

MINUTES OF USA VOLLEYBALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday May 22, 2024 (IN-PERSON) Meeting (Columbus, OH)

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

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

Mr. Gentile welcomed the Board and those in the audience to the meeting.

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

Present: C. Lichtman, K. Shoji, D. Donaghy, D. Blanton, S. Bishop, K. Kezbers, D. Peixoto, C. Seilkop, J. McGhee, T. Karlin, D. Gentile, D. Blanton, E. King, D. Eldridge, P. Lucas-White, G. Thompson (Treasurer) and T. Bourne (joined at 9:30 am ET).

Absent: S. Hughes, N. Nieves.

Guests: E. Duda (Team USA AC Rep), J. Davis, S. Smith (Recording Secretary), C. Vadala, R. Stafford, S. Kearns, A. Reitingier, J. Armson-Dyer

II. BOARD ADMINISTRATION

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes for: January 2024 – Dave Gentile (posted in Teams)**

Motion #1 made by McGhee, seconded by Bishop to approve the minutes from the January 2024 Board meeting, approved unanimously.

- **Approval of the May 22, 2024 Agenda – Dave Gentile**

Mr. Gentile corrected several items in the Agenda.

III. USOPC and NGB UPDATE AND Q&A - Sarah Hirshland – CEO USOPC

Mr. Davis welcomed Sarah Hirshland, the CEO of the USOPC to the meeting.

Ms. Hirshland thanked USA Volleyball for all they do to get the Team ready for Paris. She said that the IOC will likely vote at a meeting to be held just before the Paris Games to award the 2034 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City. After the Paris Games the mayor of Paris will transfer the flag to the Mayor of LA. This means that the next decade will be the most important decade in U.S. sports history with the LA Games, the World Cup, the Winter Olympics and other key international events all coming to the U.S. Our job, then, is to capitalize on the opportunities this will present. This will require a lot of thought and preparation now to be ready when the time comes.

Based on the way the program for LA lays out, every major professional sport in the U.S. will be participating in the Games (football, basketball, baseball, soccer, and hockey in Salt Lake City). Ms. Hirshland invited USA Volleyball to think about the opportunities this presents for the sport of volleyball.

This will also present challenges. The USOPC is the only privately funded National Olympic Committee in the world. So, the USOPC has to raise a lot of money. Driving commercial value and revenue is therefore very important. The current commercial model for the movement is tired and needs to be refreshed. The entire Olympic ecosystem needs to work together to create commercial value. Those in the Olympic Movement need to work together in this area instead of fighting with each other. We need to do more for Team USA athletes, and that requires more revenue. There is also a philanthropic campaign, and we have seen great growth over time thanks to a generous American public. It is very important that the money donated to the United States be spent wisely. She also noted that philanthropic activity in the U.S. generally is declining.

We also must think about the future of Team USA and the sports, including how we maximize sport performance. Our goal is to win more medals in LA than we've ever won. We also will go to Paris very strong, but the world is chasing us, so we need to always keep our foot on the gas and invest in being the best of the best.

Mr. Bishop asked about the recommendation from the Congressional Commission to split grassroots sports from the Olympic Movement. Ms. Hirshland noted that the Congressional Commission was appointed four years ago, sixteen people were appointed in an uncoordinated fashion, and they issued a 200+ page report that threw everything but the kitchen sink in the report. There is no mandate, but it is up to us to distill down to what is helpful from the recommendations. Overall, there were 85 recommendations, with seven major themes, including youth sports. Ms. Hirshland did not necessarily read the report the same way about youth sports, but she acknowledged a lot of NGBs were offended by the lack of credit for what they do for youth sport. She also noted that no members of Congress, of whom she is aware, have supported this recommendation on youth sports. So, she is not worried about anything coming of it. It is

important for all of us to be aware that many people misunderstand the ecosystem and how it works, so we need to work on that.

Mr. Baker noted that the Sports Act and the USOPC impose a lot of requirements on the NGBs, which place a lot of burdens on us, and it would be helpful to ease up on these requirements. Ms. Hirshland challenged Mr. Baker to change the narrative to say that we're creating a standard of quality that exceeds everyone else. She also said that, if there are barriers that are imposed that should be removed, the USOPC is open to have that conversation. She also noted that NGBs are better and stronger organizations compared to five years ago, so we need to understand what has made us better and continue to improve. Ultimately, it has to be about driving quality. Mr. Gentile noted that it would be great if other organizations who compete against us would have to follow the same rules. Ms. Hirshland agreed.

