collections

Total income for 2017 was 4.5%/\$12,290 below 2016. Net income was 8.4% of total revenue.

Compared to the 2017 budget (prepared in mid-2016), total income was 4.8%/\$13,189 below budget while expenses were down 9%/\$23,535 from what was budgeted. This means Skål USA did a better job than anticipated in keeping expenses down by managing expenses to actual cash flow.

The 2017 end of year funding was in the black. Revenue was 190%, or \$11,000, above budget expectations with actual total at \$21,785.

SI Miami reached out to Skål International and Skål USA for assistance with paying the significant \$60,000 deposit for the cruise ship for the 2019 Skål International World congress. Skål International had a list of terms and conditions tied to their extending a loan which were considered onerous by both SI Miami and Skål USA. So Skål USA elected to loan SI Miami the first payment of \$30,000 and will also pay the second installment of \$30,000 in March on behalf of SI Miami. At the time SI Miami repays Skål USA, Skål USA will receive interest at an annual equivalent rate of 6.0% which may be taken as an in-kind payment for cabins on the cruise ship. Thanks to Skål USA's cash on hand, Hagen discussed that now is a good time for Skål USA to assist with this payment as the interest offered is better than what we're receiving on our Certificates of Deposit.

Hagen discussed the four clubs that have delinquent amounts due that are more than 90 days old, (Two of which are the result of the \$500 penalty for not attending AGM.) EC assessed the \$500 penalty, but the actual dollar amount is not written within the By-Laws. Although the By-Laws provides the authority for EC to set this price. The total penalty was higher in prior years.

While Hagen provided the 2019 budget to the EC, he stated he was not prepared to do anything but discuss the budget as, the draft presentation predicts a loss of \$1,000.

To cover this deficit, Hagen discussed three options:

- Increase dues to \$7 per person
- Replace the WEC with webinar, easily saving \$1,000
- Skål USA cannot lose one more member between now and 2019

Discussion of the proposals and the budget continued. Hagen will adjust the proposed budget by increasing Skål USA dues by \$6 per person plus factor in an additional \$2,000 for expected ad revenue projects which are in development.

The 2019 budget, with these amendments, will be sent to EC members ahead of the March EC call.

Other business: Upcoming NASC 2018

The 2018 North American Skål Congress will be held in Playa Mujeres, Mexico May 3-6, 2018. The contract for this event is Jane Garcia with Skål Mexico.

President Burcin, ISC Holly and Director of Membership Dave are all part of the NASC Committee and will be holding a discussion for the NASC 2019, scheduled to be held in Hawaii. The main priority for 2019 will be to make sure the website is up as early as possible. Last minute preparation is a big stress for members and the committee alike. In addition, the Skål USA members of the NASC committee plan to discuss the possibility of a host hotel with a conference rate, to make own travel and lodging reservations, as part of considerations for 2019.

ISC Holly Provided an update on the NASC 2018 registration website. Powers has been in contact with Jane Garcia, who is working on issues with early bird members from members. There are many issues with the current website when booking reservations, which are likely attributed to language barriers.

The 2018 NASC is shaping up to be an informative and worthwhile event. This year, the event is not just for the EC or the Club Presidents and Representatives. This event is for all members, and open to any Skålleague, and will provide an experience that will leave any attendees with a different feeling about Skål.

Powers discussed that if any EC member hears of issues with registration, they should reach out to her who will then contact Jane Garcia to fix the issues.

Other Business: New Methods of Member Communication

President Burcin discussed a goal of Skål USA is to increase member participation, including those members outside of club officers. Skål USA currently sends out regular communication to clubs, and every other month will hold meetings for Skål Club Presidents and Representatives.

Goal is to increase member participation, including those members outside of club officers.

Skål USA, sending out regular communication to clubs, every other month will have meetings with presidents and reps. We need to use different communication channels this year. Increase emails,

Turkkan discussed the use of a program called VoiceBlast, which will allow members of the EC to send out a voice message to members. These messages will be personal from the President or Vice President and sent directly to individual members, providing a new method of direct communication. This can be used for direct invites to AGM, NASC and for other reasons. The cost will depend on membership and the type of plan chosen, but the cost is estimated to be around \$200.00.

