



USLA / USLF Board Meeting
Whiteface Conference Room
Olympic Training Center, Lake Placid, NY
Saturday, November 2, 2019
9:00AM

Members/Trustees Present for USLA & USLF: Ms. Erin Warren, Mr. Pete Gillwald, Mr. Don Simkin, Ms. Nonnie Mannion, Mr. Ken Yonamura, Mr. Bob Hughes, Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Ms. Erin Hamlin, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Mr. Scott McIntyre

Members/Trustees Attending Via Phone: Mr. Adam Berlew, Mr. Ray Wierzbicki

Staff Present: Mr. Jim Leahy, Mr. Mark Grimmette, Ms. Amy Chapin, Ms. Brenna Payne

Call to Order – Ms. Erin Warren

The meeting was called to order at 9:10AM. Ms. Warren thanked everyone for finding time to attend this joint meeting of the Board of Directors and the Foundation Trustees.

Approval of Minutes from May 4, 2019 and August 29, 2019.

Ms. Warren asked for comments or corrections to the minutes and with none:

- Motion to Approve the Minutes of May 4, 2019 by Mr. Pete Gillwald, second by Mr. Don Simkin. Motion Passed.
- Motion to Approve the Minutes of August 29, 2019 by Ms. Nonnie Mannion, second by Mr. Chris Mazdzer. Motion Passed (Pete Gillwald abstained as he missed the meeting).

Introduction of New Board Members:

Ms. Warren was excited to introduced Mr. Ken Yonamura who replaces Mr. Pete Gillwald who is moving off the Board.

CEO Report: Mr. Jim Leahy

Mr. Leahy started by deferring to Mr. Mark Grimmette for his report.

High Performance Plan (HPP) – Mr. Mark Grimmette

Mr. Grimmette gave an overview of the following items as they relate to the HPP.

Recruitment - This past summer we saw approximately 600 kids at the Slider Search. We will continue to evaluate them at the Screening Camps this season.

We are working on developing a C Team Race-Off and the process for the Youth Olympic Games selection procedure.

North American Tracks Overview – With the Calgary track no longer operating and the Whistler track having a number of issues, pressure has been put on our tracks in Lake Placid and Park City for ice time for all the sliding sports. Additionally, he reported that Park City is having refrigeration and mechanical problems. He explained that this may not be an issue for the National Team but he expressed concerns about the run count for the Jr. National Team.

He also expressed a concern that the FIL needs to take a more active role in helping nations to keep existing tracks on-line. Mr. Mazdzer commented that the FIL is working with some tracks in an effort to address this.

Start Facility – We will have the opportunity to tour the building later today. Upon completion of the building we will need to complete some items that are outside the scope of the project (workshops, timing, warming up area).

Mr. Grimmette gave an overview of the summer training that our Teams used this past year with not having access to our start facility. He also gave an overview on the new equipment (sleds) that we are hoping to have the Jr. National Team on this season. The goal is to have a system in place to have National Team, Jr. National Team and Jr. C Team on similar equipment.

USOC - we are working with the USOPC on submitting a technical grant.

Equipment – We need to improve our construction methods and the amount of time it takes to get equipment to the athletes. The coaching staff visited Ricard Childress Racing (RCR) which is the #4 NASCAR team. We now have a relationship with them and they can assist us with technical issues.

The coaches are having weekly meetings, which Mr. Mazdzer is also present to represent the athletes.

Jr. Team Staff - Robert Fegg remains the Jr. National Team head coach, and we are happy to say that we have added Mr. Kaspars Dumpis as a Jr. National Team Coach. Keith Younger will continue as the Jr. Manager. Pat Anderson will head the Jr. C team with Bethany Bedford

assisting. Aidan Kelly remains working with the D team. Mr. Grimmerette stated that we are confident about the quality of our staff from top to bottom.

Some items that we need to focus on for the future:

- Track Sustainability
- Improved equipment production
- Coaching education
- SafeSport implications
- Steel testing

CEO Report – Mr. Jim Leahy

Mr. Leahy reported that he, Ms. Warren and Mr. Bell attended the FIL Executive Board meeting held in Washington DC. The USOPC assisted our efforts with a financial grant giving us significant time to network with the FIL Executive Board. During the meeting current President of the FIL, Josef Fendt will be stepping down in June 2020. It was discussed that Dwight Bell is in a position to elevate his current Board position to General Secretary. If this comes to pass his appointment will be good news for the sport. He also reported this season we are happy to be hosting world cups in the General and Jr. class. There is a changing of the guard in the FIL and our ultimate goal is to modernize the Federation.

Mr. Leahy stated that he will be attending a strategic planning session being hosted by the FIL. The plan is to develop a new strategic strategy for the sport and have the document presented to the national federations prior to the FIL Congress next June. Mr. Mazdzer commented that this strategic planning is long overdue.

Critical Issues – Mr. Leahy reported on the following critical issues.

- Canada – We have received notice from the Canadian Luge Association that the Calgary track operator Winsport will not be opening the track for the foreseeable future.
- Park City – Mechanical issues at the track – a portion of the track was fixed but as they fix some sections, they find problems with other sections. This has led to the cancellation of the Jr. World Cup that was to be in late November. We have notified some countries of this, but there will be financial implications. The UOP is prepared to make good on the amounts that countries have forfeited and have a multi-faceted plan for the long and short term. There are some other issues in Park City as the road construction at the track is behind schedule due to a lack of manpower for completion.
- Lake Placid World Cup – The World Cup in Lake Placid is scheduled for Thanksgiving weekend. The change in our normal mid-December dates is due to TV. NBC will show the women's final run live on the main network.

