

PEACEFUL VALLEY DONKEY RESCUE SPRING TRUSTEE MEETING APRIL 28, 2024 WASHINGTON, DC

The meeting was called to order by Mark Meyers at 9am.

Roll Call: Voting members present: Mark Meyers, Amy Meyers, Debbie Foley, Kevin Elliott, John Roueche, Scott Jewett, Jake Meyers, Josh Meyers

Executive Staff members present: Kim Elger, Lori Larkin

Senior Staff members present: Jacob Caniglia, Sandra Pitcox, Kimberly Clark, Steve Meyers, Antonio Aguila

Dr. Heidi Breeze was also in attendance and Sandra introduced her. Dr. Breeze showed up one day and volunteered to brush donkeys. She met Sandra and quickly fell in love with PVDR. Dr. Breeze practices all over the US and holds 8 state licenses. She has spoken with Mark and she is going to do contract veterinary services for PVDR on occasion. She has worked several times at the Texas location doing castrations and other procedures. She will represent PVDR during the castration events and would like to participate in the planning of the Castration Station in Oklahoma.

Josh made the motion to skip the reading of the minutes from the last meeting. Everyone received a packet with the Fall Minutes for them to review. The motion was seconded by Debbie. No one opposed and the motion was carried.

There was no old business to discuss.

PVDR's financial position was discussed. A list of liquid and fixed assets were given to the Trustees. It was reported that our FDIC insurance was asking us to move some money to other accounts. Eberle had a significant amount of money that had not been deposited yet. Scott asked about investing some money. He said there was recently a 10% rise in the S&P 500. He suggested turning this over to a Financial Advisor for recommendations. Everyone was in agreement and Scott requested a growth portfolio, not a balance portfolio. Mark reported that all the expenses had not had any significant change and everything was basically the same.

Mark told everyone that the Trustees were meeting with Eberle the following day. He and Amy had been invited to Eberle's 50th Year Anniversary the previous Thursday. He stated that they were the only clients to be invited and were also the only animal rescue ever invited. Mark stated that fundraising had increased over the last quarter.

CBS Sunday morning had been at the Central Headquarters on April 4-5th to film a segment that will supposedly air in July. They apparently were tying this to the Democratic National Convention. CBS also stated that they had recently filmed an elephant sanctuary and it may be the one in Fredericksburg, TX. Mark stated that this

program should be huge for PVDR. Jane Pauley usually does the broadcast and the correspondent that was in Texas just aired a segment on the Waterford Crystal factory in Ireland.

Mark proudly reported that Josh and Jake had just finished their second Podcast. The first one is located on YouTube. They talked about growing up on the ranch and about the donkeys. Each episode is about 30 minutes long and can be found on the Donkey Rescue TV channel.

Mark brought up a slide showing Peaceful Valley Mule Rescue. He said we currently have 18 mules. He reported that he had a video of Matti euthanizing a healthy mule on our Texas property. She said the leg was broken but the video clearly has the vet with his hands in the air demonstrating he didn't know. LMMR has since moved to College Station, TX. Josh asked if some complaint needs to be made. Mark stated that the mules had food, water and shelter in San Angelo. Matti removed all her rescue signs off her trucks as she was moving in. She is losing donors due to lack of licensing and poor management of paperwork. Scott asked why we care. Mark stated because they are animals. She is reporting that mules are dying weekly and is posting int online. The special needs donkeys are the ones dying. Mark stated she was scared of them. It was suggested to change the logo and no one really wants to see the old logo again. Amy stated that there were 18 mules spread between our 3 facilities. She did not want to see these animals starve. We are going to bring all of them back to Texas and will need a round pen to train them.

Mark reported that the Donkey Welfare Symposium was still growing and especially with the in person attendees. He made the motion to continue to donation \$10,000 to them to help keep Eric Davis' legacy alive. Jake asked if they are needing the money and Mark stated they did. He said the donkeys are benefiting from it in the long run. Josh seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed.

