

MINUTES IF MEETING OF USA VOLLEYBALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday May 24, 2023, Dallas, TX

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

- **Welcome, Meeting Guidelines, Introductions – Dave Gentile, Chair**

Mr. Gentile called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board to the meeting.

- **Roll Call, Directory Update, Declaration of Quorum – Rachael Stafford**

Present: C. Seilkop, N. Nieves, S. Bishop, P. Lucas-White, D. Eldridge, K Shoji, C. Lichtman, D. Gentile, S. Bishop, D. Peixoto, D. Blanton, S. Kenyon, D. Donaghy and B. Baker. E. King joined at 9 am.

Absent: S. Hughes, T. Bourne, C. Rojas., and J. McGhee

Guests: J. Davis, R. Stafford, A. Reitingner, S. Smith, N. Funk, C. DeBoer,

II. BOARD ADMINISTRATION

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes for: January 18, 2023 – Dave Gentile (posted in Teams)**

Motion #1 made by Bishop, seconded by Lichtman to approve the minutes, approved unanimously.

- **Approval of the May 24, 2023, Agenda – Dave Gentile**

Mr. Gentile noted that he had sent out some notes on changes to the agenda.

Motion #2 made by Baker, seconded by Peixoto, to approve the agenda as modified, approved unanimously.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Dave Gentile

- **Executive Committee Deliberations**

Mr. Gentile thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their participation and guidance. The Executive Committee is meeting about every three weeks.

- **Chair Activities – Verbal Report**

The Personnel Committee met and will be meeting with Jamie for the mid-year meeting. Jamie will be providing information on the Foundation, and Mr. Gentile thinks that things are progressing. Mr. Gentile was contacted by a junior club, which led to a policy to go to the Board for vote today to set up a mechanism to refer complaints to the RVAA. Mr. Gentile attended two qualifiers, one with Mr. Bishop and one in Kansas City. Mr. Gentile also noted that he has resigned as president of the Junior Assembly, and a new chair was elected yesterday. Mr. Gentile reported that C.C. Rojas resigned from the Board noting that she will not be seeking re-election in the fall. He then noted that one challenge we're facing is having enough athletes present at the Assembly meetings. The organization will work on addressing this issue over the next several months.

IV. **CEO REPORT – Jamie Davis**

- **See Confidential Written Report (posted in Teams)**

Mr. Davis noted that his full report was filed several weeks ago so he will not go over all of that. He started by thanking Kathy DeBoer for all she has done for the sport.

- **Verbal report on key activities**

Membership – All membership is up in a big way, including boys. Full memberships are up 9.5% and Total Memberships are up 9.9%. This is the largest growth since 1998, excluding the COVID rebound year. All membership categories have surpassed prior years. Mr. Gentile asked if this growth is sustainable. Mr. Davis responded that history would show it has not been sustained, with average growth in the 2-3% ranged. Mr. Peixoto noted that growth is limited by the total number of clubs and facilities. Ms. Lichtman asked why growth is so high. Mr. Davis speculated that the investment in sport is important, along with the fact that volleyball is hot right now.

National Team Events. USAV is hosting three events – Men's VNL Pool 3 in Anaheim, CA, Women's VNL Finals in Arlington, TX, and the Men's Continental Championships in Charleston, WV. The VNL Events are owned by Volleyball World and sanctioned by USAV, which means USAV is not financially liable. The Men's Continental Championships also has a new structure that will be much better for USAV.

Qualification. Beach – only 24 teams in the world qualify, max of 2 teams per country per gender. There are three qualifying routes – Beach Volleyball World Championships (2), Top 17 ranked teams, and the last 5 allocated by five Continental Olympic Tournaments, along with the host country.

Indoor – 12 teams qualify. Host country automatically qualifies. Three qualification tournaments, eight team each, top two teams at each qualify. Five remaining places will be decided based on FIVB rankings with prioritizing countries from continents that do not yet have qualified decisions.

Sitting – 8 teams qualify. Two teams qualified through 2022 World Championships. Other teams qualify through Zone Championships (the U.S. Women qualified through this event), the World Cup in November, 2023 in Egypt, and the Final Qualification Tournament in 2024.

NGB Recertification. The USOPC conducts audits of every NGB every four years, and this serves largely as the basis for the re-certification. The USOPC NGB Certification Committee will make a recommendation on recertification, and that is sent to the USOPC Board for final approval.

