

Committee Name:	Board of Directors	Session #:	1 and 2
Committee Chair:	Ed Coates		
Minutes recorded by:	Carrie Stolar	Date/time of meeting:	2/22-23/25 8:30 AM CT

Actions Taken:

1. Approved: Jan. 21, 2025 BOD meeting minutes.
2. Ratified: The online approval of the amended 1/13/2025 special BOD meeting minutes.
3. Approved: The BOD will submit legislation to sunset the History and Archives Committee effective 12/31/25.
4. Approved: The recommendation that the president create the position of and job description for historian and begin the search for a historian to supervise and coordinate volunteer history and legacy projects.
5. Approved: The NBR panel as presented.
6. Approved: The recommendation of approval of Scott Fuller as NBR chair effective March 1, 2025 for a term of 2 years.

Number of committee members present:	15	Absent:	2	Guests:	0
Committee members present/virtual (list all, including chair and vice chair): Ed Coates – President; Kenny Brisbin - VP of Community Services; Crystie McGrail - VP of Local Operations; Julie Dussliere - VP of Administration; Carrie Stolar - Secretary; Teddy Decker – Treasurer; Peter Guadagni (Immediate Past President); Dawson Hughes – CEO; At-Large Directors: Sam Kraft (Breadbasket); Guy Davis (Colonies); C.J. Rushman (Great Lakes); Rob Heath (Northwest); Phyllis Quinn (Oceana); Nicole Christensen (South Central); Trey Taylor (Southeast); Jeff Commings (Southwest).					
Not present: Robin Smith - VP of Programs, Katie Kenyon (Legal Counsel).					
Guests: None.					

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM CT.

1. Welcome (Ed): Ed welcomed everyone to the Winter BOD retreat. The meeting will focus on USMS strategy as well as priorities for the national office staff and on building cohesiveness of the BOD.
2. Agenda review and declarations of conflict of interest (Ed): There were no changes to the agenda or conflicts of interest.
3. Approval of the January 21 meeting minutes and ratification of the Jan. 13 special BOD meeting minutes (Carrie): **MSA for approval of the Jan. 21, 2025 BOD meeting minutes.** Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously. MSA for ratification of the amended Jan. 13, 2025 special BOD meeting minutes.** Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Ice breaker (Nicole): Nicole led the BOD in a personality test exercise. Each BOD member took a 5-minute personality test and then met with like-minded BOD members. Ed will post the personality types and create a spreadsheet with the results.
5. Governance (Ed): 2025 Election:
 - a Ed introduced the governance education activity and asked the following questions before the BOD split into breakout groups for further discussion:
 - i How can we consistently build a stronger and competent BOD?
 - ii How should we recruit candidates for office? Currently it is an informal process where an outgoing member or a BOD member recruits future members.
 - iii What are 4 – 8 competencies/skills that all BOD members should have? The Governance Committee is creating a job description for BOD members and the competencies should be included in the job descriptions.
 - iv What type of structure is needed for a more formal recruitment process? It may not be in place for 2025 elections. The Election Committee's focus is to run the elections. They developed criteria about who can run for the BOD, expanding it beyond just a requirement of attending the annual meeting as it is very limiting – only about 400 people out of a 60,000 member organization have attended an annual meeting. Specific skills and personalities are needed for a well-functioning BOD. Expanding the requirements to LMSC BOD members, annual meeting participants or those that have served on a national committee could help. Creating job descriptions for BOD positions will also be beneficial, so those running for the BOD would know the skills required to be successful. Overall, the BOD supports the expansion of criteria. Peter and CJ: The BOD is as diverse as they have ever seen it. Certain positions like the Treasurer have a small pool of potential candidates due to the expertise needed.

Breakout session: Break into 2 groups to discuss the following questions.

Group 1: (Teddy, Julie, Dawson, Phyllis, Carrie, Nicole, Sam and CJ)

What makes board service attractive?

- Natural next step after LMSC service
- Values and mission of the organization
- Support swimming as a sport, belief in swimming.

Skills / competencies for board service?

- Prior board experience
- Need to come in WITHOUT an agenda.
- Ability to impartial
- Loyalty to USMS as an organization

Preferred characteristics: Strategic, quality communicator, diplomatic, respectful dissent, loyal

Best practices to consider:

- Board chair must have experience on the Board (i.e. President comes from within the Board)

- Independent directors [board experience from other organizations]
- Nominating committee

Parking Lot:

- Need for job descriptions for BOD
- HOD doesn't always understand what BOD members role is and what they are responsible for – need to provide more education.
- Overarching education on organizational and governance structure of USMS across membership wholistically
- Mission statement for the Board
- Look at overarching governance structure – committees, etc

Group 2: (Trey, Kenny, Crystie, Peter, Guy, Jeff, Rob, and Ed)

4-8 competencies/qualities for BOD members

- Willingness to serve.
- Forward thinking & open minded
- Adaptability to change.
- Broad knowledge of programs, services and experiences
- Big picture
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Strategic thinking

What should the criteria for BOD members be?