Discussion was held on the Castration Station in Russell, OK. Mark reported that there was fencing and a well. He said there was drainage issues that were a bit of a problem and it looks like the structure will need to be moved to the back of the property. He stated that we need a project manager and not sure who we could get to doing it. He suggested Jake Strength, but that would take him away from the Texas yard and away from Sandra and we couldn't afford for Sandra to move up there. A project manager would be in charge of bids, dirt work, pens; basically everything from the ground up. This is 4 hours away from Central Headquarters. Mark stated that this is on hold but talk was possibly needing it for a holding facility for the BLM's that come in needing castrated. Amy asked if we should look for an outside project manager to hire, possibly an independent contractor, but this person must represent PVDR. It was mentioned to possibly look in Lawton, OK, but again, once it was built, who would manage it. Mark stated that we needed decent, hardworking people and there was absolutely nothing in Russell. He said Antonio would be great for the job, but he has a child with shared custody. It was discussed that this property could possibly hold 300-400 jacks and it is so close to the Texas Tech Veterinary School in Amarillo. Jacob said that there isn't any

room in Texas to hold these donkeys. Mark stated that this is a valuable property. Jake said that it would be great to have someone that would manage people only. We said that we tried that in Texas with Dan and that didn't work out too well. Amy stated that we have increased wages to try to maintain good employee but it's so hard to find people. Steve volunteered to head this up. Mark told him that he could not be in 4 states at one time. Kim said that we need someone with managerial experience and that usually starts at the bottom and builds up over time. It was suggested to advertise in the Livestock Weekly publication. Scott asked that a clear plan be built and presented back to the Trustees. Amy questioned if this facility was be running full time or just on an as needed basis. It was said that it better to castrate in the cooler months. Jacob asked where the donkeys would go after they were castrated. Josh stated that this project needed a lot more thought into it.

Mark told the group about the donkey problem in San Bernardino County. There are approximately 600 donkeys in the residential area. The residents and commuters are fed up. Mark has signed a MOU and we hope to be able to move in on June 1, 2024 to capture and relocate these donkeys. He stated he thinks we could trap 200 in the first week. We are making plans to move the Rawhide that is in Ft. Irwin to the West yard. Antonio stated that he wanted to inspect everything before that happens.

It was reported that the West yard now has 370 donkeys and hoping to increase adoptions. AZ Concrete Water troughs were installed in Paddocks 1-5. This was voted in on Signal. These are already in place out West.

The trip to the Caribbean was discussed. In Grand Turk, Mark and Amy met with three gentlemen that wish to run the sanctuary. They met with the Attorney General, TCI Veterinarian, the Royal Governor, the Minister of Agriculture and Tourism. PVDR is acting as consultants only. Mark reported that at the donkeys were eating in the dump. Carnival Cruise is invested. Mark and Amy met with the TIC Premier and he supports the efforts. Mark reported that 12 donkeys were see out of the 78 that were in the Sanctuary. He said the fence had been cut. In Nevis, 24 donkeys were seen on the island as compared to the 3,000 there were seen several years ago.

Mark reported that no final comments have come back yet from GFAS regarding the West yard. Results from the audit from Central and the East have been received and everything has been updated. Mark has reported several time to GFAS the Oscar's Place is buying donkeys from slaughter and auctions. GFAS has always stated they would not give accreditations to sanctuaries that purchase animals. He stated that is they make the exception for Oscar's Place, PVDR will not renew the accreditation again.'

Mark reported that Kim is responsible for the overall state of the organization. The Employee Swap program is going well. Cole from Texas has gone out West to help out. This helps team building and makes sure there is consistency between the yards. It was good for employees to be able to travel and learn from different regions. , Chilo, Caylan, Jessie and Matt all went out West. The previous management out West was not encouraging employee. There has been a not of negativity and employees were

chasing sides. Mark reported that Sheldon is no longer with us. The trailers were left a mess and the swapped employees were not felt welcome due to the poor leadership.

In-House Dental was discussed. There is a 4 week long certified dental school in Virginia that would charge \$6500 per student but we could get a discounted rate. We could perform dentals on 400 PVDR donkeys if this was held in Virginia. It is a 4 week intensive course and classes are limited to 12-16 students. This would decrease medical costs. Kim suggested that this be offered to employees that were interested. Josh recommenced that we come up with some kind of training agreement that employees must reimburse PVDR if they left or failed and to possibly require that they stay with the company a year. He said that this must be enforced. Josh also recommended letting our attorney in Texas give us guidelines on who would be eligible to take the course. Scott suggested making employees apply and that they would have to be good staying employees that had been with the company for at least 6 months to a year. It was recommenced that they apply and then work with Sandra, possibly write an essay to present to the Executive Staff for guidelines. Mark stated that having more equine specialists could save approximately \$100,000 a year for PVDR. The hope would be to have 2 employees from Central, 2 from East and one from West attend the onsite class in Virginia. Mark stated he would work on drafting a contract/application process for the students and have it ready by the next meeting. Jake stated that we needed to think about housing and per diem pay.