The question of call-blocking software was raised, but Turkkan discussed that EC will work with the VoiceBlast on this issue. It is also anticipated that the program will be used 2-3 times per year to allow for

variety. There is also an option to send text messages once the program is purchased. One message will go to full membership.

Another unique method of communication discussed was to invite members of the EC to participate in events remotely via webcam.

Other Business: National Award

The idea of a National Award was continued from previous discussions. In an effort for Skål USA to be relevant, the organization would present a reward to someone who has made a difference in the travel industry, not just in Skål. The award would be presented at NASC.

Potential award winners were discussed. Mexico's agenda is set, and for Skål USA, there is no time to present and to speak. Potential award winners were discussed. While the 2018 NASC agenda is set, with no time to present the award here, the prospect of presenting the award at the upcoming AGM meeting was discussed. In addition, the award winner would provide the keynote at NASC 2019 in Hawaii.

The conversation on award details was tabled until the next EC meeting in February, at which time these details will be finalized.

Other Business: ABA Contract Renewal

Last fall, ABA advised Skål USA that the association did not wish to continue a contract with Skål USA since it proved to be much more time consuming than compensation was allowing. Skål USA had been extremely pleased with the level of professionalism it receives from ABA and was shocked by this announcement.

A search committee was created and led by Tom White. The committee sent out an RFP to other groups and to ABA, who expressed interest if an agreement could be made on a higher contract price. Two responses were received, one from ABA and another organization, that estimated the total cost of work to be 38% higher than ABA.

ABA understands the work involved with Skål USA and provides excellent service in comparison to other association management firms.

Skål USA reached a new agreement with ABA, which was finalized at the end of the year. The 2017 EC took advantage of the December conference call for the incoming EC to consider the new contract. A vote was taken by the 2017 EC, except for 2017 ISC Cyndi Golden, and was approved. The new contract was sent to an association attorney for adjustments. The final contract, a two-year agreement with one-year renewal in the amount of \$50,000, has been signed by ABA and Skål USA. EC is very pleased that the professional service will continue.

A discussion on the process of notifying club presidents, within the nature of the by-laws, was tabled for after lunch.

President Burcin announced a break for lunch.

Skål Booth at ABA

Ahead of WEC, Skål Chicago reached out to EC to express their unhappiness that Skål will not have a presence at the upcoming ABA Annual Meeting and Marketplace in Charlotte. SI Chicago has been in contact with SI Louisville, where ABA will be holding its annual meeting in 2019. As of today, Skål has secured a booth, sponsored by SI Chicago.

Although ABA offered a booth, the cost of outfitting the booth is a cost of nearly \$1,000. There are also additional costs to staff the booth and travel and lodging. It has been determined that there is a low return on investment. In addition, the uncertain future with continuing contract with ABA, which was not certain until December, caused the delay in securing a booth.

ABA Contract Approval

EC may contract full time or part time employees to assist in fulfilling of duties of Skål activities. All votes pertaining to such a matter must be taken at the AGM and NCM. In addition, 2/3 of clubs can call for an extraordinary meeting

All votes have to be conducted at the AGM or NCM, and 2/3 of clubs must call an extraordinary meeting. The Skål USA Auditor, however, also has the authority call an extraordinary meeting.

The conversation was once again tabled until a further review of the By-Laws can be conducted.

Review of 2018 Goals

President Burcin Turkkan called for the EC to discuss the 2018 goals. Turkkan discussed the main goal is maintaining and increasing membership, which comes back to the value of being a Skål members. The amount offered to Skål members is of great value when considering to become a member.

Vice President of Membership Dave Ryan prepared a brief benchmark comparison of what other associations offer compared to Skål member benefits. Of the 12 items included, associations were only able to offer 2 or 3 when Skål can offer all 12. As a result, is a must to release a document to highlight the value of membership so clubs are aware.

Turkkan discussed two items that would be of great benefit to membership: Skål Job Board and Skål Benefit Network.

The Skål Job Board would be in the members-only section of the Skål USA Website and provide an exclusive location for Skål members to view jobs as well as to post positions within their organizations. To keep the cost down, the list would be simple, listing the position, company and contact. This would give members the opportunity to be the first to be informed of positions. The cost from the webmaster would be a one-time cost of \$450, but adds a tangible value, connecting with the younger general as their join as Young Skål members. The initiative would be led by Tom Moulton of the Website Committee.

