

USA Wrestling Board of Directors Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 5:00 p.m. MT

Board Members Present

Bruce Baumgartner, President
Kerry McCoy, First Vice President
Joan Fulp, Second Vice President
Van Stokes, Secretary
Don Reynolds, Treasurer
Jay Antonelli
Veronica Carlson
Rob Cate
James Considine
Patricia Culp
Zac Dominguez
Nate Engel
Adeline Gray
Elliot Hopkins
Macey Kilty
Scott Kluever
Craig LaMont
Heather Lawrence
Michael Macchiavello
Joseph McKenna
Hardell Moore
Mike Moyer
Max Nowry
Pat Ream
Sally Roberts
Corey Ruff
Jon Ruggiano
Katherine Shai
Iris Smith
Lee Roy Smith
Robert Smith
John Stefanowicz
Dr. Angie Taylor
Steve Thorpe
Rick Tucci
Mallory Velte

Absent:

Vitali Arujau
Stan Dziedzic, UWW Bureau Member
Anthony Holman

Sara McMann
Toccaro Montgomery
James Ravannack, Past President

Staff Members in Attendance:

Rich Bender, Executive Director
Gary Abbott, Director of Communications
Megan Ball, Executive Assistant
Morgan Benham, Manager of Corporate Partnerships
Cody Bickley, National Teams High Performance Director
Tony Black, State Services Director
Kenya Dixon, Manager of Safe Sport and Compliance
Aphten Goldman, Director of Business Development
Richard Immel, Senior Manager of Communications
Pete Isais, Director of National Events
Stephanie Jezewski, Fundraising Coordinator
David Mathews, Director of Application Development
Jaimie McNab, Senior Manager of Women's Freestyle, Emerging Programs & National Team Services
Mary Beth Powers, Controller
Justin Ruiz, National Greco-Roman Program Director
Joe Russell, Manager of Men's Freestyle Programs
Derek Sikora, Manager of State Services
Terry Steiner, National Women's Coach
Bill Zadick, National Freestyle Coach

Guests in Attendance:

Finbarr Kirwan, U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee

A virtual meeting was held over Zoom. A quorum was present. President Bruce Baumgartner called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM MT.

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT & OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Secretary Van Stokes read the statement:

“Is any member aware of any conflict of interest (that is, of a personal interest or direct or indirect pecuniary interest) in any matter being considered by this meeting, which should now be reported or disclosed or addressed under the USA Wrestling's Conflict of Interest Policy? If a Board member determines there to be a conflict of interest at any point during the course of the meeting when a specific subject is being discussed and/or action is being taken, a declaration of a conflict of interest should be made at that time. This is also a reminder that no confidential information disclosed during this meeting, or while doing any of the business of USA Wrestling can be used for the benefit of any other entity.”

When the question was asked, no member announced that they had a conflict of interest as defined in the statement.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 12-13, 2022 MEETING

Motion by Veronica Carlson to approve the minutes from the Board of Directors meeting of August 12-13, 2022. Second by Jim Considine. Approved.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Bruce Baumgartner welcomed the Board members. He noted that USA Wrestling had completed its USOPC Compliance Audit, which was reviewed. He noted that the result of the audit was that USA Wrestling should have additional Board of Directors meetings each year. He commented that USA Wrestling has had a great year and thanked Rich Bender and the national staff for their efforts, also praising the state leaders and volunteers of the organization. He noted leadership efforts by John Stefanowicz and the Athletes Advisory Committee, as well as officers Joan Fulp, Kerry McCoy, and others. He also explained his USA Wrestling travel plans for the months ahead.

4. USOPC REPORT

Rich Bender introduced Finbarr Kirwan, the Senior Vice President, Chief of Olympic Sport for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. Finbarr Kirwan provided an update on the USOPC, providing updates on the Summer Olympic Games held in Tokyo, Japan in 2021. He noted the performance of the U.S. wrestlers in Tokyo was among his career highlights. He also provided information on USOPC plans and preparations for the Paris Olympic Games in 2024 and the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Rich Bender thanked President Bruce Baumgartner, who he said is the best NGB president in the Olympic Movement. He also thanked the efforts of Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and USA Wrestling volunteers for their commitment. He praised the national staff for its professional efforts. He said we had one of the best years in USA Wrestling history, including winning 49 World medals – the most medals in a year. He reported on new staff members Aphten Goldman, Kenya Dixon, Richard Immel, Justin Ruiz, Herb House, Cheney Haight, Meredith Suess, and Lisa Downey, and gave an update on future staff plans.

