

Committee Name:	Board of Directors	Session #:	1
Committee Chair:	Peter Guadagni		
Minutes recorded by:	Carrie Stolar	Date/time of meeting:	09/08/2023 2:00 PM CST

Actions Taken:

1. Approved: August 14, 2023 BOD meeting minutes.
2. Approved: The Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines policy.

Number of committee members present:	18	Absent:	0	Guests:	38
Committee members present/virtual (list all, including chair and vice chair): Peter Guadagni - President; Chris Colburn - VP of Administration; Chris Campbell - VP of Community Services; Ed Coates - VP of Local Operations; Robin Smith - VP of Programs; Carrie Stolar - Secretary; Teddy Decker – Treasurer; Patty Miller (Immediate Past President); Katie Kenyon (Legal Counsel); Dawson Hughes – CEO; At-Large Directors: Sue Nutty (Breadbasket); Charles Cockrell (Colonies); Susan Ehringer (Great Lakes); Paige Buehler (Northwest); John King (Oceana); Britta O’Leary (Southeast); Kris Wingenroth (South Central); Jeff Commings (Southwest).					
Not present: none					
Guests: Jeanne Ensign, Sally Dillon, Kathy Casey, Meg Smath, Scott Halliburton, Arlene Delmage, Bob Bruce, Dan Cox, Robin Tracy, Erin Sullivan, Ann Marshfield, Christine Fox, Doug Hayden, Jim Matysek, Mel Goldstein, Hugh Moore, Bruce Schroeder, Arlette Godges, Maddie Sibilia, Marilyn Fink, Linda Chapman, Sandi Rousseau, Nadine Day, Doug Sayles, Alina de Armas, Barbara Dunbar, Bill Tingley, Bill Sive, Brandon Franklin, DeLise Coleman, Guy Davis, Meegan Wilson, Judith Divan, David Grindlinger, Rand Valliancourt, Gary Keehner (Controller), Jay Eckert, Jessica Reilly.					

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM CST.

1. Agenda review and declarations of conflict of interest (Peter): No conflicts of interest.
2. Approval of August BOD meeting minutes (Carrie): **MSA for approval of the August 14, 2023 BOD meeting minutes.**
Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**
3. Minute of happiness (Peter): Peter talked about seeing a college teammate at Nationals in Irvine that he hadn’t seen since 1975. He also shared about amazing club support for 3 women with cancer, and about 4 new (to him) birds that he saw across the street from the pool in Sarasota.
4. Staying relevant (Peter): Peter shared that his biggest concern for USMS is staying relevant. USMS needs to evolve and stay in tune with what members need every day.
5. Request to Rules chair to conduct stress test on administration of Transgender Policy (Peter): The request and policy were posted in Community prior to the meeting. Peter asked for the stress test to be done to ensure that USMS is ready to timely respond to a situation that may arise on how our transgender policy is administered if a protest is made under the policy. Dawson repeated that the communication and messaging should be in place in advance so that they are ready when needed if an issue is brought to the Rules Committee, and the need for real time communication between the Rules Committee, the Board, and the national office staff. Charles requested that we not rewrite or add to the policy as we do the stress test. Peter confirmed this was a preparedness exercise and not a review of the policy itself.
6. CEO update (Dawson):
 - Significant updates to the digital version of Swimmer magazine are coming by the end of the month as well as to the digital content on and search functionality of the website.
 - The first membership benefit webinar, hosted by Kyle in early October, will focus on some of the new website functionalities and on how to use some of the online tools.

- Registration season is approaching. We are operating on the Salesforce CRM platform, which is running in parallel with the legacy system. Salesforce is our database of record.
 - The Grown-Up Swimming advisory group met last week. We are now waiting on outside legal counsel to complete the last round of edits on the contracts and updated proformas and projections.
 - Following the annual meeting, the 2024 budget process will begin in earnest.
7. Policy review: Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines (Teddy): The Finance Committee has recommended updates to the Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines as outlined in the document posted on Community. One update states who is eligible for expense reimbursement by USMS for attendance at the annual meeting. The senior most representatives to USAS and World Aquatics will be eligible for reimbursement. Most of the other updates were to reorganize sections of the policy, but no change in policy provisions. **MSA to approve the Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines policy.** Discussion: Britta asked that all references to FINA be replaced by AQUA in the document. **The motion passed.** Patty Miller abstained due to a conflict of interest.
8. Review of 2024 business plan and budget assumptions (Dawson). No questions.
9. Review and discussion of BOD member discussions with zones (All): The BOD went into a breakout session to discuss the Zone communication sessions.

