

Friends of Hanover Crew
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To: Hanover Select Board
From: Friends of Hanover Crew
Date: October 9, 2009
Re: Organization of and Relationship Between Friends of Hanover Crew and Upper Valley Rowing Foundation

I. Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Select Board with facts about the history, purpose and relationship between the Friends of Hanover Crew (“FOHC”) and the Upper Valley Rowing Foundation (“UVRF”), and to correct any misperceptions about these two organizations.

In a nutshell, the two organizations are separate entities, formed for different reasons, to support different aspects of the sport of rowing in the Upper Valley. While there is some overlap, they are legally and operationally distinct. FOHC’s main mission is to raise money to support rowing at Hanover High School (“HHS”). UVRF’s main mission is to run rowing programs and provide rowing opportunities for the general public.

FOHC is solely responsible for the project before the Board to install a rowing dock at Wilson’s Landing and to make site improvements to the Fullington Farm property to support rowing activities off of Wilson’s Landing. While it makes fund raising, logistical and operational sense for UVRF (the community at large) to use the rowing facility and dock that FOHC hopes to establish for the local public high school, they are not necessarily entwined.

II. Friends of Hanover Crew

FOHC is a New Hampshire non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization loosely comprised of parents, coaches and supporters of the Hanover High School crew team. In reality, it consists solely of its all-volunteer, eight-member Board of Directors. It has no paid positions or staff. It is not a “club,” nor does it organize or run any rowing programs – rather, its sole purpose is to raise money to support the high school crew. While it theoretically has “members,” there is no membership structure, no meetings, no dues or registration forms, and no way to ascertain how many supporters it actually has other than by cashing the checks that are made out to FOHC during its yearly fund-raising “rowathon.”

For years FOHC has raised money to purchase boats and equipment (trailers, coaching launches and motors, oars, cox boxes, etc.) for the Hanover High School varsity crew team. While crew is a varsity sport at the high school, unlike most sports at HHS, it is

only partially funded through the high school athletic budget. When rowing was added as a varsity sport in 1999, a pledge was made to the school board that all equipment related to the sport would be purchased through private fundraising.

In the past year and a half, the mission of FOHC has necessarily grown to include the much larger challenge of finding a permanent home and river access for the Hanover High School crew team. As the crew team has grown in size to its current 120 student-athletes, it has also outgrown Dartmouth College's ability to accommodate a team of its size. While the college has generously supported the creation and development of the team, it is not able to make any long-term commitment to the Hanover team.

While not part of its core mission, the FOHC also supports providing public access to the river for all youth and adult rowers in the growing Upper Valley rowing community. From operational and logistical points of view, it makes little sense to go to great lengths in terms of time and expense to provide a rowing facility that is only in use for the ten weeks in the spring during which the high school varsity rowing program runs. Moreover, it makes fund-raising extremely difficult in the very small rowing community if the site is limited solely to high school rowers, and not to members of the general rowing public. Potential donors have expressed a great deal of concern already to FOHC about the possibility of being asked for money for two separate facilities.

III. Upper Valley Rowing Foundation

UVRF is a registered New Hampshire non-profit sports and recreation organization dedicated to providing sweep rowing and sculling opportunities to the general public. UVRF has a formal membership structure, annual dues, and program registration fees, all open to anyone in the Upper Valley Community.

UVRF offers sweep rowing classes, ranging from learn-to-row to competitive; provides access to club-owned sculling boats; and storage for a limited number of private boats. These programs and services cater primarily to adult rowers, and are primarily offered during the summer, and, to a limited extent, in the fall, when Dartmouth is not in session. Because of this UVRF can use the Dartmouth facility when their team is away for the summer, so UVRF does not face the same pressures as HHS to find a new home.

UVRF currently has about 180 members, of which 150 take part in sweep rowing or sculling over the course of the season. The active participants are divided fairly evenly between sweep rowers and scullers. Despite these numbers, there are rarely more than 60 people on site on any given day due to the staggered nature of the programs (e.g. the Novice group meets M, W, F and the Club group meets T, Th, Fri). The vast majority of the time is spent on the water; on-shore activities consist primarily of carrying oars and boats to and from the dock.

During the summer, the club schedules its programs so that no more than three programs (generally two boats and one coach launch each) run on any given weekday morning

session. During the fall, UVRF offers two competitive programs (men's and women's, two boats and one coach launch each) on week day mornings. Scullers (people who row in small boats holding only one or two people) access the water from May to November, with the highest volume of activity between June and August. Scullers are akin to canoers and kayakers and go out unaccompanied by coaching launches and generally alone or in very small groups. UVRF does not sponsor any social or other activities unrelated to rowing. There is one end-of-season cookout in August which generally gets about 35 - 50 attendees.

UVRF has a 15 Member board which meets monthly. Under its all-volunteer structure, each board member is responsible for overseeing a specific area of the organization (e.g. programming, equipment, safety, etc.).

In 2007, after investing considerable time and resources in unsuccessful attempts at multiple locations to secure a site for its own boathouse, the UVRF board decided to refocus its priorities on providing more immediate benefits to the membership. The board moved to an all volunteer structure, eliminating the overhead of a paid executive director, and embarked on plans to: 1) replace equipment currently rented from Hanover High School with club-owned equipment, and 2) expand the fleet of sculling boats available for member use. The club's primary objective is to continue to offer programs that introduce the community to the sport of rowing, promote improvement in fitness and rowing technique, and provide competitive rowing opportunities for those who seek them.

IV. Relationship between FOHC and UVRF

Because the Upper Valley is a small community, of which the rowing community is an even smaller subset, HHS coaches, students, and parent may also co-incidentally participate in UVRF as members, coaches or program participants, or even serve as UVRF board members (but with a clear distinction between their HHS and UVRF roles). One UVRF board member also sits on the board of FOHC, at FOHC's request, in order to facilitate communication between the two boards. While each organization is a separate financial entity, adult UVRF members often participate in Hanover High fundraising events. FOHC annually rents equipment (boats, oars, launches, etc.) to UVRF for use in UVRF community recreational programs because of UVRF's limited ability to raise funds for equipment of its own. This rental income is an important source of annual income to FOHC. The time of year members of each organization row seldom overlaps, making the sharing of facilities and equipment advantageous.