

USA Wrestling Board of Directors Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 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
Macey Kilty
Scott Kluever
Craig LaMont
Heather Lawrence
Joseph McKenna
Hardell Moore
James Ravannack
Pat Ream
Corey Ruff
Jon Ruggiano
Katherine Shai
Iris Smith
Robert Smith
John Stefanowicz
Mallory Velte
Adeline Gray
Michael Macchiavello
Sara McMann
Michelle Meadows
Mike Moyer
Sally Roberts
Lee Roy Smith
Dr. Angie Taylor
Rick Tucci

Absent:

Tocarra Montgomery
Stan Dziedzic
Anthony Holman

Elliot Hopkins

Staff Members in Attendance:

Rich Bender, Executive Director

Megan Ball, Executive Assistant

Cody Bickley, National Teams High Performance Director

Tony Black, State Services Director

Kenya Dixon, Manager of Safe Sport and Compliance

Gary Abbott

Aphten Sterling

David Mathews

Greg Dana

Mary Beth Powers

Pete Isais

A virtual meeting was held over Zoom. A quorum was present. President Bruce Baumgartner called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm MT.

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT & OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

President Baumgartner asked Secretary Van Stokes to 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, President Baumgartner stated he has a conflict with the bylaw review.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 15, 2023, MEETING

President Baumgartner called for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Motion by Scott Kluever to approve the minutes from the Board of Directors meeting of November 15, 2023. Second by Jim Considine. Unanimously approved.

3. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Baumgartner thanked everyone for making the call and for their hard work and effort put into the various committees. He is very proud of USAW and the accomplishments, he thanked the volunteers and state leaders for their continuous work. The sport continues to grow with women’s wrestling being one of the largest growing sports in high schools, if not overall. The AAC and State Leaders are the best in the movement and continue to demonstrate that.

He thanked Rich Bender & the staff. A lot of good things have happened since the last board meeting and opportunities are being provided to individuals to continue their development. The

staff will continue to plan and execute a multitude of large events including the Olympic Team Trials later in the month. Next, President Baumgartner will head to the last chance qualifier, the ranking tournament, Fargo, and the Olympics. President Baumgartner asked if there were any questions and thanked everyone again for what they do and their work on growing the sport of wrestling.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT/USOPC UPDATE/UWW UPDATE

Rich Bender thanked President Baumgartner for his leadership as the best leader in the Olympic movement. On the USOPC Board of Directors front, there is nothing more important than the Paris Games later this summer. By all indications it may be the greatest sports party of all time. The IOC and organizing committees as well as the USOPC have put in countless hours to ensure a safe and supportive environment. The US is projected to lead the medal account again in Paris. Very few sports will have Russians competing, wrestling and tennis are two of the few. There has been 62.9 million dollars invested in getting all US teams to the different sites. It is expected that Salt Lake City will be announced as the host for the Winter Games in 2034.

Rich can speak with experience that our governance is the difference maker for this organization. As of today, there are over 316k members. This success does not happen without the state leaders and their efforts. On the sponsor side we are sitting at \$567,000 in partnerships almost \$200k ahead of years past. On a communications front, we are feeling fully staffed and we feel good where we are on that front leading into an Olympic Year. We will be launching our own meet management utility Jan 1, 2025.

The night before Olympic Trials in state college we will have an event to celebrate Art Martori and Sunkist Kids has had on wrestling. All board members are welcome, and we'd love to have them present.

Rich turned the call to Cody Bickley to provide an update on the National Teams and their Games preparation. The teams will leave state side on July 22. On the 24th they'll get geared up, have a press conference the next day, and opening ceremonies on the 26th. On July 27th we will travel to Normandy for our acclimation camp. On August 2, the first wave of athletes will move back into Paris to get settled in. August 5th the final wave will move in.

Rich thanked Cody for his report and for giving the board a glimpse into the work done to prepare for the Games.

UWW threw a curveball and will host a non-Olympic weight worlds after all. It will be held in Tirana, Albania the week directly following U23s.

5. PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT – 6.2.2a

President Baumgartner excused himself from the call due to a direct conflict of interest with the proposed bylaw change. He handed the meeting over to Secretary Van Stokes and First Vice-President Kerry McCoy. Kerry McCoy gave his time to Van Stokes to present the amendment to the Board of Directors. Secretary Stokes reviewed the process of the governance committee's review and approval of the proposed amendment. Secretary Stokes turned his time over to those who submitted the proposal. Rob Cate shared that the specific language is on purpose and important. He provided further context behind the decision to propose this bylaw change and the intentionality of the process to put USA Wrestling in the best position moving into 2028.

Van asked if Johnny or Pat had any other statements, or if any others had any questions for the proposers. Johnny shared that this also allows for application to future years. Pat also added that Bruce did not approach anyone for this – the idea came from outside of him and it is a good direction to go. This only allows eligibility, and so an election can still take place. Dr. Angie Taylor stated it is important to have someone who promotes stability and is supported by athletes and coaches and supported the movement. She included that having the international relationships are incredibly beneficial. Zac Dominguez also added that from the Coaches council it has 100% support. Jim Ravannack added that the difficulties of getting elected outside of being a USAW president is a feat beyond measure. It is incredibly political and Bruce as the president gives additional strength and weight in the campaign to allow influence in the international sphere.