Mark discussed having an in house medical training for Vet Techs. All of our Vet Techs have had no formal training. There are online courses offered through the American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians. Employees would be certified, not licensed and we would need 9 employees interested in taking the class. There also needs to be a contract and application process. The cost is \$4750 per person and this would help decrease the overall PVDR medical costs. Scott stated that doing an online course is risky and that there needs to be stipulation of completing each course within 6-9 months and to maintain grades. It was reported that employees would have to attend a wet lab that was hosted by vet clinics. Dr. Womack or Dr. Breeze could sign off on these. Scott stated again, that we need to have employees sign a contract. John stated that this knowledge would help donkeys. Mark stated he would have contract drafts by the next meeting.

It was reported that the Auditors were here April 8th and 9th and we are awaiting a final report. The 2023 Budget versus Actual was given to all the Trustees per the auditors. Scott noted that the cash was down. Mark reported that the hay cost had increased considerably. Assets were down, but support had increased. Contributions and fundraising were discussed. Mark reported that he raised \$10 million dollars as compared to the \$8 million that he raised the year prior. He said the hay cost have killed us because of the drought last year. We are 43% over budgeted for hay. East is paying their vet to do dentals. They also pay for medication through their vet. These two things raise the Easts cost significantly. With the dental/vet tech schooling options, this will decrease medical costs. Transportation costs have increased. It was reported that Jacob has closed all the Louisiana leases and hauled all those donkeys to

Oklahoma because of the drought which is the reason for the higher transportation costs. It was reported that a new tilt chute had been purchased. The pond out East has been finished. We are paying a lot of money for manure management. There is a fertilizer company in Canada that we have been talking to. They are looking for a facility to partner with that has close to 2,000 animals. We are the closest to that number then they have found. All of this is still in the discussion, planning and approval phases.

Mark stated that we are still waiting on TCEQ for the final plans to improve our existing lagoon at Central. He reported that the Sluice at the museum has doubled attendance. As approved in a prior meeting, we had given \$10,000 to Brazil that had an issue with a donkey. They have continued to ask for more more and we have put a stop to this since they are not managing this well. Payroll has increased with trying to keep good employees. It was reported that the Budget was overspent by \$2.5 million, we overspent what was raised by fundraising by \$1.2 million and we overspent income buy \$1/2 million. Mark stated he was not happy with this at all and as a company, we have to do better. We all need to learn how to not spend money and how to run the company as a business. He stated in Texas there are always 20 cars parked on the yard, but when he walks outside, he never sees a single employee. Everyone needs to be more efficient. We are paying top dollar for employees and we need managers to manage these employees and cut the slacking employees loose faster. We all need to make good business decisions and stop making dumb decisions. Our number one goal is to increase adoptions. We need to help solve the problem in San Bernardino. We need the managers to cut expenses.

Mark stated that he is planning on increasing the fundraising for 2024 to \$12 million. Gift shop sales are higher. It was reported that we had to spend a ton of money for manure management out West. That had not been maintained by the prior Regional Managers and there had been recent complaints by the Health Department. Mark stated that eventually the museum will break even with sales from the Sluice and events like the Jamboree, which was a huge success. He would like to have 4 events a year. Scott wanted to know that the income was from the museum and what the advertising expense was. He asked to see a break down of gift shop sales. It was reported that there were \$85,000 in gift shop sales, most of that had come from the museum. Mark stated that there is not admission costs to visit the museum. Mark stated that he wanted a Gift Shop SOP for the auditors for next year. Scott asked again for a report of sales by item. Mark told him these reports were available in Shopify. It was reported that West Adoptions will be low for this year. They have one trainer that is there about 5-10 hours a week. There have been 10-15 adoption returns. There have been 4 adoptions to Donkey Dreams across from the West yard. There have been a lot of personnel issues out West over the last several years. Mark stated that he has placed Steve in the West as the Regional Manager and that Steve wants to learn and teach the team. Mark stated that Steve would be required to meet all of the expectations placed upon him.

Mark made the motion to approve the Budget. Josh seconded the motion, there was no discussion and the motion was passed.

Mark stated that the 2025 Budget would be presented in the fall, as he failed to present it at this Spring meeting.

It was decided to hold the Fall Trustee meeting in Fredericksburg, TX and then possibly the West for Spring 2025.

Meeting was adjourned at noon.

Reported and submitted by Lori Larkin, Corporate Secretary