

Therapy Dogs of Vermont (TDV) Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 16, 2025

Location: Virtual Meeting

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Evan Stainman, President

Recorded by: Michele Shepard, Secretary

Attendance: Evan Stainman (President), Craig Deslaurier (Vice President), Michele Shepard (Secretary), Robin Wheel (Treasurer), Emily Lester, Michelle Carol, and Michele Tulis.

1. Call to Order

President Evan Stainman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Evan Stainman moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Robin Wheel. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. Total assets: \$152,239
- b. Craig Deslaurier moved to approve the Treasurer's Report.
- c. The motion was seconded by Evan Stainman.
- d. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried unanimously.

4. Annual Meeting Update

- a. Board members should arrive one hour early, at 9:00 a.m.
- b. As of this meeting, approximately 45 people have RSVP'd.

5. Website Domain

The TDV website domain has been renewed and is now set to auto-pay and renew automatically in the future.

6. Workers' Compensation Update

- a. The State will accept four copies of the form to exclude board officers from the Workers' Compensation policy.

- b. At this time, only Robin has completed her form and emailed it to Secretary Shepard. The form includes a notary stamp, so the original is required.
- c. Robin has been working with our insurance agent at Stowe Insurance to obtain quotes for new coverage.

7. Policy Update

- a. Discussion occurred regarding TDV members posting photos on the members-only Facebook page that show potential policy violations.
- b. Michele and Emily have commented to remind members of the policy requiring handlers to maintain control of their leash at all times when their dog is wearing the TDV uniform.
- c. President Stainman requested that any observed violations be brought to his attention so he can address them privately.

8. Proposal from Deb Helfrich

- a. President Stainman received a proposal from Deb Helfrich regarding the creation of an Operations Director position for TDV.
 - i. The proposal was sent to the Board at approximately 10:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. Board members expressed that they had not had adequate time to review and consider it before discussion.
 - ii. Evan explained that he and Deb had identified several organizational needs that this position could address. Due to technical issues, he was unable to share this list during the meeting.
 - iii. The Board discussed whether the proposed position would be a short-term contract or a permanent role within TDV. If permanent, it would need to be opened to all qualified TDV members.
 - iv. The Board also considered whether some of the responsibilities described could be handled by current paid staff, who were present and expressed willingness to take on additional duties where feasible.
 - v. This led to a broader discussion about identifying TDV's operational needs, including the potential use of volunteer tracking software.

Motion:

- 1. Robin Wheel moved to table further discussion of the proposal until the Board has had adequate time to review it and until Deb Helfrich can attend a future meeting.
- 2. The motion was seconded by Craig Deslaurier.
- 3. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion carried unanimously.

Action Item: Robin Wheel will send a Doodle poll to the Board and to Deb to schedule this follow-up meeting.

9. Website Committee Update

- a. The committee has not yet met. They have not received a response from Courtney, the representative from the Certification Leadership Team, regarding her availability.

b. Robin Wheel will send a Doodle poll to all committee members to schedule a meeting to determine website needs and assign responsibilities.

10. Resignation of Vice President

- a. Craig Deslaurier announced his resignation as Vice President and as a member of the Board of Directors.
- b. Craig expressed his appreciation for TDV and explained his decision, citing challenges related to living in another state and the loss of his therapy dog.
- c. He also shared his belief that future Board meetings should return to in-person sessions.

11. Adjournment

Craig Deslaurier moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 p.m. The motion was seconded by Evan Stainman. There being no opposition, the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Shepard
TDV Secretary