- The group likes the Elections Committee suggestion of the 3 criteria (new).

Carrie described the USA-Swimming Foundation process for selecting its board members.

BOD Discussion regarding Breakout Session:

1. We could combine the options: Find the required skill sets through the nominating committee and do a populist vote through the HOD.
2. Another option is that the delegates in the HOD elect the BOD members, then the BOD elects the positions. The chair would not be a new BOD member. Discussion continued about the logistics of how this framework would work. An example would be USA-Swimming, which elects its chair a year in advance.
3. One issue with finding candidates is the lack of exposure to the responsibilities of Board members. How do we build the framework to help educate members on what is an effective board and an effective board member?

4. Write a job descriptions for Board positions and share them in Streamlines.
5. Recruit your replacement (BOD members). Recruiting shouldn't be the president's role. Each BOD knows his/her role and what it takes. We should do 60% of the work, with the nominating committee doing the rest. We need to have a centralized place for this function.
6. Include this topic on the BOD agenda each month (recruiting).
7. VPs have a pool of candidates among the members of their committees.
8. How do we sell this job? Focus on the mission, vision, and love for the sport while making the volunteer experience attractive.
9. RECAP: The BOD agrees with the election criteria changes that were proposed by the Election Committee. We will look at changing the EOG at the next BOD meeting. The formalized structure will be that the BOD member(s) is the lead recruiter for his/her replacement. Efforts will then be shared in a centralized reporting method. Pull together messaging for BOD recruitment process and a shift to a more corporate approach.
10. The three EC members who are being termed out should be proactive in looking for their successors.
11. Potential candidates should be open to change and what is best for organization.
12. One on one conversations are helpful to get people interested.
13. One suggestion would be to have a BOD member attend every LMSC meeting to talk about BOD service. Logistics could be challenging to carry this out.
14. Ed will gather the ideas from the 2 breakout groups and put them in a document for everyone to pick the top 5 skills necessary for a potential BOD member and we will discuss them at a future BOD meeting.

6. CEO update (Dawson):

- a YTD results: Gary is wrapping up the 2024 financial statements. Current 2025 membership is 4% higher than last year. CCS membership is up 1.7% and GUS registration already stands at 50 (non-USMS members), all from Phoenix, whose first meet is today. Thirty league directors have signed for this year. Last year there were 18. Brian has developed a quality training program and will have 3-5 experienced league directors who will be regional training directors. All league directors must be SafeSport trained.
- b LaneMate had a soft launch in January, and are 8 LaneMate active subscribers (monthly subscriptions). 35-40 LaneMate participants utilized the trail membership. 160 USMS+ members have signed up for stroke analysis, but not all have necessarily initiated the process. Three coaches are set up to do stroke analysis right now. The feedback process is already in place for the stroke analysis.
- c USMS membership growth could be attributed to the year plus members and the Olympic year boom (25% increase in year plus members in 2024). The first year of automatic renewals could have also boosted the numbers. We still have 20,000 members

from last year that haven't renewed. Membership is trending to be over 60,000 for the year, above the budget of 59,200.

d In 2024 we held 455 events. In 2023, we held 430 events, and in 2022 we held 353 events. This averages to 9 events per LMSC. Forty-nine LMSCs had at least one yards event. The goal would be to have one in every course. LC meters meets are declining in number. Events are important as we know that if someone swims in a meet they are more than likely to renew their membership.

e Dawson shared the priorities for the national office:

- i Daily operations, service, marketing, and communications.
- ii Sanction process improvements.
- iii CCS integration (members of CCS get a USMS ID.) We need to bring the CCS registration process in-house so that members can get more access to USMS.
- iv GUS: Continue to grow with a goal of over 5000 registered swimmers.
- v LaneMate/Stroke Analysis: Scaling up.
- vi Digital Capabilities: Focus on the sanctioning process, build a timeline to sunset all legacy systems, work on the communication structure (including forwarding addresses).
- vii Club Development: Future plan.
- viii Support BOD/volunteer initiatives.
- ix Board comments: For updates, ask the question, "How will this impact our volunteers?" And, can AI help in any of the priorities?

f Sanction Improvements: (more detail)

