



Volkssport Club at West Point

2022 Annual Meeting Minutes (for 2021 calendar year)

On 13 January 2022, the Volkssport Club at West Point (VCWP, or “The Club”) held its annual business meeting to wrap up the 2021 calendar year. Notices of invitations to all current club members and general friends were announced in multiple issues of the club newsletter **STEPPING OUT!**

Club President Joan Vorbach presided and called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

All four elected officers were in attendance along with other members:

- Joan Vorbach, Club President
- Jessica Ruit, Club Vice President
- Carol Schmidt, Club Secretary
- Andrew Schmidt, Club Treasurer

- Tom Nisonger, Point of Contact (POC) Hyde Park YRE
- Betty Green, former American Volkssport Association (AVA) Northeast Region Director
- Mike Green, Club Webmaster and former AVA Atlantic Region Director
- Dorothy Basini, POC Cornwall YRE
- Nancy Patrick, former club President
- Farrell Patrick, former club officer

President's Report – Joan Vorbach

1. There were two meetings, each about 40 minutes in length, due to Zoom limitations for free accounts. Joan stated that the first will cover a wrap up of the previous year 2021, and the second will discuss future years 2022/2023 items, along with any Q&A.
2. Joan stated that she was sorry that we could not get together in person for our January 2022 holiday luncheon (for the second straight year we've missed the January party due to COVID-19 protocols), but we'll plan a luncheon in the late spring or summer on the river instead; a place holder for this luncheon has been placed on our 2022 club calendar.
3. 2022 Club Officers: Notice was provided previously via our "Stepping Out" newsletter for any nominations to run for any of the four officer positions. No volunteers were received.

As all four incumbents were willing to serve in 2022, it was announced in December 2021 **STEPPING OUT!** issue #21 and reiterated in this club meeting that the current set of officers were re-elected as follows:

- Joan Vorbach, Club President
- Jessica Ruit, Club Vice President
- Carol Schmidt, Club Secretary
- Andrew Schmidt, Club Treasurer

Club Treasurer's Report - Andrew Schmidt

Andrew gave a review and current state of the club finances.

Some recent statistics:

Year	Balance as of 12/31 (\$)	Paid Walkers (number)	Dues Paying Members (\$)
2017	\$ 962.70	247	\$365
2018	\$ 890.59	177	\$415
2019	\$ 836.88	234 (Convention)	\$320
2020	\$ 852.59	165	\$315
2021	\$ 826.16	167 (incl. two WAI buses for Fort Montgomery SE walk (33) + 4 others=37)	\$365

4. Some thoughts:

- Membership has remained roughly level throughout these years
- Walker participation has declined, obviously COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 was a big factor
- Club financial balance has dropped about 15% from the high to the current level

- Charitable Donations analysis:

Since last membership meeting in January 2021 we have dispersed:

- \$25.30 to the AVA 2021 Madison WI convention for the club's silent auction donation (a NY state themed glass scented candle) as previously voted; thanks to Tom Nisonger for bringing it out to Madison.
- 2021 donations proposal announced in 2021 ***Stepping Out!*** Issue #21 (27 December) to donate to the following organizations which was done in December:
 - Friends of the Walkway - \$25.00 earmarked as our 2020 donation (written to Natural Historic Trust of NY State)
 - Friends of Fort Montgomery State Historic Park - \$25.00 earmarked as our 2020 donation
 - \$63.50 to AVA for club's policy for YRE/SE event donations (50% to AVA for non-venue hosted YREs/SEs)
- At approximately 7:40 PM, this concluded the first of our two scheduled meetings this evening. A short 20 minute rest break occurred, and the club reconvened at 8:00 PM.

The second half of the meeting began at 8:00 PM, focusing on future 2022 activities:

- Joan and Andrew proposed we cancel our donation policy that sent the AVA a 50/50 split from walk donations, but rather allocate a flat-fee donation to the AVA Big Give.

This provides our club more publicity and is easier to manage, bookkeeping-wise. We proposed \$50 yearly.

Since we gave at the AVA Silent auction, the club did not participate in the Big Give 2021. This proposal is for all future years, regardless of whether they are convention years or not.

The club voted in favor of this change effective for 2022.

- For donations considered to be “2021”, the club voted to donate:
 - Friends of the Walkway (written directly to the Friends to ensure they receive the donation) - \$25.00
 - Friends of Fort Montgomery State Historic Park - \$25.00

These two checks in total for \$50 were sent in January 2022.

- Joan reminded us that the long and proud 35 year short history of the club is available on the club website at: <http://nodegreen.com/westpoint/brochures/2017/2017HistoryoftheVCWP.pdf>
- 2023 Officers: Joan and Andrew have signaled they plan not be running for office next year in 2023; we need people to step up to assume their officer's responsibilities; learning should start in the summer and fall:
 - A shared approach to the responsibilities (e.g.: co-Presidents, perhaps) could certainly be accommodated
 - Both Joan and Andrew will be available to assist in their assumed roles, of course, even past the transition date
 - Joan requested that a link to the bylaws be available on the club website for those interested in seeing what the responsibilities are should they be interested in becoming an elected club officer.

