



USLA / USLF Board Meeting  
Whiteface Conference Room  
Olympic Training Center, Lake Placid, NY  
Saturday, September 29, 2018  
9:00AM

Members/Trustees Present for USLA & USLF: Ms. Erin Warren, Mr. Pete Gillwald, Mr. Don Simkin, Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Ms. Julia Clukey, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Mr. Adam Berlew, Mr. Paul Baribault, Mr. Bob Pokelwaldt, Mr. Ray Wierzbicki, Ms. Arlene Graime

Members/Trustees Absent: Mr. Scott Arnold, Ms. Janine Musholt

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

Also attending at the request of the President the three new USLA Board nominees: Ms. Nonie Manion, Mr. Scott McIntyre, Mr. Bob Hughes

**Call to Order** – Ms. Erin Warren

The meeting was called to order at 9:05AM. 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 the August 29, 2018.**

Ms. Warren asked for comments or corrections to the August 29 minutes and with none:

- Motion to Approve the Minutes by Mr. Don Simkin, second by Mr. Bob Pokelwaldt.  
Motion Passed (Pete Gillwald abstained as he missed the meeting).

**Introduction of New Board Members:**

Ms. Warren introduced to the USLA Board and the USLF Trustees the three nominees selected to replace the open seats vacated with the departures of Mr. Dwight Bell, Ms. Mary Ann Deignan and Mr. Terrence Burns. She stated that their names have been put up for election for the open seats and that their approval to the Board will take place at the USLA Annual Meeting taking place later today.

She thanked all three for their willingness to serve the Association and gave each nominees the opportunity to address the group.

Nominee Ms. Nonie Manion – Current Acting Commissioner for the Department of Tax and Finance for the State of New York.

Nominee Mr. Bob Hughes – Retired. Former Partner at Carr Hughes Production.

Nominee Mr. Scott McIntyre – Retired. Former Senior Executive at Oracle and Google.

After each Nominee gave a brief talk, the entire group applauded their willingness to serve USA Luge.

**CEO Report:** Mr. Jim Leahy

Mr. Leahy first thanked the Board for their faith in him as he is celebrating his 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the CEO this month. He briefly addressed the successes the Association has seen over the last several years and looks forward to continuing success as we plan for Beijing in 2022.

Mr. Leahy continued his report by discussing the Year End Financials for 2017-2018 ending on August 31 presented to the Board prior to this meeting. He discussed that the shortfall for the current year end financials were mainly due to higher expense on the National Teams fall and winter trips, in part due to the fluctuations of the euro against the dollar, and the significantly higher expenses incurred at the Olympic Games in PyeongChang.

Mr. Leahy continued his report by giving the group an update on the new building project and discussing how USA Luge was utilizing our sponsors CertainTeed and Dow to work with ORDA and Northwoods Engineering to utilize their interest in providing value in kind products to better enhance the overall financial picture. He did discuss some concerns with the \$5M capital budgets as the price of steel in the last several months have increased significantly. He stated that he is working with ORDA to finalize a timeline with regards to the RFP NYS process soon to be undertaken by ORDA.

**High Performance Plan (HPP)** – Mr. Mark Grimmette

Mr. Grimmette discussed in length the new high performance plan that USA Luge has put in place with USOC funding. He highlighted that the plan is to begin to place a major emphasis on development. The plan will include a significant increase in run production for the Junior National Team and the various developmental teams. The plan also focuses on improving our coaching ranks.

Mr. Grimmette continued to overview the group about the upcoming season's team staff and the operational plan for National Team, Jr. National Team, Jr. C and D Teams.

### Marketing – Mr. Gordy Sheer

Mr. Sheer Gordy stated that from a marketing position the job the team did in PyeongChang has once again raised the level of awareness for USA Luge. He specifically mentioned Chris Mazdzer's silver medal and Erin Hamlin carrying the USA flag in the opening ceremonies as creating increased traffic over traditional and digital platforms. USA Luge was able to capitalize on that success by the athlete's very busy off-season visiting numerous sponsors and doing appearances on behalf of the association.

He stated that USA Luge had re-signed 3 of 4 major sponsors at the announcement of the Olympic Team, and that other sponsors have recently renewed. He was proud to announce that our organization has a history of long sponsor tenure which speaks volumes to our athletes and staff.

TV Programming – Mr. Sheer discussed the overall opportunity with NBC Sports and the FIL. He stated that NBCSN will cover all our upcoming races this season (except Oberhof), and that the Olympic Channel will live stream all our races with a tape delay via NBCSN.

White Castle Slider Search – Mr. Sheer gave an overview of the success we had this past off season with our White Castle Slider search. The tour, conducted by Olympian and C team coach Aidan Kelly, visited numerous cities and attracted over 800 participants.