- i There are 3 types: sanction and recognition, a calendar listing (more of a save the date if the full sanction process isn't complete), other events (like clinics and World Aquatics events)
- ii Designation of how times will be handled post-events: there will be branding on the event listing (i.e. what counts for top 10).
- iii Pool measurement database will be integrated into the system. Part of the sanctioning process.
- iv Events calendar will have marketing tools and search capabilities (launching soon)
- v No communication timeline yet with sanctions chairs. The communication process can start once the development process is underway.
- vi Pool measurement issue: USMS process is not aligned with USA-Swimming which results in confusion among event hosts.

g Kyle is hiring a marketing manager and has narrowed the list of candidates to 4-5 finalists.

h Line of communication: Discussion on what communication methods are used to communicate to volunteers. Community is the first choice/option and is timely. Content for Streamline for volunteers should be submitted a month ahead time. Current email system of email aliases is aging and experiencing issues.

7. Club Development: How to start a club.

a Dawson discussed the historical reasons that clubs were formed and more recent efforts to increase the number of clubs.

- b Teams report a greater number of swimmers than the actual USMS member number (62540 reported but 45080 members). The top 20% of clubs have 50+ members per club and 55% of members. 71% of members are in clubs.
- c Breakout exercise: (Start/grow USMS clubs)
 - i Group 1: (Teddy, Kenny, CJ, Nicole, Guy): You need the right coach in place. Need to give the coach an incentive to help recruit and grow membership. Potentially utilize triathlete coaches. Bring in a welcoming committee to plan socials and create goody bags. Put on clinics, advertise to the community and cover a portion of the dues for all new swimmers for a certain period of time. Offer multiple workouts at the facility. To grow a team: plan socials, pair mentors with new swimmers (lane buddies), utilize social media, incentivize the coach, sign up for events, bring a friend to practice, look for hidden coaches within your team.
 - ii Group 2: Crystie, Peter, Rob, Trey, Sam: They talked about efforts at a specific location, Antelope Valley. It is a sizable town with no masters teams in Southern California. The group talked about researching to find right facility. Potentially utilize some financial resources from USMS. Offer weekend clinics (before the first practice). The national office could help find area unattached swimmers and market to them. Recruit swimmers from clubs from nearby towns so that you have “bodies” in the pool for the first practices. Keep doing clinics/contacting swimmers, make sure the facility staff understands the program and draw in the LMSC. Offer free swag. Approach USAT and USA-S about improving public access to aquatic facilities.
 - iii Group 3: Julie, Carrie, Phyllis, Jeff, Ed: This group shared experiences from different teams/coaches/administrators. There are multiple ways to start clubs, but you need the right coach to thrive. Need an invested coach/administrator and an invested facility that wants to see your program thrive.
 - iv Dawson: How do we recruit/vet/place the right people? Create a job description. Initially consider utilizing guest coaches to see how they work/interact with masters swimmers. Run clinics (could be difficult if it is in a swim desert). Make sure the coach knows that it is up to him/her to make it a success. Pay. There are different prototypes of potential coaches- different profiles and different needs 1. Younger, interested in coaching. Mentor them. 2. Established masters swimmers who are empty nesters: Use them as subs and move them to full-time 3. Lifelong swimmer who is now retired and looking to fill time.
 - v Recap: Recruit coaches. If there is a pool that wants to start a program and needs a coach, potentially utilize the Coaches Committee to vet coaches. What is the financial risk tolerance of the BOD and how would USMS get paid back over time? Focus on an area of country where there is the best chance of success. Focus on 2-3 per year. Be willing to replace the coach if he/she isn't the right fit, but don't give up on the team. Significant admin is required to start a new club which can be daunting. The BOD has an appetite for a well-planned and well-time project and has some risk tolerance. Phyllis suggested an opportunity in Sacramento around nationals. Vision: Pick the right pools and find the lowest

hanging fruit. Talk to facilities about cost and structure of masters programs. Find the best opportunities.

