

## **Metropolitan Swimming Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

October 17, 2023/ Virtual

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

General Chair, David Rodriguez called the 10/17/23 House of Delegates meeting to order at 7:51 PM with the following members in attendance:

### **PRESENT**

Christopher Arena, Jeff Chu, Ethan Fergus, Sandy Graham, Keith Green, Kate Hallex, Zac Hojnacki, Annette Mackrel, Jonah Montgomery, Phil Paspalas, Bob Vializ, John Yearwood

### **ABSENT**

Joseph Apat, Thomas Cho, Dylan Gallub, Eddie Oyola, Jamila Smith

### **GUESTS**

Elaine Ang, Ken Graham, Allen Wone

### **STAFF**

Kim Wyer-Ferraris

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Mr. Rodriguez read the Mission and Vision statements of Metropolitan Swimming.

### **Minutes**

***MOTION:** To approve the September 19, 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Seconded.*

**APPROVED.**

### **General Chair**

Mr. Rodriguez reported on the ASCA membership rollout. Metro has more than 500 coaches, which was the initial membership number negotiated. ASCA has agreed to accept all present Metro coaches, about 560, as members for the originally negotiated price of \$15,000. ASCA will contact all the coaches via email and provide them with their account information. They are also aiming to give Lifetime and Lifetime Plus members extra value from this deal.

A kick-off coaches' meeting is in the works to let everyone know what will be offered and what can be expected from the membership in terms of clinics, continued education, and more.

Mr. Rodriguez reiterated the importance of the committees. He pointed out, they are required to get together at least twice a year. He encouraged everyone to make extra efforts to recruit and get more people to participate; the committees should be representative of our LSC. He wants the Board's governance to be recognized as successful and productive, giving value to our constituents while motivating the membership to get more involved. He is expecting all the committees make an effort to meet before the end of the year, preferably before the November BOD meeting. Presently, he is focussing on getting the Athlete Committee and the DDEI Committee launched.



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He also encouraged Tech Planning to stay on track coming out of the HOD, looking at the summer meets as well as the championship meets, having updated time standards available latest by the January BOD meeting to avoid scrambling in May.

Mr. Rodriguez went on to emphasize that the Officials' Committee needs to come together, some appointments were expected at the end of the BOD meeting. He pointed out the importance of holding a referee meeting soon to inform the officials about the changes that passed at the recent HOD meeting, some of which were mandated by USA Swimming. He also endorsed an application being posted soon for people who express interest in serving on the Officials' Committee. He is hoping the new structure of the Officials' Committee will prove successful.

Mr. Rodriguez also encouraged the Age Group Committee to focus on improving Age Group Champs before our November BOD meeting.

Lastly, Mr. Rodriguez commended the Strategic Planning Committee finally becoming active under the aegis of Julie Chen. He is excited to see their work in the future.

### **Administrative Vice Chair**

Ms. Hallex stated that post meet reports are being submitted.

### **Finance Chair**

Mr. Arena was pleased the budget was approved. He is looking forward to brainstorming ideas with the Finance Committee about Metro's Savings, for instance, potentially getting higher interest rates. The Committee will be getting ready with the accountants to file our taxes for the last fiscal year.

### **Coaches Rep**

Mr. Yearwood thought the ASCA rollout was a great opportunity. He is still working on getting all the coaches email addresses updated for the roll out.

### **Athlete Reps**

Not present. The GC would like to investigate avenues to get the athletes more engaged and productive. It is ultimately their sport and it would be beneficial for them if we could get them more involved.

### **Secretaries**

Mr. Chu asked that the committee chairs write their minutes as we regularly meet the limit of our storage capacities in Zoom. Once the minutes are written, the recordings can be erased, freeing up



space. Presently, there are still recordings from meetings in April that have no written minutes. Committee chairs have been given access to their recordings.

### **Operational Risk**

Mr. Vializ had nothing new to report since the last meeting.

### **Technical Planning**

Mr. Montgomery reported that an unopposed bid for Bronze Central Championships was received. The Kip's Bay Makos will host Bronze Central at the Mark Twain pool in Yonkers. The other party pulled out their bid.

He expressed concern that the present procedure, requiring a pool contract to secure a bid, lends facilities power and control over who can run championship meets. It could limit access for the teams that want to get involved.

Mr. Montgomery stated that a 1650 time was still needed for the 15-18 Team Challenge.

### **Senior Chair**

Mr. Hojnacki reported that the upcoming Senior Committee meeting would investigate different needs in the reimbursement program, with input from Finance.

He also has reached out to the Officials' Chairs to go over Senior Mets information.

Mr. Hojnacki proceeded to share valuable insights from the annual ABM in Colorado Springs, emphasizing the importance of efficient board meetings and the role of committees in discussing and refining ideas before bringing them to the board. He identified the need for patience with incremental changes and shared some action items for the board to consider, especially close adherence to Robert's Rules to allow efficient and transparent governance, but also clearly defining responsibilities, particularly of Committee Chairs, enhancing communications with the membership, and (b) annual reviews to determine that everything was running as should.