Rich Bender praised the organization's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that we are currently seeing the results of leadership during that challenging time. He also gave an update on United World Wrestling and the International Olympic Committee concerning the status of Russia and Belarus participation in future competitions.

As part of his Executive Director Report, Rich Bender indicated that there would be staff directors giving updates during the meeting, in addition to the other agenda items.

6. NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT

Cody Bickley noted the growth and success of the women's wrestling program. He reported on the growth of the U.S. Open in 2023, and how the new World Team Selection procedures resulted in the quality of the competition to increase. He explained that the 2023 Senior World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia was the first qualifying event for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, and that the 2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in State College, Pa. was just a year and a

week away. He reported that USA Wrestling was already preparing for Paris and explained that the U.S. teams would be training in Normandy, France this summer and also prior to the Paris Games.

7. FINANCE REPORT

Treasurer Don Reynolds explained the sequence of Finance Committee meetings and noted that the Committee had approved the February 2023 financial statements. He gave specific information on the organization's financial position, noting over \$1 million in revenue over expenses to date for the current fiscal year, including the huge increase in membership this season. He reported on new Finance Committee members Dr. Angie Taylor and Ted Young. He also updated the Board on the progress of the job search for a new Director of Finance, with input from Van Stokes. Bruce Baumgartner explained that Van Stokes was volunteering at the national office to assist the Finance Department staff during the hiring process.

8. NATIONAL EVENTS REPORT

Pete Isais reported on a successful folkstyle season which had just completed, which showed an overall increase. He noted that USA Wrestling had hosted the Men's and Women's Freestyle World Cup in Iowa City, Iowa in December 2022. He explained an increased focus on event marketing, with input from consultant Old Hat and expanded staff activities. He explained that Final X would be in one location this year with all three disciplines at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J. He noted that planning for the Olympic Trials in Penn State continued, and that tickets would soon be available. He also noted that USA Wrestling was submitting bids for three World Championships events, the U17 Worlds in 2025, the U20 Worlds in 2026 and the Senior Worlds in 2027, leading up to the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

9. ATHLETES ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

John Stefanowicz gave an update on stipend increases for National Team athletes. He noted that retiring athletes have gotten coaching certification. He explained that the AAC has updated its bylaws and has been working closing with the USOPC on many matters. He explained the Athlete Leader of the Year Award, now in its second year, will give \$1,500 to the recipient from the Greg Strobel Leadership Academy.

10. STATE SERVICES REPORT

Tony Black reported that USA Wrestling broke the all-time membership record on March 14, with more than five months of the membership year to go. He noted that 49 of 51 state associations had an increase in members from the previous year, and that the projection was to have between 290,000 and 295,000 members at year end. Female membership has exceeded 35,000. He noted that just a few years ago, females were one in every 20 members, but now are one in every seven members.

11. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION REPORT

Kerry McCoy noted the partnership that the DEI Committee had with national staff to move its initiatives forward. He noted that members of the DEI Committee are being including as part of the USA Wrestling hiring process. He noted efforts for an activation with the Big10 Conference next year.

12. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Aphten Goldman explained the department efforts to expand revenue through sponsorships and partnerships. She praised Morgan Benham for maintaining our position with existing USA Wrestling sponsors. Her focus is now on sales and noted as much as \$150,000 in new sponsor revenue, including new sponsors Pritchard Companies, BAND and PinTV. She also noted efforts to increase private donor fundraising.

13. WOMEN'S WRESTLING REPORT

Joan Fulp reported that high school numbers continue to grow, up to about 53,000 athletes this year, an increase of 17,000 wrestlers. She thanked Elliot Hopkins from the NFHS for opening the door to high school stakeholders. She noted new states with championships, New York and Kentucky bringing the number to 38, with more to come very soon. She also noted that the NCAA had reached 43 programs, which meets the threshold for consideration for an official NCAA Championships. She praised the work of the Committee to Advance Women's Wrestling, a coalition of all of the women's wrestling stakeholders. She explained the need for more women to serve as coaches, officials, and leaders within the sport. She mentioned a new coaching female wrestlers course coming from USA Wrestling and Wrestle Like A Girl, as well as a female wrestling exhibition by the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

14. NEW BUSINESS

Rich Bender thanked affiliate groups (active members) – and called for any updates or additional information at this time.

Lee Roy Smith shared information on the inductees for the National Wrestling Hall of Fame this June as well as a special exhibition dedicated to Women's Wrestling.

President Baumgartner gave closing remarks, thanking all for their collaborative efforts to support and grow the sport.

Motion to adjourn by Adeline Gray, seconded by John Stefanowicz. The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m. MT.