- a Spoonbill group: Reports were given from the following BOD members who held meetings with the listed Zone:
- Ed – Oceana - Southwest
 - Robin - Breadbasket
 - Charles – Great Lakes
 - Chris Colburn – Colonies
 - Paige - Southeast
 - Britta - Southcentral
 - John - Northwest
 - Patty – Southcentral

Commonalities

- Mission, Vision, and Values update: positive and constructive feedback, some would like to keep the preamble.
- Event support: Many LMSCs have support programs in place to ensure that event hosts don't lose money. For some smaller LMSCs the event grant criterium/minimum participation rate is too high. Do we need a tiered offering for event development grants to encourage meet hosts to apply for grants?
- Club development: Comments on criteria and bureaucracy that clubs will have to go through to apply for a grant. Do we need a tiered approach?
- Gold Clubs: Some clubs have restrictions so aren't eligible (i.e., aren't able to participate in Try Masters Swimming).
- How do we keep the LMSCs connected and continue the conversations and collaborations?
- LMSCs and zones appreciate talking to the BOD, but don't get feedback after the BOD talks.
 - Need to report back on how the BOD is addressing their feedback.

- b Limpkin group: Reports were given from the following BOD members who held meetings with the listed Zone:

- Jeff C. – Breadbasket
- Susan Ehringer – Oceana-Southwest
- Chris Campbell – Southeast Zone
- Kris W – Northwest
- Carrie S. – Great Lakes
- Peter G. – Southcentral
- Sue Nutty – Colonies
- Teddy - Northwest

Commonalities:

- Most places, especially larger cities, are recovering and returning to pre Covid membership and club numbers but some rural areas are having difficulty. Once a rural area loses a program, the swimmers may have nowhere to swim that is within a reasonable distance.
- Membership Coordinators need to be more informed (i.e., knowing when a new club registers) and active in helping new clubs.
- Some LMSCs had questions about our grant programs. What are the criteria for the grant programs? How does a LMSC or club access the grant information/application.
- Some LMSCs are giving out financial support such as paying club registration fees and meet grants, but this is on a small scale, not as robust as they could be considering the resources of many LMSCs.
- Many places are having pool issues. Access to pools is becoming limited, especially with college and high school pools, it may be difficult to find required lifeguards, and fees are often very high for pools.
- It is difficult to find meet directors, especially experienced ones and those willing to run championship meets.
- Some USA-S clubs and coaches are not enthusiastically supporting the Masters.
- The Colonies Zone is creating a combined USMS/College Club meet, and the College Club enabled access to the pool when USMS would not have been able to get access to it.
- LMSCs don't seem to be confident in how and when to spend their money. In fear of not being equitable, they aren't spending their reserves at all.

c Final discussion and next steps:

- i Club development and event support grant programs are new. They may not be “right” the first time but are an important start to see what works.
 - 1 The process is iterative. Use the feedback on the program, tweak it, and move forward with year two. Word of mouth will help with organic communication, in addition to the emails.
- ii This is a shared effort across all levels. Connection and dialog is required between and across levels. There is an investment of effort at all levels.
- iii We need to have an intentional communication effort: This is what we heard (common themes) and allow for feedback on them. For club development, look at the feasibility for smaller clubs.
- iv There seems to be a breakdown between the LMSC/zone chairs/BOD communication. There is no direct line to the BOD. We need to say, “We heard you.” The feedback loop is missing. We heard, we are discussing, here are the takeaways and what we will do. The communication must happen.
- v The VPs have a heavy load. Perhaps the At-Large Directors can have quarterly listening sessions with the zones? Connect the zone chairs and at-large directors.
- vi Zoom call with zone chair and at-large directors.
 - 1 In 4 to 6 weeks
 - 2 Create talking points
 - 3 3 to 5 themes
 - 4 “We heard you”
 - 5 Consistent follow-up of conversation: create a relationship with the zone that they “represent.”
 - a BOD needs to act as one and give a similar message.
 - b We don't want to lose the specifics that we heard in the previous meetings; need a connection to show that we listened (in reference to switching to at-large director on the call versus the teams of BOD members from the summer calls).
 - c Quarterly conversations = goal; an ongoing conversation.
 - d In Community, set up a Zone Community as another communication channel so that communication can happen more frequently.
- vii Upload your notes from the summer zoom calls into community.
- viii Develop a process to develop specific messages (talking points): Susan, Charles, Britta, Robin (and John?) volunteered to work on this and put it on Community. (i.e., support for small events)

10. Recognition of outgoing officers (Peter): Peter thanked the BOD, and specifically recognized those members of the BOD that are termed out: Teddy (5 years), Chris Campbell (5 years), Chris Colburn (10 years), Ed (7 years), Patty (20 years).

11. The next BOD meeting will be on September 10 at 7:30AM CST.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 PM CST.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Stolar, Secretary