### **Age Group**

Mr. Green reported that the new position of Zone Coordinator would be fleshed out at the upcoming Age Group Committee meeting planned for November. The cuts for Age Group Champs would be finalized, too.

### **Safe Sport**

Ms. Graham reported that a Committee meeting was scheduled for November 16th. She wants everyone to encourage the swimmers to watch the anti-bullying video on the USA Swimming website.



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**DEI**

Absent.

**Unfinished Business**

**- Committee Member Appointments:**

**MOTION:** *To approve the appointments Julie Chen from BAD to the Governance Committee and Kyle Wilson (athlete) from SSC to the Open Water Committee. Seconded. **APPROVED***

There are still vacancies on the Operational Risk and the Hall of Fame Committees.

**- HOD Fine Waiver:**

Over 30 teams did not attend the Fall HOD meeting. It was moved to ZOOM because of flooding in the area that day.

**MOTION:** *To approve waving the fines from the Fall HOD meeting for all those teams. Seconded.*

Discussion ensued. Mr. Rodriguez wondered if we would be setting a bad precedent. The Fall HOD is the only mandatory meeting, it is imperative that teams attend. Several board members agreed that changing it from in-person to Zoom did not represent a hardship, to the contrary, it did not even require travel time. It was the general consensus that teams did not make any effort to attend the Zoom meeting. Additionally, none of the teams notified the board or the office that they could not attend via Zoom. It was noted that 3 teams had reached out prior to the meeting and before the change to Zoom that they would not be able to attend on the 30th. Mr. Chu added that although the Executive Committee had tried to vote on waiving the fines for those 3 teams, not everyone had replied to the request to vote and the vote technically did not count. He reiterated that for an email vote, every eligible member of the Executive Committee was required to give consent to voting via email, and in this case not everyone had replied.

**MOTION:** *To amend that the fines be waived only for the teams that contacted Metro ahead of the HOD meeting. Seconded. **APPROVED***

Discussion continued. Mr. Montgomery wanted to additionally amend not to apply the fines to athletes who missed the meeting because they might not have received the Zoom link. He also requested clarification of the fines. There is a fine for not having any representation of a club at the Fall HOD meeting and a fine for not having an athlete representative at the Fall HOD meeting. He restated that it might have been difficult for athletes to attend via Zoom or that they thought they did not have to attend.

**MOTION:** *To waive the fines as amended by Jonah. Seconded.*



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Mr. Vializ pointed out that it was a slippery slope when making more and more exceptions. Everyone was equally affected by the changes due to the weather. Mr. Montgomery brought up the athlete break-out of past HOD meetings and that via Zoom that was not expected to happen. Mr. Rodriguez restated USA Swimming's intent to have the athlete's participate in governance and in HOD meetings and that Metro had added the athletes as voting members accordingly. Athletes were always supposed to be part of the HOD meeting; the separate athlete break-out activities of the past had not been in compliance with USA Swimming policies and the Ted Stevens' Amateur Sports Act.

Several board members agreed that the same criteria for fines should be applied for the in-person as for the Zoom meeting. Mr. Chu shared the attendance spreadsheet on screen.

Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Fergus recused themselves from the vote as both did not have athletes attending.

Mr. Vializ noted that the September meeting was always the most important HOD meeting and we should not change our procedures. If teams were deficient they should be fined as in the past.

**MOTION:** *To amend the proposal to waive the fines for teams that had a non-athlete attending and for the 3 teams who excused themselves ahead of time. Seconded. **FAILED***

**MOTION:** *To waive the fines for just the 3 teams that contacted Metro ahead of the HOD meeting. Seconded. **APPROVED***

**- Officials Committee Appointments**

**MOTION:** *To appoint Darryl Strabuk as Education Coordinator and Jennifer Bancroft as Communication Coordinator to the Officials' Committee. Seconded. **APPROVED***

**- H4 Visa Compliance Letter**

Mr. Rodriguez reported that a request had been made to pen a letter stating that Metro officials are volunteers and not paid. The letter is for a person who would like to become an official but has to stay in compliance with their H4 visa.

**MOTION:** *To approve the request for the H4 compliance letter. Seconded. **APPROVED***

**- Officials' Expiration Date Proposal**

Submitted by Elaine Ang. Mr. Graham reported this was put forward by the National Officials' Committee. Since national certifications expire twice a year, at the end of June and the end of December, we should align our certification expiry dates accordingly, effective immediately.



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**MOTION:** *To have 2 expiration dates for officials' certifications. For officials becoming certified between January 1st and June 30th, the expiry is June 30th. For officials becoming certified between July 1st and December 31st, the expiry is December 31st. Seconded. **APPROVED***

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Rodriguez adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jeff Chu

Secretary

/s/ Annette Mackrel

Secretary

