

Alamosa Volunteer Search and Rescue
Meeting Minutes: Tuesday JUNE 27, 2017
Location: Alamosa County Sheriff's Office

The monthly meeting of the Alamosa Volunteer Search and Rescue Organization (AVSAR) was held on Tuesday, June 27, 2017 at 1800 hours Mountain Daylight Time (MDT). It was held in the Alamosa County Sheriff's Office classroom.

Board Members Present: Suzi Hopper, Bruce Morrison, Don Thompson and Mérida Zerbi.

Team Members Present: Morgan Barnes, Stephen Cline, Kraig Fairhurst, Chris Lavery, Mark Martinez, Levi Wilner, Darrell Elder and Crystal Wilson. (Clifford Wagoner arrived late and left early and did not sign in).

Board Absent: Rob Mabry

Guests Present: Chief Ranger Dale Culver, NPS, GSDNP&P

Call to Order: Suzi Hopper called the meeting to order at 1804 MDT. Mérida Zerbi recorded the minutes. A quorum of members were present and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

Introduction of Guest: National Park Service Chief Ranger Dale Culver, of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, spoke to the team regarding NPS search operations, the history of collaboration with AVSAR on searches, and the availability of training opportunities.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: The May minutes have been emailed to team members and are available online at the AVSAR website. There were no objections to the May minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Don Thompson provided the Treasurer's Report and stated that there had been little activity in the accounts recently. Recent expenses included a payment for a training class, team equipment and the stage rental for the SUDS for SAR event; income included merchandise sales. The financial reports will be posted to the website.

Correspondence: Suzi Hopper communicated with CORSAR about the new tri-fold and posters that are available to CORSAR vendors.

Committee Reports: SUDS for SAR committee: Suzi Hopper reports that there are extra donation letters available for team members who might be able to contact additional vendors regarding donations for the SUDS for SAR event.

Announcements: Undersheriff Woods sent his regrets as he hoped to join the meeting tonight. Suzi passed along his appreciation for our team's efforts on the recent mission and how proud he was of the job we do.

Old Business:

1. RADIOS:

- a. The radio reprogramming on the Motorola radios is complete. The Motorola 800 MHz radios will remain the primary radios for the team and the most frequently used channels have been moved to the same bank for easier access. The orange 'officer in trouble' buttons have been disengaged due to their sensitivity. All Vertex VHF radios are now in working order. The squelch issues have been resolved. Suzi Hopper will update the channel list and email it to team members.
- b. Suzi Hopper is trying to arrange a way to free up another VHF radio for field use by adding a mobile VHF unit in the rig, in addition to the 800MHz we already have mounted. Obtaining additional, cheaper radios is still up for discussion if needed in the future, but many such radios are not Part 90 compliant.

2. RADIO CHANNELS:

- a. Suzi Hopper has clarified which channels are properly licensed for AVSAR to use with CRSB. There are some letters of authorization on file for SAR use licenses owned by nearby organizations, but at this time there is not a Letter of Authorization use the VLAW31 channel; it can be used in an emergency to contact CSP Dispatch. Suzi will finish up the process to make AVSAR use of all necessary radio channels legal. ****NOTE:** An online vote was taken for approval of payment for the FCC License ranging from \$400-\$700.00. Motions were made from Francis(1st) and Mark(2nd) and motion was passed unanimously.
- b. Suzi Hopper reviewed the Colorado SAR Communications Fact Sheet with the team.

3. LAPTOP: Francis Song is working on getting a charger for the team laptop, but is out of town until at least June 30th. Mérida Zerbi has two options for a computer bag to protect the laptop.