Motion to accept the bylaw change as presented: Johnny Stefanwoicz

Second: James Ravannack

The vote will take place in the USAW Portal. The vote will close at midnight MT.

6. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Don Reynolds provided the Finance Committee report. The Organization sits in a strong financial position and expects to remain in a positive variance at the end of the fiscal year.

Board members asked if there would be a significant impact on the budget due to the non-Olympic weight World Championships. It will be considered in next year's budget and the variances have been discussed within the finance committee and all is set.

JOWC/GRASSROOTS UPDATE

President Baumgartner asked Pat Ream for an update. The JOWC met in Q1 and plans to meet more frequently than in the past. Events will go out for bids on a four-year basis. The JR Duals are out for bid this year and then additional age groups will go out in the next years. Every state is ahead of last year in terms of membership. CA and WA are way ahead of previous years. At the end of the year, at least one state will be in the top five that never have been.

7. ATHLETE ADVISORY REPORT/TEAM USA AC UPDATE

President Baumgartner asked Johnny Stefanowicz for an AAC report. Johnny shared that the AAC worked with USAW to ensure we have as many athletes on stipend as we can during the Olympic year. So as the team drops from 10 weights to 6, a fourth stipend position was added. We anticipate 75-80 National team members for the Olympic and non-Olympic teams. The AAC has been working with the medical advisory committee to update concussion protocols. Johnny also provided the Team USA AC update on behalf of Mallory Velte. We would like to continue to improve the relationship with USADA and WADA. USADA is extremely professional and would like USADA to help lead WADA to meet the same standards. Team USA AC is slowly gaining independence from the USOPC – this won't impact USAW at the current time, but Johnny will keep the board updated as this grows. Rich added that we have the best AAC in the movement and would like to ensure our AAC keeps their power and influence. Our AAC does not plan to move out or away from USAW in any way.

8. WOMEN'S WRESTLING UPDATE

President Baumgartner gave the report on behalf of Joan Fulp. Women's wrestling continues to grow throughout the country, and additional numbers and final comparisons will be shared at the August meeting. A highlight recently was that there were all-female officials assigned to the 8-14U Missouri Folkstyle tournament.

9. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

Kerry McCoy provided the DEI report. From the last meeting, a group of representatives went to Jordan and met with the Jordanian Wrestling Federation. Afsoon Johnston will head a sub-committee to help develop Culturally and Religious Compliant Gear and support the Jordanian Federation with the goal of another uniform option being accepted and available to women who currently face barriers to competition. Kerry applauded Gary and his staff for their work and commitment to the work.

10. SAFE SPORT UPDATE

Kenya Dixon provided the Safe Sport report. There are a few changes coming from the Center. We have updated our MAAPP to meet their standards. The Center is updating their Response and Resolution process as they have taken into consideration comments from the different stakeholders. Additionally, there will likely be an event audit this year.

Rich added the congressional report hit on the Center pretty hard. Shout out to Kenya for all the work she's done working with an organization that continuously changes. James Ravannack also thanked Kenya for her work with his state and all her help navigating the processes.

11. CONSITUENT GROUP REPORTS

NJCAA Report – Michelle Meadows – There was a 17% increase in men's teams and 60% increase in women's teams between 2022-24. The organization hosted the 2nd women's national invitational this winter and hopeful the governance committees will elevate that to a national championship in the future.

NWCA – Mike Moyer – the WIBN career fair is tomorrow. Any former wrestlers can register and participate. Additionally, a coalition of coaches associations has had a letter drafted by an attorney sent to congress with the essence of it being that if they provide antitrust protection to the NCAA to please not forget about Olympic sports. Likely will have a lot of media attention.

NWHOF – Lee Roy Smith – The NWHOF submitted a written report, but asked if there would be a Hall of Fame ceremony in Paris? There has not been any communication as of yet.

WLAG – Sally Roberts – WLAG and USAW put on the NWCCW. The event made a profit in the first time in its history. There will be about 15k going back to NCAA programs. There was a fan fest, and viewership was up significantly. Sally thanked all of the groups who joined together to get the college athletes the event they deserve.

Officials – Rick Tucci – Rick shared that the officials' program is going forward with leaps and bounds. They continue to improve and strive to improve officiating in the United States.

12. IN PERSON BOARD MEETING – SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2024

President Baumgartner shared the in-person board meeting will take place August 17 in Colorado Springs with the SLS a few days before that.

13. NEW BUSINESS

President Baumgartner called for any new business. Rich Bender shared that Wrestling 4 Peace program under USA Wrestling will be transferred to Dan Russell's established Wrestling for Peace non-profit. He has the capacity to fully support and engage in mission of the program.

Bruce thanked all of those for attending the added additional meetings throughout the year. He hoped the additional communication was valuable and for their time.

Motion to Adjourn: Jim Considine

Second: Pat Ream

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.

Minutes Prepared by: Megan Ball, Executive Assistant

Reviewed by: Van Stokes, Secretary