A. Call to Order, Introductory Remarks

The USATT Board of Directors meeting in Baltimore, Maryland was called to order at 9:02 am ET on March 28, 2015 by Mr. Peter Scudner, Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Jim Kahler will continue to serve as Board member until a new independent director is found. Candidates for this position are being identified.

B. Roll Call, Quorum Established, Conflict of Interest Statements

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established. A routine call for conflicts of interest was made and there were no conflicts reported.

Members present:

Peter Scudner, Chairman of the Board (COB)  
Mike Babuin, At-Large Director (joined meeting at 9:46 am)  
Anne Cribbs, Independent Director  
Larry Hodges, At-Large Director  
Ed Hogshead, Club Representative Director  
Kagin Lee, National Organization Director  
Jim Kahler, Independent Director  
Han Xiao, Athletic Director  

Also in attendance:

Gordon Kaye, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Dennis Taylor, Secretary & General Counsel  
Carl Danner, Foundation Representative  
Lee Kondo, Assistant Secretary

C. Approval of January 21, 2015 and March 5, 2015 Minutes

The COB requested that the minutes from the January and March meetings be reviewed, discussed and approved.
MOTION 1: MOVED to approve the Minutes from both the January 21, 2015 and March 5, 2015 meetings as amended.

Movant: Kagin Lee
Second: Anne Cribbs

Discussion: Proposed amendments to the minutes were discussed and agreed upon.

The motion passed unanimously 6:0:0.

D. Legal Update (Dennis) - Executive Session

The Board went to Executive Session at 9:20 am for a legal briefing. No minutes are taken at Executive Sessions.

Mr. Babuin joined the meeting at 9:46 am.

The Board resumed Open Session at 10:15 am.

E. Committee Assignments

The COB suggested that the Board address Committee Chair position openings. Chairs are needed for the Nominating and Governance (NGC), Umpires and Referees (URC), and Seniors Committees. The COB noted the Board's agreement to table consideration of the appointment of Chairs for the Nominating and Governance and Seniors Committees until the Board's meeting in April or May respectively. Candidates for these positions will be approached and identified.

The COB stated that both Mr. Joseph Yick and Mr. Roman Tinyszin applied for the URC Chair position. He inquired whether anyone wished to present a motion.

MOTION 2: MOVED that Mr. Joseph Yick be appointed as Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) Chair.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Han Xiao

Discussion: Mr. Hodges and Mr. Danner discussed the question of whether term limits should be applied to this position. The COB inquired whether Mr. Yick had any administrative experience. It was noted that Mr. Yick possessed 15 years of company
management experience, which was applicable to this position. Mr. Lee said that the URC Chair would be responsible for scheduling and assigning of officials for major tournaments.

The ORAC Chair’s responsibilities were then discussed. Mr. Danner said that the URC Chair could learn the various aspects of the URC Chair position responsibilities from the ORAC Chair and Mr. Dillon.

The COB requested a roll call vote.

The motion passed 4:1:2.

In Favor: Mr. Hodges, Mr. Xiao, Ms. Cribbs, Mr. Scudner
Against: Mr. Babuin
Abstaining: Mr. Lee, Mr. Hogshead

The CEO will inform Mr. Tinszyin and Mr. Yick of the Board's decision. The Board then discussed that the ORAC Sub-committee operated to select officials for tournaments. The URC could establish a similar sub-committee, with the URC's ratification of the sub-committee's decision. Alternatively, if a separate committee were formed for selection of officials, then an athlete representative will be required. The COB noted that the URC Chair must submit a list of nominees to the Board for selection. Subsequently, the URC Chair possesses the flexibility to organize his committee (e.g., formation of sub-committee) to best meet the committee's responsibilities.

The COB said that the Board may consider nominations for several committees at the same time as a group. However, if a Board member wishes to have separate discussion on a particular committee, then that committee will be removed from the group prior to voting. The Board then will vote on members for the remaining committees with their single vote as a group. The Ethics and Grievance Committee will have a Chair and three other members--a fifth member may be added later. The Compensation Committee will remain as comprising 3 members.

The Rules, Clubs, High Performance, and Nominating and Governance Committees were removed from present consideration. A list of athlete candidates for the committee member positions will be compiled then distributed to Board members.