New Business:

- 1. INJURY REPORTING: Suzi Hopper reminded team members that AVSAR policy is to notify Suzi if they are injured on a mission.
- 2. GEAR CACHE: Kraig Fairhurst initiated a discussion about whether the team should place a gear cache in the Lake Como area. A gear cache could be useful to hasty teams and in cases where 4x4 assistance is not readily available. The FAA has strict rules that limit the ability to air-drop extra supplies except in emergencies. The gear

cache would require consistent up-keep as many gear materials and food items are highly sensitive to moisture and extreme temperatures. A gear cache would also be susceptible to theft or damage if it was discovered by non-team members. Suzi Hopper called for a vote on whether the team should pursue a gear cache or stick with the plan to rely on 4x4 assistance. Kraig Fairhurst seconded the call for a vote. The team voted in favor of relying on 4x4 assistance.

3. **RADIO HARNESSSES:** Suzi Hopper asked the team to consider the purchase of radio harnesses based on complications experienced by the hasty team on one of the last missions. After investigating the available options and costs, Suzi recommends the True North radio harnesses that run approximately \$45 each. Levi Wilner motioned to vote to approve the team spend up to \$270 on the radio harnesses. The motion was seconded by Mérida Zerbi. A short discussion was held about increasing the total purchase amount in case of unexpected additional costs. Kraig Fairhurst motioned to amend the amount to be voted upon to \$350. The amended motion was seconded by Mérida Zerbi. The vote to spend up to \$350 on True North radio harnesses was approved.
4. **GPS SETTINGS:** Suzi Hopper reported to the team about complications on a recent mission involving GPS coordinate formats. Mérida Zerbi noted that the GPS units had been synchronized to Degrees Minutes Seconds (DMS) format at the last GPS training, but the new units had been purchased just after that training. The team discussed using the GAIA app on mobile devices, the format used by Flight for Life, the format used by the program installed on the team's Toughbook, and the formats used on the team's current maps. The consensus was to use DMS to coordinate with the current maps. This may change if the new maps that are to be purchased use a different format.
5. **ZAPATA MISSION REPORT:** AVSAR was contacted by dispatch in regards to a mother and son who were off-trail in the Zapata Falls area and unable to relocate the trail. Morgan Barnes enter the coordinates given to us by Dispatch and was able to contact the subjects via text and provide the subjects topo map images and directions back to the trail. The subjects were then able to locate the trail and self-extricate.
6. **LITTLE BEAR MISSION REPORT:** Three subjects (two men and one woman) activated a SPOT device from the summit of Little Bear Peak (14,035 ft). The SPOT dispatcher was put in touch with AVSAR and relayed the three subjects could not retreat due to a rock slide. AVSAR deployed a hasty team and ICS team. The hasty team was required to bivouac overnight near the summit and reached the subjects early the next morning. The subjects refused to descend with the hasty team and stated a medical evacuation was necessary. A HAATS helicopter was deployed and the flight crew was able to winch the three subjects off the summit. Upon landing the subjects refused medical care. The hasty team returned to basecamp after almost 24 hours in the field. Both hasty team members suffered injuries during the mission.

7. **REFUSAL POLICY:** The team discussed whether to implement a process that will be carried out when subjects refuse to comply with the method of rescue determined by AVSAR. Ideas include video or written waivers by the subjects and documentation of the factors considered by AVSAR in creating the rescue strategy. Further investigation of liability issues and state policies is necessary.
8. **PHYSICAL TRAINING STANDARDS:** The team discussed whether a physical conditioning test should be required for ground team members, what the test might consist of and how it would be administered.

After Meeting Training: Deputy Chris Lavery introduced the team to the MOBEX Digital Vehicle Repeater System that AVSAR has access to through the Sheriff's Department.

Next Trainings: The conditioning hike will now occur in the Zapata area on June 29, 2017. Meet at the Zapata Falls parking lot at 0600 MDT and bring a 24-hour pack.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 25, 2017, at 1800 MDT, at the Alamosa Sheriff's Office classroom. ***Update: Meeting time changed to 1730 MDT. Team members to bring their laptops.**

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned, after training, at 2038 hours MDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Mérida Zerbi
AVSAR Executive Secretary