Mr. Thompson asked about the philanthropic effort. Ms. Hirshland compared the USOPC to a community foundation that raises money collectively and distributes it to a number of recipients. The USOPC Foundation is now 10 years old and is very sophisticated. Under the circumstances, she wondered whether it is necessary for 50 NGBs to create their own foundations, and she envisions the USOPC raising the money and distributing it to the NGBs. She also noted that the USOPC is now having conversations about very large gifts that a lot of NGBs would not be able to get. She noted that the goal is to raise \$500 million in the lead up to the LA Games. Ms. McGhee asked about private equity firms and how they fit into this. Ms. Hirshland explained that the USOPC is having discussions where PE firms could invest in certain infrastructure of the Games, but those conversations are in their early stages. In the next decade, to put on the LA Games, the Salt Lake Games and Team USA, the USOPC will have to raise \$11 billion. Mr. Baker noted that it would be helpful for NGBs to be able to use the Olympic Rings in their promotions and fundraising. Most people who participate in local clubs have no idea they are part of the Olympic movement. Ms. Hirshland noted that historically the Olympic Movement has protected its intellectual property with great care, but with that said, the USOPC is spending a lot of time thinking about how we can better take advantage of the entire ecosystem.

Ms. Lichtman noted that it is harder to promote individual athletes in team sports. She asked what the USOPC's role is in promoting athletes' stories and building their narratives. Ms. Hirshland noted that the USOPC has allowed NBC to be the vehicle to promote the Olympic narrative. The USOPC recognizes the importance of NBC, but the USOPC is also trying to reassert some energy to re-shape the narrative and tell the athletes' stories. As part of this, the USOPC has had a lot of conversations with NBC on how to work together to tell more stories. The USOPC is building a huge platform in Team USA. Also, we have to empower athletes to tell their stories themselves. The USOPC also is working with a company that uses AI to funnel highlights back to athletes so they

can use them to promote themselves. Mr. Shoji asked whether the USOPC has started to look at opportunities outside of NBC, particularly as the media landscape is changing. Ms. Hirshland notes that the agreement with NBC runs through 2032. The USOPC is focused on creating value and preparing for the next deal, as well.

Mr. Shoji then asked about the changing collegiate landscape and how that impacts the USOPC. Ms. Hirshland noted that this is one of the three major issues that keep her up at night. Everyone in the room should be concerned about this, not just for the Olympic movement but for the entire sports movement. The education-based sports system is failing us. The community investment in sport has been declining, and now we have a pay-for-play model which is failing. Government is not the answer. We must figure out how to preserve campus-based sport. Athlete compensation is a real issue, and we have to figure out how to get money into athletes' pockets. At the same time, we have to protect broad-based sport on campuses in a real way, and right now this is very uncertain.

IV. BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Dave Gentile

- **Executive Committee Deliberations**

The Executive Committee has met a couple of times, but predominantly the Board has met in executive session, so there is not much to discuss. Mr. Gentile emphasized that the EC is an advisory body and has no power to make decisions. The EC has discussed governance and the future training session options. He noted that he will be addressing committee appointments towards the end of June.

V. CEO REPORT – Jamie Davis

- **See Confidential Written Report (posted in Teams)**
- **Verbal report on key activities**

Mr. Davis reported that membership is up, with Total Memberships up 6.2 percent and Full Memberships up 7.3% through April 30th, which is record membership. This includes growth in all categories, including the boys.

He then discussed the international events being held in the U.S., including the Women's VNL Week 2, the Men's VNL Week 2 in Ottawa, Canada, and the USAV Cup and Paris Team send off.

He then updated on Olympic Qualification in beach, indoor and sitting.

Mr. Davis walked through the list of Championships over the next year.

He then updated the Board on the Try Volleyball for Free initiative in September after the Olympics, which we will be promoting through the Olympics and Paralympics. The hope is this will lead to growth coming out of the Games.

He then updated the Board on the professional leagues, including Athletes Unlimited, Pro Volleyball Federation and Love.

He then reflected on his last 7 ½ years with USAV, which included growth in membership, growth in revenues, profitability, great investment in the National Teams which was accompanied by great success of the Teams. He thanked the Board for the past 7 ½ years and the great success we've achieved together.

