



USLA Board Meeting
Teleconference
Thursday, January 18, 2018
5:30PM

Members Present: Mr. Dwight Bell, Mr. Terrance Burns, Mr. Don Simkin, Ms. Mary Ann Deignan, Ms. Erin Warren, Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Mr. Pete Gillwald.

Members Absent: Mr. Adam Berlew, Ms. Julia Clukey, Mr. Paul Baribault

Staff Present: Mr. Jim Leahy, Ms. Amy Chapin

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM by Mr. Bell

Mr. Bell welcomed everyone and commented that we are just 3 weeks out from the start of Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang. He went on to say that most of the work for these games is in place, but we, as a Board, must begin to move forward towards the next quadrennium. With that in mind he suggested further discussions after the Games discuss a potential succession plan with board elections in 2018.

Mr. Bell went on to express his appreciation to the athletes and staff for a great World Cup weekend in Lake Placid this past December that was very much enjoyed by many sponsors, families and board members in attendance.

Board Election 2018 – Mr. Dwight Bell

Mr. Bell addressed that a number of our Board members terms are up this fall. He was extremely happy with the work this Board has done in strategic planning, growing the budget and establishing much needed stability, but it is now time to turn our attention to the next four years. He stated that there are six Board seats that will be up for election, and his hope is that those members will strongly consider continuing to serve in their current capacity. The members whose terms are not up at this time are Mr. Berlew, Mr. Gillwald, Mr. Simkin, Ms. Clukey and Mr. Mortensen.

Mr. Bell expressed that he felt this is a good time for him to pass the baton to the next Board President. He discussed his plan to step aside after the Olympics Games and further discuss a succession plan at the next Board meeting scheduled for March.

He also addressed that the contract of Mr. Leahy is up this April and will need to be addressed by the Board.

He finished by thanking all for the hard work and stated that he is extremely proud of the work done by this Board and believes the building blocks are in place working towards 2022.

Mr. Leahy expressed it has been an honor to work with Mr. Bell and this entire Board over the last 4 years. Mr. Bell commented he is not going far and will still be involved and possibly at the international level.

CEO Report – Mr. Jim Leahy

Fall Elections – Mr. Leahy expressed that he hoped everyone on the Board would have an interest in continuing to serve.

Lake Placid World Cup – Mr. Leahy gave a recap of the World Cup & Gala in Lake Placid this past December. He stated that it was extremely successful event. Attendance was very good and he commended ORDA for the great job they did. NBC was pleased with the ratings the event had on the NBCSN broadcast.

He stated that Gala held on Saturday night was phenomenal. Over 450 people attended and again he thanked ORDA for their help with the event. A proclamation from Governor Coumo was read and a large number of local politicians were in attendance in their support of USA Luge.

A large number of our sponsors had representation at the Gala and USA Luge announced sponsorship renewals for the next four years with Norton/Saint Gobain, Team Worldwide and US Venture.

He finished by adding that Mr. Bell showcased the new Norton National Championship trophy, which was commissioned by the Board in memory of Frank Masley, to all the attendees with Frank's widow, Donna Masley, at his side.

SafeSport Update – Mr. Leahy updated the Board on the most recent work being done to ensure SafeSport compliance. He stated that he is working with outside counsel and the USOC to revamp our existing policies. The work has been completed and the revised policies have been submitted to the USOC for final approval.

In addition to this review, Ms. Amy Chapin reported that USA Luge recently submitted a minor on minor incident to the US Center for SafeSport according to the new SafeSport protocol. The Center is currently investigating. Ms. Chapin stated that this is a non-criminal matter and it is possible that it will come back to USA Luge to be handled in accordance with our Code of Conduct.

PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games Update – With the Games just three weeks away from Opening Ceremonies, Mr. Leahy updated the Board on the schedule for the team leading up to the Games and an overview of what we are doing differently from the Games in Sochi. He commended Sport Director Mark Grimmette who has worked tirelessly to ensure that all our athletes required needs will be met. And finally, we have worked with USA Bobsled/Skeleton to have Dr. Eugene Byrne, our team doctor, to be available for our athletes on the ground in Korea. Both federations are splitting the expense to have him at the Games.

HQ/Start Facility Update – Mr. Leahy gave an update on his conversations with Mike Pratt, CEO of ORDA. He stated that Northwood Engineering has recently been on site completing a survey of our property. It has been concluded that all of our needs can be handled at our current site. This facility will be a luge specific facility. We should see more progress on this project over the next several months. Our hope is to break ground late this spring.

Athlete Report – Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Matt Mortensen

Mr. Mortensen reported that the athletes are currently doing well in Norway, and there has been good consistent ice. He stated that some athletes are still doing some testing, but all are focused for the next couple of races so they are in a good seeded position for PyeongChang. Mr. Mazdzer added that the team is working toward putting their best foot forward during these Games.

Mr. Bell added that the entire organization is behind our athletes and that we are all cheering them on!

Club Report – Mr. Pete Gillwald, Mr. Don Simkin

Mr. Gillwald reported that had a great time attending the World Cup in Lake Placid. He wanted to thank all who made it successful.

Mr. Gillwald reported that the Wasatch club has begun collecting sliding fees using an iSquare and it has been working well for them.

The Jans Winter Welcome fundraiser went very well, and they probably raised 10K. They are looking forward to the announcement of the next round of grants that could potentially be available for the club. He went on to say that the club hopes to work with the Utah Olympic Park (UOP) to get better start houses at various points of the track. He was happy to hear that USLA is working with the FIL to acquire a Junior World race next year for Park City. This event may help in the UOP upgrading some of the junior facilities.

Finally he reported that the club is looking forward to hosting the Masters race and he wanted to commend Mr. Jon Owen for organizing the largest After School Program that the club has had in a long time.

Mr. Leahy confirmed that there will be a double Junior World Cup in Park City next year, the last week of November and the first week of December of 2018.

Eastern Region

Mr. Simkin added that the Lake Placid World Cup weekend was a wonderful success.

He also reported that Mr. Tony Shimkonis is doing a great job as the Adirondack Luge Club president. He said the club is doing a good job communicating with its members with newsletters. He said the club is working the Ice Breaker race as well as their participation in the Empire State Games scheduled for Feb. 3 and 4. He also added that the club held a major Try Luge event and even had reporters from the Washington Post who came out and gave it a try.

Natural Track – Mr. Simkin reported that on behalf of USLA we sent two athletes to Europe to train and race and they did very well and we can all be proud of how they competed.

New Business

Mr. Bell will reach out after Games to set up our March call and for now he asked everyone to sit back and enjoy the Games!

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35PM