**MOTION 3:** MOVED that the Board approve the listed committee members on the attached document for the following committees: Rules, Tournaments, Leagues, Juniors, and Ethics and Grievance.
Movant: Ed Hogshead  
Second: Kagin Lee

Discussion: In April, the Board intends to vote on committee members for the following six committees: Umpires and Referees, Clubs, Hard Bat, Marketing, Nominating and Governance, and High Performance. See Attachment for approved committee member list.

**The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-0.**

Regarding Mr. Bassetti’s recommendations for coaching, no motion was made, and the issue was tabled to the April meeting. The CEO asked whether the purpose was to develop high level coaches or high level standards. Mr. Hodges replied that both are important. The CEO will request that Mr. Bassetti send coach resumes to Board members and also define the Coaching Committee’s purpose.

The meeting was recessed at 10:52 am.

The meeting was reconvened at 11:02 am.


The CEO described the process by which the financial statements are created by USATT’s accountant, CEO, staff, and auditor. The 990 form was discussed. Mr. Hogshead suggested that the Audit Committee should review this procedure. The CEO noted a budget shortfall of about $50,000 at the end of the first quarter. However, with addition of several revenue-generating programs (e.g., Associate membership category, fundraising, online store), the CEO said that this shortfall should be a temporary one.

The CEO will continue to provide monthly financial statements to the Board, and he will send Board members an audit summary and a membership report. The CEO entered into a contractual two year extension on NATT’s contract, with some monetary savings.

The CEO requested that the Board consider two funding requests. First, he requested $1100 to purchase a phone system to replace the current outdated one. Second, he requested $2500 to purchase USATT-owned show court barriers for the two main feature courts at the U.S. Open and Nationals. He proposed that USATT would purchase court barriers and sell decals to sponsors for advertising purposes. These decals then would be affixed to the barriers which would be stored in Colorado Springs.
Mr. Babuin left the meeting at 11:15 am.

MOTION 4: MOVED that the Board authorizes that the CEO be given funds for the purpose of purchasing phone equipment and barriers.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Anne Cribbs

Discussion: In response to Ms. Cribb's question regarding the phone system, the CEO said that USOC volleyball now functions as USATT’s technical support system. It was clarified that the CEO does have the authority to make this funding decision. With the purchase of USATT-owned barriers, USATT can then control the sale of advertising on them. Mr. Lee argued that foamboard show court barriers are fragile and intended for one-time use, and should not be considered a capital expenditure. The CEO stated that the show court barriers owned by NATT have been used for multiple tournaments.

The motion was passed 6:1:0.

G. Regional Association Task Force

Mr. Hodges noted that 50 to 60 regions initially may be formed throughout the United States. He recommended providing regions with guidelines for creation of their bylaws and soliciting leaders for these regions. Mr. Hodges wishes to start with establishment of state championship tournaments nationwide, then add regional championship events. The CEO commented that a state championship event can become a valuable commodity to a state organization.

The COB envisioned regional associations as being subsets of the USATT, with a tactical challenge being how to structure them. The CEO noted that the U.S. Tennis Association may provide an alternative model structure, where the regions may remain independent but instead are more loosely affiliated with USATT. The COB suggested using U.S. Triathlon as a model for USATT, whereby regional "councils" are created as sub-sets of U.S. Triathlon. Both USATT branding and a link to the USATT membership are important. The term "council" would emphasize that it exists as a sub-set of the USATT parent organization. The COB prefers "council" nomenclature to the term "association." The COB envisioned that councils in various states (e.g., California, Maryland) would be run under USATT's banner, providing unity to the organization structure.
Mr. Hodges said that establishment of team leagues throughout the country, such as the Los Angeles Table Tennis Federation (LATTF), may encourage USATT membership to grow significantly. Germany was cited as a good example of successful establishment of leagues, where there are 600,000 members. The longest drive to German matches was 30 minutes. Local German sponsors were sources of funding for the leagues. He suggested sending a USATT representative to start leagues in regions nationwide.

Mr. Danner noted that with creation of leagues, top players may have the incentive to play more often, particularly if league-play counts towards meeting participation requirements. In part, this might encourage players who would not otherwise play (e.g., after the U.S. Trials) to compete in leagues. Mr. Danner also commented that it could be problematic that league ratings may differ from USATT ratings.