Transgender. This is a rapidly changing landscape. USAV is trying to achieve a balance between inclusiveness and fairness, along with safety. More states are passing K-12 non-transgender participation legislation. The number of transgender athletes still remains a very tiny percentage of the overall athlete pool. A Minneapolis judge recently cancelled a USA Powerlifting event scheduled in Minneapolis. It is still illegal in many states to ask an athlete what gender they are, regardless of appearance. We had a unique incident at the 2023 Girls' 18s championship, where an individual who was assigned female at birth, identifies as a male, but is now playing in the female category. Mr. Bishop asked if there is a handout for event organizers that would provide guidance when these issues arise. Mr. Davis said he would distribute the policy, and Rachael Stafford is available to help. Mr. Davis then discussed the USAV policy. Ms. Lucas-White asked if there could be a separate category for transgender athletes. Mr. Davis noted that there are probably not enough transgender athletes to field a tournament. Mr. Kenyon raised the possibility of an "open division" where any team may compete. Mr. Davis noted that USAV has a mechanism for participation of non-binary athletes.

Region Investment Fund. USAV and USAV AFB approved a request for an investment fund of up to \$5 million. The North Country Region proposed a concept of "region ranking tournaments" across all 40 regions. Only certain tournaments would be included in this. USAV could provide capital, and receive a share of ownership, in these events, to be negotiated. Mr. Davis recommended that USAV move on this concept very quickly. Mr. Bishop noted that, if USAV had an indoor ranking system, it would position us at the head of the marketplace.

USAV Foundation. We have been doing a lot of work to improve the Foundation to become a meaningful revenue source. A new employee was hired almost a year ago. The Hall of Fame proceeds will benefit the Foundation, and tonight's event is 100% sold out with a waiting list. The Foundation has also created five unique VIP packages for interested people to have an insider experience at the Olympics. Mr. Bishop asked what the funds would be used for – Mr. Davis responded that proceeds will go into the Foundation, and would depend on whether the donor would restrict the gift.

Boys Junior Nationals. For the Boys Junior National Championships, USAV added some enhancements to make the event more attractive, cut entry fees, brought Olympians for meet-and-greets. Currently we have 361 registered teams, which is up from last year. We've found that boys want to play against the top boys teams. Mr. Gentile confirmed this, but noted that the growth in entries is a good sign. Mr. Bishop noted that the AAU has 1,000 teams, and offered a suggestion that we change the format of the event and schedule it so it does not compete with the AAU championships.

Congressional Request. USAV sent over 3,500 pages to the committee. Mr. Davis gave kudos to Rachael for pulling this together. Mr. Davis talked with the committee and pushed for all youth organizations to be subject to the same laws. Mr. Bishop asked if clubs could work with USAV to

craft a letter from the grassroots to send to legislators on this issue, and Mr. Davis supported that idea. Ms. Stafford noted that the Committee will be holding public hearings in November.

Regional Liaison. Mr. Davis introduced Michelle Goodall, the new regional liaison.

Mr. Gentile noted that there are two candidates for the Board of the Foundation, Brooke Billings and Scott Fortune.

Motion #3, made by Baker, seconded by Shoji, to appoint Brooke Billings and Scott Fortune as directors of the Foundation, approved unanimously.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

V. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – Andy Reitingering

Mr. Reitingering noted that there were two Governance Committee meetings since the last meeting, at which the following issues were discussed: Conflict of Interest, the independence definition, who selects and approves committee positions, particularly athletes. The Committee also discussed elections issues, AAC Manual changes, Bylaws changes, the grievance procedure, regional governance issues.

Mr. Reitingering walked through the proposed changes to the Bylaws, noting that some changes are driven by the USOPC's audit requirements. A copy of these proposed changes are attached to these minutes.

Motion #4, made by Baker, seconded by Lichtman, to waive the 30-day notice requirement for amendment of the Bylaws, approved unanimously.

Motion #5, from the Governance Committee, to approve the amendments to the Bylaws set forth in the attachment to these minutes, approved unanimously.

Mr. Reitingering then walked the Board through the proposed changes to the Athletes Manual, which are attached to these minutes.

Motion #6, from the Governance Committee, to approve the changes to the Athletes Manual, approved unanimously.

Ms. Stafford walked the Board through the new Grievance Procedure, which was largely taken from the USOPC's new policy. Ms. Stafford noted that this was removed from the Bylaws and will be a separate, free-standing policy.

Motion #7, from the Governance Committee, to adopt the new Grievance Policy, approved unanimously.

Mr. Bishop asked about the election record-keeping requirement, specifically who would be responsible for keeping that information. Mr. Reitingger responded that this would be kept by USAV. It will not be available to public inspection. Ms. Stafford noted that this would apply to actions taken by the Nominating Committee.

VI. NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Nancy Funk

Ms. Funk told the Board that there is a report from her that was provided to the Board. Ms. Funk noted that there is still not a beach discipline person on the Committee. The RVA had its election and Bob Baker was reelected. The Officials will be voting on their Director soon, but this may be held up pending an athlete being added. Cassidy Lichtman has volunteered to serve for another term. Dane Blanton has also been elected to serve another term. There are candidates for the Independent Director, and they are currently being vetted. Ms. Funk was elected to continue to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Mr. Gentile thanked Ms. Funk for her service.