8. Streamlining Rules, Regulations and Policy management
 - a Includes Bylaws, Rules/Regulations, Policy, Guides
 - b Can we develop a structure of what should be in the rule book, namely the rules of competition/open water and the bylaws of the corporation. Task committees to pull out processes from the rule book and put them in a document where they can be adjusted and flexible as needed. We are working to create a document that outlines what is a rule, policy or guideline or corporate bylaw? The document should be reviewed regularly/keep updated/monitor: this process would provide flexibility and agility.
 - c The goals are consistency and simplicity.
 - d Have Legislation, Long Distance and Rules weigh in on the document.
 - e We need to develop structure to make sure it is easy to find required information, not matter what document it is in.
 - f A test site will be created so that we can see how information will be stored with current materials.
 - g Define which entity is responsible for managing/updating, then a roadmap can be created for how it is presented on the website.
 - h Questions were asked about updating our bylaws, including whether we could/should bring in an outside expert to help overhaul our bylaws? This is an option, especially to help with project and change management.
9. LMSC Topics: Increase efficiency.
 - a Structure: what would the LMSC structure look like if it were created today? Also think about balancing what we have and what we have to have because of our rules/historical structure. Background information:
 - i Membership data: Average number of events per LMSC is 9. The range is 0-34.
 - ii Average number of members per LMSC is 1150. The range is 55-10203.
 - iii 25% of members participate in sanctioned meets. The average meet size is 70 swimmers.
 - iv In 2016 the peak membership was 65787. 16 LMSCs have peaked since the pandemic. 11 peaked in 2017-19, 9 peaked in 2016, 2 peaked in 1986-87.
 - v 11 LMSCs are 30% down since the peak. 16 are down 15-30%, 13 are down 0 – 15%.
 - vi Decline > .5% of membership: 11 LMSCs, 11,487 members, 12.1% of 2024 membership.
 - vii Breakout Groups and topics:
 - 1 Membership 1 (Ed, Phyllis, Rob, Trey):
 - a Some LMSCs incentivize around events.
 - b Clubs: Give incentives to clubs that hit membership goals.
 - c For larger LMSC membership drop-offs, offer help from the national office or other LMSCs.
 - d LMSC standards need to be met.

- e Lack of organization in an LMSC structure tends to affect membership growth.
- 2 Membership 2 (Julie, Carrie, Nicole):
 - a Incentivize clubs not LMSCs (if members are not required to be USMS members, how to incent them to be members?).
 - b Quality of experience
 - c The right people are key.
 - d Quality of experiences: need to have consistent member experience across the clubs/LMSC.
 - e Membership roller coaster numbers can be attributed to events: hosting nationals, fires in CA, pandemic rules, etc.
 - f Automate tracking of membership/renewal incentives: have a drawing for swag when renew. Any club that hits 100% renewal gets swag box.
- 3 Geography (Kenny, Sam, Crystie, Guy):
 - a Active club reported membership does not align with USMS membership numbers.
 - b Potentially merge LMSCs that are smaller.
 - c Make LMSC/zone boundaries rational with geography.
 - d Simplicity and effectiveness = LMSCs providing services to 800-1500 members at a minimum = more revenue, more volunteers, more resources and a more efficient operation.
- 4 Operations: (Peter, Teddy, Jeff, CJ):
 - a Systems are built based on the structure we had (snail mail and rule book) in the past, not technology.
 - b Membership Coordinators work has been automated.
 - c Top Ten coordinators have no discretionary work to do.
- 5 Potentially have one sanction/top ten coordinator per zone to load meet results and do sanctions. LMSCs could approve event dates. Rule book says sanctions must be approved by an authorized LMSC person, so have the LMSCs approve the zone coordinator. Have LMSCs opt in. This process would eliminate LMSC work, so it can focus on growth and events.
 - a Dawson: Have a few dedicated people do the sanctioning, etc. rather than one in each LMSC. Focus on events and services rather than something that can be automated.

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Discussion:

- 1 Event hosts will run meets correctly and we should trust their results. Train the local people.
- 2 Discussion on the accuracy of results, especially distance events. Make sure that the Hytek operator and meet director are well trained.
- 3 Potentially have 5 to 6 zone operating top ten chairs. One is lead for World Aquatics results.
- 4 Part of BOD communications should address restructuring/streamlining, including Top Ten and Sanction Coordinators

so that volunteer efforts can be focused on the local level. Can opt in now.
Establish the zone model and enable LMSCs to opt in.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:17 PM CT.

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM CT on Sunday 2/23/25.