Mr. Hodges said that software is required to track league matches, and he cited England’s 365 League Manager and Omnipong as possible software sources. Mr. Hodges emphasized the need to recruit and train coaches, with multiple training centers located throughout the country.

The CEO suggested that a Regional Association Coordinator volunteer staff position be created, with Mr. Hodges as a potential candidate. This coordinator would work with USATT staff to execute a long term vision for creating state and local regional organizations. Mr. Xiao suggested that 4-5 regions may be used to obtain preliminary results, obtaining feedback on implementation issues. The COB noted that, if there were no objection, the task force would be disbanded, with 10 regional councils being created to assist in development of regions, serving under the Board’s guidance and authority.

**BOARD ACTION 1:** The Board disbands the regional association task force.

Approved without objection.

**BOARD ACTION 2:** The Board gives the CEO the authority to create a volunteer staff position to assist the CEO and Board with the creation and implementation of a national/regional/state structure.

Approved without objection.

Mr. Babuin returned at 11:55 am.
The meeting was recessed for lunch at 12:25 pm.

The meeting was resumed at 12:43 pm.

**H. CEO’s Report**

The CEO commented on his work towards obtaining Caesar’s Palace as a possible sponsor for the U.S. Open. Caesar’s Entertainment is responsible for conducting the high successful “World Series of Poker,” and the CEO wishes to explore a long term relationship with Caesar’s Palace. The U.S. Open Finals program may be held at Caesar’s Palace, with live streaming of the event.

The U.S. Open entry form will be posted online after the sponsorship details are finalized. New events, such as a double giant round robin event, will be included. The CEO’s goal is to provide more events to encourage more adult player participation.

Mr. Kahler joined the meeting at 1:00 pm.

**I. Proposed Bylaw Amendment**

The COB described the current Bylaw whereby the Nominating and Governance Committee (NG&C) places candidates on the ballot for Board Director positions. He noted that in December, the Board discussed a possible direct petition method which gained insufficient support to be adopted. However, Mr. Hodges’ Bylaw amendment below retains the existing Bylaw provisions, while simultaneously providing a second method whereby a candidate who obtains 150 signatures may be automatically added to the ballot as an at-large candidate.

**MOTION 5: MOVED to append a new, Paragraph 3 to Bylaw 7.6(b)(3) as follows:**

Any adult General Member in good standing at least 60 days before the record date, who obtains and submits to the Nominating and Governance Committee at least 150 signatures of support from current adult USATT General Members in good standing and whose membership is current as of the date of affixing of their signature, shall be placed on the election ballot as a candidate for At Large Director. Petition forms will be kept online at the USATT website and made available year round for prospective candidates. Signatures may be collected at any time between January 1 and December 1 in the year of the election.

Mr. Hodges cited three reasons for passing the above motion as follows: giving an alternative route to being selected as a candidate for a Board Director position which does not involve Board approval, permitting membership-supported candidates with
outside views to be considered on the ballot, and maintaining good relationships with USATT members by allowing them to have significant input into the Board candidacy process.

Movant: Larry Hodges  
Second: Han Xiao

Discussion: The General Counsel noted that six affirmative votes are needed for passage of this motion. For a signature to be valid, the signing USATT member must be in good standing at the time of his/her signing of the petition. The CEO suggested that the period for obtaining signatures may be from January 1 through December 1 in the year of the election. Mr. Lee stated his concern that this amendment would contradict bylaw 7.4 which places certain requirements on candidates’ experience and character. However, the COB noted that USATT’s Code of Ethics is routinely provided to new Board members.

The CEO stated that 125 signatures comprises about 25% of the voting membership, a significant number. If the motion passes, a ballot signature form must be created.

Mr. Lee suggested that the Bylaw amendment language also should ensure that a runoff election be conducted between the top candidates. In response, the General Counsel said that this could be a second topic for discussion, apart from this one. He added that the current Bylaw provides that the NGC determines how to administer the election and how to compute the election winner—either via a plurality vote or a majority vote. He pointed out that Mr. Lee is proposing specification of the method of voting, thereby removing it from the NGB’s committee responsibilities. Whether to address this topic in the context of the proposed amendment or to address this topic separately at a later date was discussed. It was decided to postpone further discussion on this topic.