VI. USAV FOUNDATION CONSULTANT UPDATE – Stacie Kearns / Liz Adams

Mr. Davis noted that a goal of both Mr. Gentile and Mr. Davis has been the growth of the Foundation. USAV decided to hire a consultant to assist with the Foundation, which led to the hiring of Savvy Strategies Consulting. He introduced Liz Adams to discuss their findings and recommendations, the slides for which are included in the Teams materials.

Ms. Adams expressed that the goals of the engagement were to identify revenue growth, ensure there is a staffing model to capitalize on opportunities. She conducted interviews with a broad base of individuals. Her findings included (i) a strong desire to see the Foundation succeed and raise money, (ii) the Foundation hasn't been a key focus, (iii) there is a lack of development expertise among USAV staff, (iv) there is a need to hire a development professional to focus on donor identification, cultivation and solicitation, as well as volunteer management, (v) the Foundation Board needs to be a fundraising board and not a governance board, (vi) there should be a minimum giving requirement for non-athletes on the Foundation Board, (vii) the Foundation offers unique value, including access to Olympians, Paralympians, etc., and (viii) the natural donor base is USAV membership.

Her recommendations include: (i) transition Foundation Board to a trustee model, (ii) build a formal orientation process for Board members, (iii) add a minimum giving requirement for non-athlete trustees, (iv) add a minimum attendance requirement, (v) recruit future board members with a

focus on their ability to give and influence others to give, and (vi) add a Development Director and Development Coordinator as staff members. She then provided a timeline and roadmap for next steps.

AVCA

Dr. Jaime Gordon of the AVCA reported to the Board that his goal is to start a dialogue between the AVCA and USA Volleyball, which led to convening a leadership summit to gather the key people in the sport to discuss the future of the sport. Jamie Davis and Dave Gentile will be representing USA Volleyball.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

VII. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – Andy Reitingner

See Teams for various documents.

Mr. Reitingner reported that the Governance Committee met last month and discussed the regional agreement. There was a request that the CEO requirements go into the Bylaws, but it was determined that existing language is sufficient. The Committee requested that the election of the Treasurer's position be held off until language is clarified. The Beach Representative was also discussed. The AFB requirement for an independent director was discussed, with a recommendation that language be added that he/she must have financial experience. The Committee also approved the Junior Assembly Manual.

Motion #2, which came from the Governance Committee, to approve the Junior Assembly Manual, approved unanimously.

VIII. NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Nancy Funk

Ms. Funk's written report will be posted in Teams. Regarding the Board positions, Nicky will come back and has been approved by AAC. Tri Bourne decided not to seek a second term. Casey Patterson may be the replacement with some formalities to be finalized. The Beach Development position will be in the hands of the AC Nominating Committee, and the Bylaws are being reviewed and this should be resolved in a couple of weeks. The RVA position will be filled by Andy Reitingner.

With respect to the Nominating Committee – Nancy was elected back to the Committee. The Sitting Athlete position is up for appointment and Charles will be coming back. Ryan has decided to rotate off the Committee. The Indoor Discipline is up as well, and Ruth has indicated that she will be coming back. There is no Beach Discipline representative on the Committee and that needs to be filled.

Motion #3, brought forward by the Nominating Committee, to approve Charles, Ruth and Nancy to continue serving on the Nominating Committee, approved unanimously.

IX. AUDIT, FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE – George Thompson

George Thompson reported that the AFB reviewed investments. The Board needs to approve the audit, which was a clean audit.

Motion #4 to approve the audit, brought forward by the AF&B Committee, approved unanimously.

X. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Elizabeth King

- **Moved to Executive Session**

XI. USAV FOUNDATION UPDATE – Stacie Kearns on behalf of Mark Peterson

The appointment of directors was tabled to the June meeting.

XII. REPORTS FROM ASSEMBLIES, CONSTITUENTS, COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS AND REVIEW GROUPS

- **Reports**

- **Centralized Training Center – Kezbers / Davis**

Mr. Davis gave an overview of the unified Centralized Training Center project. Mr. Davis is working on renewing the lease for the National Training Centers for the indoor teams. There are also discussions about a proposed project in Nebraska. Mr. Kezbers reiterated the importance of this project, regardless of the decision on the Nebraska project.