Jim Dwyer made the motion to create the Skål Job Board and Holly Powers seconded. The ayes were unanimous.

The Skål Benefit Network would also be in the members-only section of the Skål USA website and provide a location of the various benefits, such as a discount car rental from Avis, that come with being a member

of Skål USA. This page would also be simple, listing company name, benefit and contact information. Skål USA will not be involved with this transaction, but rather simply list the benefit as a service. The webmaster estimates the total project to be \$500.00.

Holly Powers made the motion to create the Skål Benefits Network and Jim Dwyer seconded. The ayes were unanimous.

The discussion on the Skål Benefits Network continued, questioning the need to first find the benefits then create the network.

Holly Powers made a substitute motion to proceed on the creation of the Skål Benefits Network once benefits are identified through a plan offered by the Sponsorship Committee. Lisa Conway seconded, and the ayes were unanimous.

National Fundraising Program for Skål USA

President Burcin Turkkan discussed the possibility of a national fundraising program created by the US Fundraising Committee. Some clubs have various and unique ways to raise funds, but others do not have a set process in place. The committee has been in place for the past two years and is available for review by clubs.

Skål Canada has a national fundraising model, which includes a lottery and raffle tickets. The club has asked the United States to join, but the offer was declined as Canada would keep a large portion of the proceeds.

Turkkan explained the Skål International development fundraising model, which is an online auction with donations from across the globe and proposed that Skål USA adopt a similar model. Any funds raised could be distributed from many options – equally back to clubs, based on the size of the clubs or donations of the club, with a small percentage kept by Skål USA for facilitating the fundraising.

The discussion moved to the idea of selling 50/50 tickets, with half of the Skål USA Membership Development Fund and the other half to go to winner.

Lisa Conway made the motion to proceed with this plan at NASC, which was seconded by Jim Dwyer. The ayes were unanimous.

Advocacy

Director of PR and Communications Steve Richer discussed the importance of the Skål USA Advocacy Committee become stronger.

Some topics considered have been public-private partnerships for National Parks and the continued funding for Brand USA, as well as the proposed infrastructure bill and the freedom to travel with security.

To be a strong committee, Richer discussed that one or two issues should be the complete focus, with issues affecting the United States but also internationally. It was stressed that the issues selected must remain objective and non-partisan.

The causes selected were (1) the freedom to travel with security and (2) the protection and support to existing tourism assets (cultural, historic, environmental, etc.) do not lose their value.

The selection of these two issues will show that Skål USA is willing to stand up for issues, and serve as a model for Skål International

Next steps in this process will be to start internally, with a press release on website and Facebook, and will continue to move forward in 2018. The advocacy committee will create verbiage for use by executive committee and will be completed ahead of the ISC meeting so ISC Holly can present during meeting.

Steve Richer made the motion for EC to officially accept the two causes to move forward in 2018. Holly Powers seconded. Alton Hagan abstained. The ayes have it.

Skål USA Emergency Fund

The situation in Puerto Rico, where the recent hurricane affected SI Puerto Rico, created discussion of a Skål USA Emergency Fund. Burcin Turkkan opened the floor for discussion. This fund would provide for club assistance in time of need from issues like natural disasters.

ISC Holly Powers suggested that such a fund not be created, as it could be a burden if there are many disasters in the future.

It was determined that the EC does not see an emergency fund neither necessary nor manageable.

VP of Administration Lisa Conway will draft a letter for the future of natural disasters from an insurance standpoint.

EC will also proactively ensure that clubs are better educated about FVF.

Strategic Planning for Clubs 2018

Burcin Turkkan introduced discussion of strategic planning for clubs in 2018.

The Membership Committee will work on potential cities to launch new clubs and target individuals who might be potential club leaders in these cities.

Vice President of Membership Dave Ryan provided an update on new clubs.

Central California – This club will be based in Fresno, and there are potential candidates to join. The target launch date of February 1 has been moved back to March 1, and looking to launch with 25 members.

Phoenix – The original club in this city closed in 2011. A Skålleague who is a member can aid with re-opening this club, and another Skålleague is working to create a list of potential members, which is 60-70 names. The anticipated launch date is April.