Luge Challenge – Mr. Sheer gave a brief overview of this on-snow event that encourages young skiers to try luge. He announced that he was finalizing plans to work with the Green Bay Packers and run a recruitment program at Lambeau Field on Feb 16 & 17, 2019. He will be working with our current sponsor US Venture that is locally based in the Green Bay area.

He finished his report with a brief overview of the events being planned for the FIL Veissmann World Cup that will take place in Lake Placid on Dec. 15 & 16, 2018.

### Safe Sport – Ms. Amy Chapin

Ms. Chapin gave a brief report on the Center for Safe Sport and the requirements imposed on all National Governing Bodies. She said that we will continue to be very diligent to ensure that USA Luge remains in complete compliance with the ever changing requirements coming from the Center.

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

Mr. Wierzbicki gave a report on the current value of the funds in the US Olympic Endowment Fund, the Fidelity account and the NBT Bank account. He discussed the volatility within the

market that had some impact on the US Olympic Endowment account that host the majority of the Foundations funds.

He expressed his sincere thanks to Ms. Brenna Payne for the job she is doing to elevate the awareness of USA Luge and the mission of the Foundation and congratulated her for her efforts in the last year.

At this time Mr. Wierzbicki yielded to floor to allow Ms. Payne to discuss the most recent fundraising event.

Ms. Payne began by thanking the organization for all the help and support she has received over the year. At this time she gave an overview of the most recent fundraising event that she and Mr. Wierzbicki coordinated on Thursday, September 27 in New York City. It was well attended and she thanked Chris Mazdzer, Tucker West, Summer Britcher, Emily Sweeney, Erin Warren, Arlene Graime, Gordy Sheer, Jim Leahy and Ray Wierzbicki for their attendance and interaction with all attendees.

At this time Ms. Payne outlined some upcoming initiatives that she will focus her attention on, i.e., Alumni programs, Giving Tuesday, fundraising activities around the December World Cup in Lake Placid, and possibly enhancing the Masters event to leverage more involvement of former sliders.

### **Athlete Report:**

Mr. Chris Mazdzer reported that the team is headed to Lillehammer for their first training of the season immediately after this meeting. He said it was a very busy off season for him and the team but stated that all athletes worked hard with their off season training. He finished by stating that he was extremely excited by the direction of USA Luge to provide considerable funding for our Junior National Team.

Ms. Julia Clukey reported on a number of issues being addressed at the AAC including the Center for Safe Sport and the ongoing investigation by WADA of the Russian doping issues.

Ms. Clukey finished her report by telling the Board that she has taken a major leadership position with the AAC and will be unable to maintain an NGB board position. She stated that her intention is to work with Amy Chapin to send a letter to AAC eligible luge athletes to seek a replacement. Once this is completed Ms. Clukey will inform the Board of the change.

Mr. Matt Mortensen reported that as an AAC representative the group was able to secure equal Op Gold Money for the Para Olympic Athletes. He believed this is a positive step undertaken by the USOC. He also reported that at the most recent General Assembly Julia, Jim Leahy and he spent some time with the USOC new CEO discussing her new role and challenges.

## **Club Reports**

Mr. Don Simkin reported that the Adirondack Luge club and its president, Tony Shimkonis, is working with trainers and other volunteers to work with club athletes with the hope and encouragement to push them to make the development team at USA Luge.

With regards to Safe Sport he reported that there is a push and desire on the part of the clubs to be compliant. The Club will require coaches to take the Safe Sport modules as well as pass a certified background check.

Mr. Pete Gillwald reported that the Wasatch Luge Club continues to conduct fundraisers. He was happy to see that the club assisted in the recent Slider Search event held in Salt Lake City.

He also reported that the club is hosting an Officials refresher course in conjunction with USA Luge in November in the hopes of certifying some new officials. He was also happy to report that he has been selected to be the Race Director for the upcoming Junior National World Cup this December in Park City. In addition, the Wasatch Luge Club is looking forward to working with USA Luge for Junior Nationals in Park City in March.

## **New Business**

Mr. Chris Mazdzer stated that the FIL World Cup calendar was not complete for the 2019-2020. He suggested that USA Luge seriously consider bringing two World Cups to the US ---a World Cup to Lake Placid and a World Cup to Park City in the 2019-2020 season.

Mr. Leahy agreed with Mr. Mazdzer that hosting two World Cups on US soil is good for the program. He did state that hosting two World Cups at home comes at a considerable expense to the organization as TV production, at a cost of approximately \$200k per event, is mandated by the FIL.

Mr. Leahy told the Board that he will work with various stakeholders (ORDA, UOP, FIL, USOC and NBC) and determine the likelihood of hosting two World Cups next season on US soil.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:18pm