



**USLA / USLF Board Meeting  
Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> 2019  
In-Person  
Olympic Sports Park, Park City, UT**

**MINUTES**

Members Present: Ms. Erin Warren, Ms. Nonie Manion, Mr. Don Simkin, Mr. Bob Hughes, Mr. Pete Gillwald, Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Scott McIntyre, Mr. Matthew Mortensen, Mr. Adam Berlew, Mr. Ray Wierzbicki USLFF

Members Absent: Mr. Paul Baribault,

Staff Present: Mr. Jim Leahy, Mr. Mark Grimmette, Mr. Jon Owen

Call To Order: 9:04AM Ms. Erin Warren calls meeting to order

**Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2019 Meeting:**

Mr. Don Simkin moves, second by Mr. Adam Berlew, unanimously approved.

**President's Opening Comments:** Ms. Warren outlined meeting goals including growth of the organization plus an update on the building of the new office. Noted was success of the teams coming off a solid High Performance plan that was implemented. Focus for meeting to be sport performance, and to maximize the investment in the building.

**USLF Report:** Mr. Ray Wierzbicki gave an update on the financials and investments of the USLFF. He stated that the growth was flat in 2018. Fundraising event in NYC was success, raising about \$7500. Mr. Wierzbicki thanked the athletes for their support at the event. Strategy on fundraising events needs to be fine-tuned. He addressed the Board on Ms. Brenna Payne, Director of Fundraising for the USLF, efforts via a newsletter survey which provided information on what people want to hear about, the need for hosts for fund raising events and use of the newsletter for revenue generation. He also stressed the need to engage board members to help bring people to USLFF who may donate. He also discussed the possible use of the transfer of equities as a fund raising vehicle. He finished his report with a deep appreciation for all the work done by Bob Pokelwaldt who recently passed away.

**Welcome:** Mr. Jim Leahy introduced Mr. Colin Hilton, CEO Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation (UOLF) as well as Mr. Callum Clark the new CFO for UOLF. Mr. Hilton gave an overview of the events that were hosted in the Salt Lake area this past winter including World Speed Skating Championships, Snowboarding and Biathlon World Cup. He stated that the Utah Olympic Foundation (UOF) oversees three Olympic venues, the

Utah Olympic Oval, Utah Olympic Park and the Nordic Center. He also detailed the entry level programs they host at the various venues. He credited Mr. Jon Owen for his work involving local athletes in luge entry programs. Mr. Hilton then gave a visual presentation on the state of the UOLF including details on the long-term financial history and future forecasts. Questions and a discussion on collaboration with other entities (NGB's, IOC, USOC, etc.) ensued.

Mr. Hilton then detailed the UOLF's efforts to build athlete housing at Utah Olympic Park. The building is under construction and is planned to open in September of 2019. The new facility will have 144 beds and will include workforce housing and year round apartment housing for athletes. Costs will be low for the region and are currently planned at \$450-\$850/month furnished including utilities. Short-term housing will be \$40-\$60 per night. The new facility is on the road into Utah Olympic Park. He further stated that the construction of this new housing facility is currently on-time and under budget and is planned to be operated on an income neutral basis.

Mr. Hilton discussed track repairs and upgrades detailing the upgrades needed on the refrigeration system plus repairing the retaining walls along the track. He also discussed that the water distribution system will be replaced in sections over the next few years.

**Boardspan Presentation:** Ms. Abby Adlerman, CEO of Boardspan gave a presentation on the results of the recent NGB Executive Board performance survey covering governance. Every NGB was surveyed and expenses were paid by the USOC. USA Luge's assessment results were then discussed as well as comparisons to other NGB's (full survey results had been distributed to the USA Luge Board prior to this meeting and are on file). USA Luge results were above the NGB averages in virtually all categories and in fact USA Luge was the highest rated NGB in this survey. Both the strengths and the weaknesses of the organization were discussed in detailed. Crisis management was our lowest rated area and a long discussion on that topic followed. A Management Succession Plan was discussed for both planned and unplanned succession scenarios as well as best practice functions. Ms. Adlerman then went into key considerations for long-term board success. She discussed possible board training program which is under consideration by the USOC for NGB use.

**CEO Report:** Mr. Jim Leahy opened with a new office update including the move to the temporary headquarters we well as the history of the project. He reported that the start track was shut off on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Construction is being managed by Gilbane and funded through ORDA with the New York State funding that was promised back in May of 2016. He stated that the project is currently ahead of schedule with concrete work planned by the end of May and steel work by the end of June. Mr. Leahy credited Mr. Gordy Sheer's work in gaining in-kind donations towards to the project with great effect. He stated the projected move-in date is November 2019. He finished the update by mentioning the favorable relationship with the town and their assistance with renting temporary space for the office staff and ORDA's cooperation on the project in general.

Mr. Leahy then discussed the current financial documents which were circulated to the board prior to the meeting. He stated that we are still on budget but stressed that we still face additional expenses in athlete travel and training to replace the start training elsewhere since our building is now closed.

He briefly addressed the potential need in the future to add administrative staff to support the new influx of coaches. The entire admin staff is just 2 people and the possibility of one leaving at some point is real. Mr. Leahy complimented the dedication of the staff but staff burn out is a concern.