VII. AUDIT, FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE – George Thompson

Mr. Thompson noted that the last AFB meeting was with the auditors to discuss the audit. USAV received a clean audit.

Motion #8, from the Audit, Finance and Budget Committee, to approve the audit, approved unanimously.

VIII. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Steve Kenyon

The Personnel Committee will report during Executive Session.

IX. USAV FOUNDATION UPDATE – Mark Peterson

The Foundation matters were discussed in other reports.

X. REPORTS FROM ASSEMBLIES, CONSTITUENTS, COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS

Athletes Reports

Ms. Lichtman reported that all of the women are back in the U.S. U.S. players had successful seasons overseas.

Mr. Shoji reported that the men are back in Anaheim. U.S. players had successful seasons overseas. The men are looking forward to the upcoming events being held in the U.S.

Ms. Nieves reported that the women's sitting team qualified for Paris. There is a big tournament later in the year in Egypt.

Mr. Seilkop reported that the Men finished second in Edmonton so did not qualify for Paris, but there are two other qualification opportunities. He also thanked Mr. Reitingger for hosting the 5-match event with

Canada. There is some concern about building a pipeline to get some younger players into the program. Mr. Reitingger suggested that USAV put together a simple RFP form to host events like these. Mr. Seilkop noted that a lot of international teams want to come to the U.S. for matches.

Mr. Blanton, on behalf of the athletes, reported that the women are doing really well internationally. On the men's side, the teams are also playing well. He noted that the collegiate program is creating a good pipeline for the sport.

USOPC AAC/Team USA Advisory Council

Mr. Duda reported on AAC meetings. The name has been changed to the Team USA Advisory Council. Mr. Duda then reported on the changes to the policies on benefits available to athletes and the different tiers of benefits involved. The Council is pushing back against the California bill that wants to give money to revenue sports, which would greatly hurt Olympic sports in California by eliminating funding.

Regional Audit Standards

Mr. Baker reported that the regions are doing audits to make sure they meet the minimum standards of USAV and that regions are meeting certain standards. The audit covers 10 regions per year. For this year, eight regions submitted materials quickly, the other two regions are currently in process of providing information. He noted that the quality of information provided is noticeably improved.

Administrative Council

Mr. Reitingger reported that all of the RVA committees met, and he reported on the main issues they discussed.

RVAA

Mr. Reitingger noted that he submitted a written report on the RVAA, and he discussed the proposed amendments.

Motion #9, made by Lichtman, seconded by Seilkop, to waive the 30-day requirement to amend the Bylaws, approved unanimously.

Motion #10 made by Bishop, seconded by Peixoto, to approve moving Ohio Valley from Atlantic Zone to Central Zone, approved unanimously.

Mr. Reitingger noted that a number of states have approved boys volleyball as a high school event. Mr. Reitingger asked if USAV is reaching out to those states. Mr. Davis acknowledged this is a good idea and he will reach out. Mr. Bishop suggested possibly holding a national high school boys championship,

Mr. Gentile noted that written reports were submitted for AAC, the Implementation of Region Audit Standards, the USAV Administrative Council, the RVAA, the Junior Assembly, Officials and Championship Events Commission.

Mr. George Mulry joined the meeting to report on the Hall of Fame. He thanked USAV for all of their support of the HOF. The HOF has revealed a new brand with more of an international look to reflect the excellence of volleyball worldwide. He also noted that there will be some special recognition and awards given out at the Hall of Fame dinner. There will be six new inductees to the HOF this year, and he invited the Board to the event this fall.

XI. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business raised.

XII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion #11, made by Nieves, seconded by Shoji, to move into Executive Session, approved unanimously.

Motion #12, made by Nieves, seconded by Lichtman to come out of Executive Session, approved unanimously.

Mr. Gentile reported that the following topics were discussed in Executive Session:

Personnel Committee report from Mr. Kenyon

Financial report from Mr. Thompson

SafeSport update from Ms. Stafford

Volleyball landscape review from Mr. Davis

Motion #13, made by Bishop seconded by Seilkop to approve the financial report, approved unanimously.

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion #14, made by Kenyon seconded by Baker to adjourn, approved unanimously.

REMINDER NEXT BOARD SESSIONS

TENTATIVE DATES AS FOLLOWS

WEDNESDAY October 4, 2023

THURSDAY December 7, 2023

THURSDAY January 11, 2024 (POTENTIALLY IN-PERSON IN DENVER)

WEDNESDAY May 22, 2024 (ANNUAL MEETING)