- Dow - There has been a Dow Dupont merger and while this won't give us more money, we will be looking at a new contract and are hopeful that there will be a cash component to the contract.
- With the assistance of Team Worldwide we have purchased a new Nissan van at a cost of \$35,000.

Mr. Leahy explained that we now undergo 4 different audits. We are audited by the USOPC to make sure the grant money we receive is being properly utilized. We are also audited by the USOPC to ensure a number of operational compliances that are needed to operate as a National Governing Body (NGB). Our third audit is by the Center for SafeSport. And last our own internal audit that is done by McSoley McCoy. Mr. Leahy noted that as a small staff the work requiring such compliance can sometimes be challenging.

Safe Sport – Ms. Amy Chapin

The US Center for SafeSport continues to evolve and require more recommended changes from the NGB's. The focus in 2019 has been the development of the MAAPP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies) and the implementation of this with the NGB's. This summer we had a SafeSport audit specifically geared toward the MAAPP. We are in the process of setting new policies at the track for adult members (athletes and officials) as required by the Center. We have gone on notice questioning the Center for the deadlines they impose and the length of time that it is taking for investigation of allegations.

Mr. Leahy and Ms. Warren noted this was a good time to discuss the needed change to the **USLA Whistleblower policy** as required by the USOC and the Center for SafeSport.

A Motion was made to approve the **Whistleblower Policy** by Mr. Mazdzer, seconded by Mr. Mortensen and passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued on the amount we pay toward the operation of the Center which is based on our operating revenue.

USLF Report – Mr. Ray Wierzbicki and Ms. Brenna Payne

Mr. Wierzbicki reported that the fund balance is \$1.5M which is comprised of the USOPC Endowment fund, Fidelity investments and our local NBT checking account. Our investments are up 13%. The Foundation through Brenna Payne, continues to reach our through multiple channels to raise the awareness of USA Luge.

Ms. Payne reported that the Crowdfunding program she devised for Jr. athletes has been successful. Twenty-nine (29) development athletes have utilized her preogram and raised approximately \$40,000 to use toward their training. She is also working on a similar page for Giving Tuesday that can be emailed and forwarded for added effect. Ms. Payne addressed how

the Giving Tuesday event would work and that it might be more successful if targeting funds to a single item such as performance enhancing items, i.e. a video system for the new building. This campaign can be a single day, or can use Giving Tuesday to kick off a campaign, which is likely what we will do.

There was additional discussion of potential options for investments and fundraising as well as fundraising for the Foundation vs. for USA Luge as well as various vehicles for donations – such as email or Venmo. The fact that we are not able to accept Equities is a missed opportunity for us. Mr. McIntyre offered to further investigate a way in which we could do this.

Athlete Report: Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Ms. Erin Hamlin

Mr. Mazdzer reported on the current state of the Athletes saying that overall, we have done a good job at the Development level, something that he is excited about. The National Team is currently preparing for the World Cup season which is difficult without office/workshop and feels some athletes are sensing frustration. He stated that we do have a small but solid team and the addition of a Chef at some or most locations has been very positive.

Mr. Mazdzer reported that they have been working on a new doubles sled, which he is very excited about. On the Junior level Dana Kellogg and Duncan Segger are sliding well and the coaching staff is also putting more teams together so that we should be able to compete at all team events. He commented that with our bigger pipeline and more of the right resources our transition has been good the past few years.

AAC – Mr. Matt Mortensen

Mr. Mortensen reported that there isn't a great deal going on right now that impacts us directly. The AAC is still deciding if they want to become an independent entity, allowing them to raise their own funds. The new Athlete Services Division at the USOPC is one reason not to jump into the independent formation.

Ms. Erin Hamlin explained the Rule 40, which is an IOC rule, that controls what athletes are able to do in terms of self-promotion. Athletes are now able to thank personal sponsors. They are still not able to use sponsor marks, but can use "generic marks." There is an ambush clause that requires that this is done in advance to protect all parties involved.

The new USOPC Maternity Policy goes into effect January 1, 2020 and now extends stipends and EAHI to athletes who have a baby. USOPC's ACE program now has many resources available for current athletes and not just athletes transitioning out of the sport. There is also an Athlete Services App making access ever easier.

The USOPC has an Athletes First Mentality with the focus on mental health and transitions. This is also an IOC initiative and there will be a workshop on this at the Jr. Worlds this year.

Club Reports: Mr. Don Simkin, Mr. Pete Gillwald

ALC – Adirondack Luge Club, Mr. Don Simkin reported that the club schedule is set. They are looking to increase the amount of time for the Try Luge program for both young and old! Regarding SafeSport compliance, the club is looking for clarification regarding what is required so that they can require that of their members.

WLC – Wasatch Luge Club, Mr. Pete Gillwald reported that Ken Yonamura is now the club representative to the USLA Board. The club is working on an initiative for Juniors on social media. They held local contest for the Jr. World Cup poster. At the annual fundraiser Jan's Winter Welcome, they raised between \$12,000 – \$15,000 which will be given back to the club. The club is donating \$15,000 to the track to be used for kids programs and also upgrades to the Jr. start house. They have also donated \$5,000 to USA Luge.

The Back to Luge night was well attended and they have certified 6 new officials in Park City. As always, they participated in the 4th of July Parade paddling wheeled sleds down Main Street.

Mr. Gillwald gave his personal thanks for 4 years on this great board.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08PM to depart for a tour of the Luge Facility. The Board will convene for the Annual Assembly meeting at 2:00PM.