On Safe Sport Mr. Leahy discussed the substantial additional work being required by Safe Sport to stay compliant. Currently USA Luge has one case being adjudicated with the Center for Safe Sport and a resolution is expected within the next 30 days. On this case USA Luge has taken all the appropriate steps in a timely manner and the final decision will be made by the Center for Safe Sport. He stated that the newest compliance issue is that all athletes over the age of 18 will have to be Safe Sport compliant.

At this point Ms. Erin Hamlin and Mr. Matt Mortensen discussed using senior athletes to help facilitate both Safe Sport and social media issues with younger athletes. They also suggested upgrading the code of conduct to help address these issues. A Board discussion morphed into how to better use senior athletes in mentoring junior athletes and to possibly involve senior athletes in educating junior athletes in Safe Sport compliance.

Mr. Leahy discussed the two World Cups coming to the U.S. The Senior World Cup will take place in Lake Placid the weekend of November 30<sup>th</sup>. This event will air live on NBC. The second is a Junior World Cup in Park City slated for November 21-22.

Mr. Leahy closed with comments on our relationship with the FIL and international issues. The focus was on the closing of the Calgary track and its implications to our existing and future programs.

A working lunch was then served.

**Sports Performance Update:** Mr. Mark Grimmette opened with a results recap noting Emily Sweeney's 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish at the World Championships and Summer Britcher's 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in FIL World Cup standings. He then detailed other athlete results. In Juniors Ashley Farquharson's 4<sup>th</sup> at the Junior World's highlighted overall strong results team wide across the season. He further stated the hiring of Robert Fegg as head coach and significantly increasing the run count for our athletes are all part of our increasing emphasis on developing a stronger performing JNT program.

He discussed, as part of our high performance plan, the JNT will start again this upcoming season with summer long training as the USOC once again is allowing the Training Center use for these types of programs.

He addressed with the Board how the high performance plan, and the increase funding that goes with it, establishes certain milestones we need to achieve via performance. He further discussed the staff changes made this season that definitely improved overall performance for our SNT and JNT programs, but did discuss the needs in the future for additional funding to bring in more coaches and trainers for our Jr. C and D development programs.

A long discussion on run count and the possibility to use new data techniques to increase the efficiency of training ensued with Mr. Adam Berlew inquiring and providing additional thoughts.

Mr. Grimmette finished with a brief overview of his recent meetings in Europe as a member of the FIL Sport Commission.

**Athlete Report:** Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Ms. Erin Hamlin  
Mr. Mazdzer opened with comments on the overall success of the Jr. National Team and commented on the big positive change in that program. On the Sr. National Team he commented that although this year's team was small team they were very well supported.

Mr. Mazdzer brought up two topics for discussion:

- 1) Athlete retirement: How to keep retired athletes engaged with the luge program.
- 2) Athlete relationship in the technology development process.

A lengthy discussion on these topics was addressed with comments from all in attendance.

Mr. Matt Mortensen addressed the Board on his role with the Athlete Advisory Council (AAC). Mr. Mortensen discussed athlete involvement at the USOC and talked about the progress being made.

Ms. Erin Hamlin mentioned that at the USOC level the AAC has discussed the numerous athlete problems experienced at various NGB's. She was happy to report that many of those issues are not present at USA Luge and commented on the good relationship the athletes have with the Association.

**Club Report:** Mr. Pete Gillwald, Mr. Don Simkin.

Mr. Simkin reported that communication within the Adirondack Luge Club (ALC) has been very good. He stated that the club has been active and efforts to recruit new sliders over the season improved markedly. He reported that the trip to Sochi, coordinated with USA Luge, to meet with Russian Luge Club officials went very well. He addressed that Club elections have been held and that the Club hosted a Lake Placid track workers appreciation event which was well received. He finished his report by saying the Club is buying a few new sleds from Latvia.

Mr. Gillwald addressed the happenings at the Wasatch Valley Luge Club. The Spring meeting will be next week and will include elections. He discussed the final tally from the Clubs fundraising efforts reached an impressive \$26,000 of which \$15,000 will be

returned to help athlete families. Mr. Gillwald was also grateful to all the parents that came out to help with the Jr. National Championships that took place in Park City

At this time Mr. Leahy thanked Mr. Gillwald for his service to the USA Luge Board. It was noted that his position on the Board terms out at the Annual Members Meeting in the Fall. A round of applause from the Board ensued.

**Elections:** Mr. Bob Hughes

Mr. Hughes addressed some potential reviews of the Election portion of the USA Luge bylaws. By acclamation of the Board, Mr. Hughes was asked to suggest, if necessary, any potential by-law changes in this area and report back at our next in-person meeting.

**USLA Strategic Discussion:** Ms. Erin Warren

Ms. Warren outlined her thoughts on some key strategic issues that will warrant further Board discussion for the health and wellness of the sports:

- How can the Board support the High Performance Plan
- Can we as a Board help with additional partners to better our technology development
- What resources can we tap into to better utilize Board contacts for the new building project.
- The development of succession planning both long term and short term.
- SafeSport compliance.
- Development of a crisis press plan.
- Onboarding new Board members.

Ms. Warren then sought Board volunteers to oversee specific tasks:

- Ms. Erin Hamlin agreed to address building a plan to discuss Safe Sport and social media with JNT athletes.
- Ms. Nonie Manion agreed to help with State funding.
- Mr. Scott McIntyre agreed to assist with staffing and succession issues

**New Business:** No new business was proposed as most new business items had already been addressed during the Board meeting.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:45PM

Mr. Simkin moved, Mr. Berlew seconded and voted unanimously.