Mr. Danner said that USATT Headquarters could be used as the address for submission of these forms. Mr. Babuin raised the issue of whether to accept electronic signatures in addition to regular signatures. The General Counsel said that this issue could be addressed at a future date.

The motion passed 7:1:0 by roll call vote as follows:

In Favor: Mr. Hodges, Mr. Kahler, Mr. Babuin, Mr. Xiao, Ms. Cribbs,  
Mr. Hogshead, Mr. Scudner

Against: Mr. Lee

Abstaining: None
J. CEO Update

The CEO discussed his concept for a donor program, which might be called, "Friends with Paddles," or, alternatively, given another name, to appear on USATT's website. The target is to receive $50 to $250 per donor. Donors will be given a special gift. The COB stated his concern for starting another brand.

The CEO raised membership issues, with the possibility of having a membership period run for a specific one year period (e.g., January 1st through December 31st, July 1st through June 30th). A membership renewal system could be implemented for automatically renewing memberships at the end of each membership period. Membership payment plans might be used, where members are charged a monthly fee (e.g., $5 per month) until the annual membership fee is paid in full.

The CEO updated results of the national media campaign, pointing to recent articles appearing in major publications.

The ratings system within RailStation is in process of being stabilized. Several USOC sports (e.g., fencing, badminton, shooting) use RailStation as their computerized system.

K. High Performance/USOC Update

Mr. Danner provided updates on our juniors' successful performances at major ITTF tournaments. He observed that for Olympic trials, there is currently no requirement for tournament play. However, in the future, Olympic trials players should demonstrate their commitment to the sport by participation in tournaments. Competition among players in tournaments, could strengthen the U.S. internationally.

The CEO described the Direct Athlete Support program, whereby athletes receive funding monies based upon their potential and their commitment to table tennis. The CEO indicated that if sufficient funding is obtained, this might induce promising young athletes to temporarily postpone their college/university plans, which may improve our Olympics and World performances.

With the elimination of junior and cadet B teams, other ways were discussed to give recognition to these players, such as membership in a national development program.
K. Discussion Regarding Plastic Balls

Mr. Hogshead said that a date (e.g., January 1, 2016) should be set for mandatory use of plastic balls at USATT sanctioned tournaments. The task of setting a date might be delegated to the Rules Committee. Mr. Lee said that USATT could require use of the plastic balls in tournaments at the present time, as Canada has done. The COB said this issue will be revisited at the Board's late summer meeting.

Plastic balls appear to play differently depending on the manufacturer (e.g., Nitaku, Joola, Butterfly, Xushaofa). The CEO will contact manufacturers for more information on this issue.

M. Strategic Vision

The COB opened discussion on USATT's strategic vision by noting that in 2009, USATT was faced with the same issues that it currently faces--greater focus on youth, greater value needed to be given for membership, the need for improved communication via the website, and a greater focus on leagues.

The COB commented that while progress was made since 2009, more progress is needed. Mr. Xiao suggested that much could be accomplished through volunteers. A National Volunteer Coordinator may organize regional coordinators. Mr. Hodges observed that Board members have different individual visions for USATT which should be discussed. Some recommend that the High Performance program be better funded. National coaches should be evaluated. There should be greater unity in the National team. Training centers nationwide can be contacted to integrate USATT's training programs. Increased USATT funding will permit player development and allow lead athletes to move up the ranks. The CEO said that having a U.S. Open sponsor and popularizing USATT's brand are steps in the right direction.

N. Old Business

None

O. New Business

None.
P. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm ET.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lee Kondo
Assistant Secretary
ATTACHMENT: APPROVED COMMITTEE MEMBER LIST

Rules Committee:

Joseph Yick
Azmy Ibrahim

Leagues Committee:

Adam Boborow
Michael Levene
Bruce Liu
Han Xiao (ATH)

Juniors Committee:

Linda Leaf
Yang Yu
Sheri Cioroslan
Khoa Nguyen (ATH)

Ethics and Grievance Committee:

Lee Kondo
Amir Sadeghy
Tahl Leibovitz (ATH)