With both launches upcoming, Ryan discussed his desire for EC members to attend the launch events.

Andres Hayes discussed the opening of Savannah, with the first meeting being held the first week of February with club open no later than April. The first meeting will focus on recruiting, with support from CVB and Mayor's office. President Burcin Turkkan plans to attend the Savannah launch event.

A plan is in place to understand why club membership is declining, including an analysis for clubs that cannot increase membership. A discussion continued around the next steps for clubs in the danger zone, whether to save these clubs, let them fail or look to start a second club since the city is so large and members are isolated in one part of the city.

Steve Richer discussed the options of assisting with the opening of new clubs. These individuals would join Skål in a new member category, such as “New Club Leaders”, to waive new dues while working directly with EC, to be a direct liaison to the new club to receive attention they need while establishing the new club. EC would provide them with the materials they need to get the club off the ground. This individual would committee to building a new club in a certain time frame and provide EC with a list of a certain number of club member prospects.

There was also discussion of new clubs being paired with a “mentor club” in good health.

To support the officers of clubs old and new, webinars or recorded videos would be created for the 4 main offers for best practices, which would then be available on the Skål USA website or the YouTube page.

The prospect of creating a new fund for clubs to be established was also discussed, which was already approved with the vote of the 50/50 raffle at AGM. The roadmap for a new fund will be prepared and put in front of membership at the upcoming AGM.

Ryan discussed the 5 of the 10 largest cities for not have Skål clubs. To build a presence in these cities, a new webpage would be created on the Skål USA website, creating a general announcement in the open section of the website seeking new leaders who are interested in joining or opening a new club in Skål, without listing the cities in which Skål is not currently represented.

2018 Committee Goals

President Burcin Turkkan opened the floor for the Skål USA Committee chairs to discuss their goals for the upcoming year.

- Dave Ryan discussed the Membership Committee and requested recommendations for individuals outside of the West Coast. It would be a good idea to get people from across the country involved. Andres Hayes will also be part of this committee.
- President Burcin plans to send a letter to membership summarizing the WEC and ask members to actively join the committees. Turkkan advised that committee chairs may receive requests from members to join.
- PR Communication will be changed to the Social Media Committee, led by Jim Dwyer. The PR and Communications Committee will be changed to Social Media Committee, led by Jim Dwyer. Social media pages are crucial for reaching out to new members, especially younger prospective members. The committee is active on Twitter and other social media platforms, and these icons can now be found on the Skål USA Website for easy access. VP of Administration Lisa Conway discussed the introduction of podcasts, which could also benefit the industry relations committee. The suggestion was favorable to all EC members.
- The Website Committee will be run by Tom Moulton.
- Andres Hayes will co-chair the sponsorship committee.
- The Standards and Processes Committee does not have additional members but may not need other members.

- New committee, Industrial Relations, has been established. Two chairs, Holly Powers will work to continue relationship with NGO, Lisa will be leading the way to establish new contact with organizations and associations. A new committee, Industry Relations, will have two chairs, Holly Powers who will continue to relationships with current NGOs, and Lisa Conway who will be learning the way to established new contacts with organizations and associations.
- The Young Skål Committee is led by Richard Scinta, who discussed there is lots of passion around this committee. Tom Moulton and three other individuals are part of the committee and looking for one more individual to join.

Other Topics for Discussion

ISC Holly Powers was asked about the upcoming ISC meeting in Berlin but discussed that she is still waiting for additional information.

Eric Braendel with ABA, mentioned that, with the new contract with ABA, it is important for all EC member to read and understand the statement of work so everyone is familiar with the new agreement.

Closing Remarks

President Burcin Turkkan asked observers SI President Donetta Poisson, SI DC President Andres Hayes, SI NJ Skål USA Rep Robert Lowell, SI Portland Representative; SI Albany Skål USA Representative if they have any further questions and/or suggestions for the Skål USA EC. All expressed their support to the current EC. President Burcin Turkkan offered closing remarks saying that she can feel the excitement and commitment from everyone and thanks the EC for their time from busy schedules.

Jim Dwyer made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Alton Hagen seconded. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: Seth Coppe of the American Bus Association.