- **Athlete Updates (Lichtman / Shoji / Seilkop / Nieves / Bourne / Hughes)**

Ms. Lichtman reported on the VNL and the progress towards naming the Women's Indoor Olympic Team. The Women's VNL Team is evaluating a lot of players. She expects at least half of the Women's Indoor Olympic team to play professionally in the US next year.

Mr. Shoji noted that the Men's Indoor Olympic Team has been announced. He will meet with the team next week in Anaheim to update them on a number of issues.

Mr. Seilkop noted that the Men's Sitting Team lost in the final of the last qualifier. Although the Team did not make the Olympics, it fared much better than in the past. He attributed this improvement, among other things, to having foreign teams come to the U.S. to play. The focus is now on the LA28 Games. He also discussed the upcoming schedule for the Team. Mr. Davis complimented Mr. Peixoto for his efforts to bring foreign teams to the US to play the US team.

- **AAC Update (Duda)**

Mr. Duda thanked Mr. Reitingger for hosting an event and also the regions for their support. The Team USA AC is still processing the Congressional Commission Report and its recommendations. He noted that he does not have access to the athlete's list, which makes his job more difficult to fill various positions. Mr. Gentile reported that he will be given that access.

- **Update on Continuation of the Implementation of Region Audit Standards (Baker)**

Ms. Armson-Dyer discussed the Regional Organization Audit Standards (ROAS). 28 of the 30 Regions that have gone through the process have been certified, and they are working with the other two. The final ten regions will be providing their reports soon, which will begin the process. If there is a region that misses deadlines, the committee will work with them, but if they do not work towards meeting those deadlines, there may be consequences. Further, going forward the deadlines will be firmer, and the regions will be expected to meet those deadlines.

- **USAV Administrative Council – verbal report (TBD)**

Mr. Reitingger gave a brief update on the appointments for the Council.

- **RVAA – verbal report (TBD)**

Mr. Reitingner noted that the RVAA met over the last two days and updated the Board on the issues discussed and the various committee meetings. Key vendors also came in to meet with and have discussions with different zones within the RVAA. There were also discussions about Nationals, the ranking system, and registration. He also announced the results of elections. There were also discussions about the structure of the RVAA, and there was a general feeling that the structure may be a bit antiquated. There will be a committee set up to look at the structure.

- **Junior Assembly – verbal report (Bridges)**

See written report on Teams.

- **Officials Assembly – verbal report (Rodriguez)**

See written report on Teams.

- **International Volleyball Hall of Fame**

George Mulry thanked the Board for their support of the Hall of Fame. He then recognized those members of the IVHF who were in attendance. The IVHF's goal is to become more international, and is looking to add more international members of the Board. The next induction will be October 18-19 with nine new inductees.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

CONVENE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion #5 made by Peixoto and seconded by Lichtman to go into Executive Session, approved unanimously.

Motion #6 made by Shoji and seconded by Donaghy to come out of Executive Session, approved unanimously.

Mr. Gentile reported that, during Executive Session, the Board discussed the following:

- Financial Report and Topics (G. Thompson)
- Legal Report (R. Stafford)
 - o Annual Disclosures – Conflict of Interest etc. (R. Stafford)
- E & E Report (R. Stafford)
- SafeSport Update (R. Stafford)
- USA Volleyball Landscape Review (J. Davis)
- The Board also reviewed the information with respect to a complaint from an athlete who sought WORK WITH RACHAEL ON LANGUAGE, and the Board unanimously agreed _____.
- CEO Transition topics
- Staff matters

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion #7 made by Lichtman seconded by Baker to adjourn, approved unanimously.

REMINDER NEXT BOARD SESSIONS

TENTATIVE DATES AS FOLLOWS

TUESDAY July 16, 2024 – UPDATE ON CEO SEARCH (EXECUTIVE SESSION / TELECONFERENCE)

TUESDAY September 10, 2024 – UPDATE ON CEO SEARCH (EXECUTIVE SESSION / TELECONFERENCE)

WEDNESDAY October 22, 2024 – Regular Board Meeting

THURSDAY December 5, 2024 – BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL

THURSDAY January 11, 2025 - Regular Board Meeting

WEDNESDAY March 11, 2025 – Regular Board Meeting

WEDNESDAY May 21, 2025 - ANNUAL MEETING