1. Ed welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.
2. History and Archives (HA) Committee: Task forces have looked at how we use our committees and have defined volunteer roles. They have clarified what staff, individual contributors, and committees do. All the task forces felt that HA functions had run its course. The task forces looked at what the committee does and how it aligns with the mission of the organization. Other questions to be asked are, is the committee valuable to our membership or a significant portion of our membership? Is it of value to our organization and does it follow our mission? Should we sunset the committee and appoint a historian? The In Memoriam video is not within the mission and is a very resource intensive process, amounting to 1 hour a week of work for a volunteer all year. This job was inherited by the committee from an individual contributor. The work of the committee (power point slide) hasn't changed in last 10 years.
 - a. Questions: What resources do they need from the organization? Small amount. The committee held one meeting last year. It is not functioning as a committee. Oversight is the time spent (President, VP, National Office)
 - b. Can volunteers passionate about this pursue this on their own? The committee has added things to their task list that don't have strategic alignment. If the committee would be replaced by a historian, the volunteer position of historian would be appointed by the president. The description of this committee is in the bylaws, so it will need to be removed to sunset the committee. Chris Colburn has agreed to be the chair of the HA Committee for this year and coordinate move to historian structure. The committee members haven't been named yet.
 - c. USMS history is now automatically kept because of the way the organization functions—everything is online. The historian could make some content suggestions for Swimmer magazine and could create content and push out stories with historical context. The chair/committee should write the historian's job description of the historian. Strategically, what do we want to direct our history efforts toward? How do we strategically integrate our efforts? We value our history, but records, results, and content are more documented than ever before due to technology and the evolution of the organization. It is a legacy function. We need to ask the question of how do we consume history? Are we meeting those needs. With a historian, yes, we will.
 - d. History is important and so is assigning a historian. This path follows our strategic shift to have our volunteers focus on local efforts. We have the efficiencies of technology in our efforts to capture our history. **MSA for the BOD to submit legislation to sunset the**

History and Archives Committee effective 12/31/25. Further discussion: The BOD appreciates the timing/transition period. **The motion passed unanimously.**

- e. **MSA to recommend that the president create the position of and job description for historian and begin the search for a historian to supervise and coordinate volunteer history and legacy projects.** Further discussion by the BOD about the historian's job description. **The motion passed unanimously.**
3. NBR chair: The NBR chair is appointed by the BOD for 2-year term. Juliet Cox has served in this role and has asked to step down. Ed and Juliet have identified and vetted a new NBR Chair, Scott Fuller of the NC LMSC. He is an attorney and has agreed to serve in the role. The BOD must also approve the panel that has been asked to serve. (The list of panel members was shared with the BOD) All of those listed are willing to continue and are recommended by Juliet. The goal is to have one representative from each zone. Last year only one panel was formed. Juliet will chair the NBR through this month, and then Scott will become chair on March 1, if approved and Juliet will move to vice chair. This process has worked well in the past year. We have an average of .75 grievance per year but the number is growing. The new process that was developed last year is in place allowing for better responsiveness and communication, making things smoother. The NBR chair writes an annual report about its activity which is published in the annual meeting packet. Julie asked if the NBR panel members are vetted with background checks? Based on her experience with other NGBs, it would be a good idea.
 - a. **MSA: The BOD recommends approval of the NBR panel as presented.** Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**
 - b. **MSA: The recommendation of approval of Scott Fuller as NBR chair effective March 1 for a term of 2 years.** Discussion: Additional questions were asked about Scott's background. **The motion passed.** Trey abstained since he knows Scott personally.
4. BOD communications with the LMSCs/Zones: Each summer the BOD has calls with the Zones and LMSCs on relevant topics. They have appreciated the opportunity to give feedback to the BOD and all involved find it to be a valuable experience. The At-Large directors and BOD buddies will be teamed. The topics include finding future BOD members, the History and Archives Committee, and the rules policy document guidelines (if complete). The fee share/revenue/LMSC budgets discussion will be ongoing as the real impact will be seen in the next year or two. We will also be seeking feedback on LMSC standards project. A script will be developed and provided in advance. The calls, scheduled by the zone chairs, should be targeted for late June/early July and will hopefully be done before the summer BOD meeting. The National Office staff will be on the call to answer questions if needed. In the past, some groups invited more than just the zone and LMSC chairs.
5. Following this meeting a summary will be sent to USMS members, hopefully in early March.
6. Future BOD meetings: The May BOD meeting will be on Monday, May 19. The Summer BOD meeting will be on July 18-20 in Atlanta. The GUS meet starts on Friday night at 6 PM. We will be staying at AC hotel at Atlanta airport. The bus will leave for the meet at 3:30/4. BOD members

can fly in on Thursday if necessary, and the meeting should finish on Sunday by 11:30 AM. There will be a BOD offsite dinner on Saturday night.

7. For new BOD members, Peter will share the onboarding materials, including the 10 Basic Responsibilities of BODs, USMS policies, USMS financial overview, the training presentation (which is mostly financial), Dawson's summaries of major decisions and the most recent strategy document.
8. D&I: Jeff gave an overview of the most recent D&I Committee call, which included Kenny, Ed and Dawson. The committee will refocus on its strategic goals. Our mission is swimming, and inclusivity is part of that mission. We celebrate our diversity.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 AM CT.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Stolar, Secretary