Club webmaster Mike Green has subsequently posted the bylaws and they are available at: <https://nodegreen.com/westpoint/bylaws/CurrentConstitutionAndByLaws.pdf> .

- Other 2021 items of interest:
 - Two buses of Walking Adventures International (WAI) walks of Fort Montgomery did a special version of the Fort Montgomery YRE to qualify for the Appalachian Trail AVA special program. These two walks were held on 3 September and 14 October.

Thanks to Joan Vorbach, Brenda Presnal, and Andrew Schmidt for meeting bus and doing route work for their two visits.

\$111.00 in total received (\$99 WAI fees, \$6 Andrew's prep walking fees, and \$6 in Online Start Box (OSB) walking fees from Wayne Knapp & Kathy Mack for walking with WAI on the October walk, but registering via OSB)

- 2022 Stamps all in Traditional Start Boxes – thank you to our Point Of Contacts (POCs) Andrew (Rhinebeck and WOTH), Tom N. (Hyde Park), Dorothy (Cornwall), Joan (West Point and Fort Montgomery), Judge Tom S. (Beacon and Cold Spring) and Jessica (state-wide Appalachian Trail)
- Joan Kimmel, former Club officer, will continue to be the 2022 Walk Incentive Book program manager, and the 2022 booklet will be prepared. (This was completed and posted on the Club's website in March 2022.)

- Change of PO Box address to lower fee:
 - Fee was \$140 in 2021, announced to \$150 in 2022 according to website)
 - A smaller one @\$100 for 2022 was available when Andrew spoke to the Postmaster in December 2021
 - The Club voted to renew our PO Box to the lower fee one when it becomes due in spring 2022.

(This was completed in March 2022 and our new address is “PO Box 122”, no longer “PO Box 30”).

- Andrew completed the annual three November forms needed for IRS and AVA compliance ((1) IRS Form 990-N, (2) AVA Officers report in September 2021, and (3) Annual Fiscal report (2020-2021 fiscal year) to AVA in November
- 2020-2021 Audit (done after AVA Fiscal report is submitted in November) to be sent to auditor late in January 2022. (This was done in February and March 2022.)
- Joan indicated that it would be nice to invite Club members from our sister club, the Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club. After the meeting, this was scheduled and communicated with their officers, and that walk with some of their members has been scheduled for our Rhinebeck YRE on Saturday, 18

June 2022. As of March 2022, they have issued publicity to their member's get-together. A lunch at the Beekman Arms will be held after the walk as well.

- Joan offered that Club flyers be sent to local libraries for their distribution. Andrew will take care of this.
- Two of our Walks contain the two new 2022 AVA Special Programs as listed on the qualifying website:

Rails to Trails:

- Beacon (a walk addition will made to incorporate the new section of the Klara Sauer trail will be added to qualify)
- Highland/Walkway Over the Hudson

Town Halls/City Halls (we've clarified with the Program POC that "*Village Halls*" also qualify as they perform the same functions for the village):

- Beacon
- Cold Spring
- Cornwall
- Highland/Walkway Over the Hudson
- Hyde Park
- Rhinebeck

- 2022 Boat Cruise is a possibility

We contacted Farrell Patrick's contact Roy Spells last year who was very friendly and receptive.

- 2022 Proposal for Club Membership Terms and Updates:

Background:

- The price of *AVA New Walkers Kit*, that contains two AVA books (event and distance) that sell for \$6 each, plus three \$3 walking event credit coupons (along with some other materials) has been raised from \$5 to \$10 from the AVA.
- The Club has about half a dozen in current inventory
- Andrew asked some other local AVA clubs (see below) do they plan to now sell their old stock at the \$5 level or new \$10 level.
- Most said they'd be keeping old stock at \$5 level, but this opened up a new series of membership questions The Club has exactly 100 paying family unit members as of 13 January 2022, but over 200 people on our mailing list.

Reference local clubs structure:

- CVVC dues: \$12 (w/communication)
- ESCV dues : \$12/single, \$20 family (w/communication)
- Walk 'N Mass: \$12 (w/communication)
- PAWS: \$10 (they have non-member email list)

The proposal, which was accepted by members present, was:

- New Members will pay \$15 and receive a no-charge NWK (regardless of our cost)
- No NWKs will be sold outside of a Club membership
- The idea here is to add dues paying members to our roles, and with a NWK, that provides them with the incentive of continuing to walk with us
- Renewing members will pay \$12 renewal (up from \$10) after current year's cycle is completed
 - Reinstate mailing the hardcopy brochure as a physical perk of Club membership
- Our mailing list (used mostly for **STEPPING OUT!** communications) will remain for dues paying members of course, but after a single year of a person who is not a member will be dropped, or 2 years drop for a previous member who has not renewed

A generic email of 'droppage' will be sent to all on list annually before dropping with information on how to join

Emphasis on the communications list will be deemed a membership privilege, but we'll allow non- and old members to remain for a while as a courtesy

The second of the two meetings was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Minutes reviewed by Club Secretary Carol Schmidt and submitted for posting to our Website March 2022.