The USATT Board of Directors meeting at the Las Vegas Convention Center was called to order at 12:16 pm PST on December 13, 2015 by Mr. Peter Scudner, Chairman of the Board.

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

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established. Mr. Ed Levy, Athlete Director, was absent. 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
Anne Cribbs, Independent Director
Larry Hodges, At-Large Director
Ed Hogshead, Club Representative Director (joined meeting at 12:43 pm)
Kagin Lee, National Organization Director (joined telephonically at 12:25 pm)
Carolyne Savini, Independent Director
Han Xiao, Athlete Director

Also in attendance:

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

C. Approval of Minutes

**MOTION 1.** MOVED to approve the Minutes of August 21-22, 2015.

Movant: Mike Babuin
Second: Anne Cribbs
Discussion: none

The motion passed unanimously 7:0:0.

Kagin Lee entered at 12:25 pm.

**MOTION 2.** MOVED to approve the Minutes of September 21, 2015.

Movant: Anne Cribbs
Second: Carolyne Savini

Discussion: none

The motion passed unanimously 8:0:0.

**MOTION 3.** MOVED to approve the Minutes of November 23, 2015.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Mike Babuin

Discussion: none

The motion passed unanimously 8:0:0.

**D. USATT Committee Reports and Discussion**

The COB noted that the Board has a responsibility to review and discuss USATT committee reports and to provide our committees with direction for the coming year. Committee reports are attached hereinafter.

1. **Umpires and Referees Committee ("URC") Report**

The URC report was first to be discussed. Mr. Lee said that the URC's suggestion to raise the provided per diem from $50 to $75 per day was reasonable and should be approved by the Board. He stated that the ITTF hospitality standard is $25 plus three meals (usually hotel buffets) per day, and that a $75 per diem is closer to those ITTF guidelines.

**ACTION 1.** To increase the officials' per diem reimbursement at major USATT tournaments (e.g., U.S. Nationals, Open) from $50.00 to $75.00 per day.

Approved without objection.

2. **Tournament Advisory Committee ("TAC") Report**
The CEO discussed the issue of USATT's commission for Tournament Directors, based upon a percentage of membership fees paid. The CEO stated that the commission encourages bringing in more tournament players as members.

3. ITTF and Continental Junior Commissioner Report

In response to Ms. Cribbs' question, Mr. Lee explained the change of title of ITTF's position was made to "Junior Commissioner," whose purpose is to advise on technical and educational programs for juniors.

4. ITTF Veterans' Committee Report

The CEO said that the 19th World Veterans Championships to be held on June 19-24, 2018 in Las Vegas will have a venue that is approximately double the current size of the U.S. Nationals' venue. ITTF representatives will be on a site visit in Las Vegas this week. Equipment sponsorships (e.g., tables, barriers) must be planned now. More events will be added (e.g., California) as part of the Veterans Tour. Ms. Cribbs noted the importance of ensuring that USATT advertising material clarifies that for this event, the term, "veteran," implies no connection with the military.

5. ITTF Athletes Commission Report

This report was received.

6. League Committee Report

Mr. Hodges noted that California and New York, in particular, are committed to the league program. The CEO mentioned that Mr. Hodges may wish to phase out his role in running the League Committee, requiring that another be appointed for this opening. Mr. Hodges is also the Regional Associations Coordinator. It was observed that most countries with successful table tennis programs are regionalized (e.g., state championships, leagues).

Ed Hogshead joined the meeting at 12:43 pm.

7. Coaching Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CEO noted that Mr. Fede Bassetti expressed his desire to terminate his appointment as CAC Chair. The CEO said that while Mr. Hodges expressed his interest in this position, Mr. Hodges' current responsibilities in heading the Leagues Committee may be more important for USATT. Mr. Lee, Mr. Hogshead, Mr. Danner, and the CEO commented on the benefits of having Mr. Hodges continue in his current Leagues Committee Chair position.
The CEO inquired as to the purpose and objectives of the Coaching Advisory Committee. After discussion, the COB directed Mr. Babuin to write a draft of the CAC's charter, indicating its purpose and objectives.

8. Rules Committee (RC) Report

Mr. Lee asked whether the Board wished to add other projects to the "Future Development" proposals submitted in his Rules Committee's report. The COB noted his approval for the RC's proposal to draft a "Simple Rules of Table Tennis" for recreational players. Regarding the RC's proposal to compile a list of official rule interpretations and precedents, Mr. Lee commented that while he supports creation of such a document, there is some hesitancy due to concerns raised by other officials.

Mr. Hogshead noted that the service rule itself raises issues regarding both rule interpretation and rule enforcement, both of which may not be easily resolved. Mr. Lee said that if the document is published, it would become a guiding document for officials (e.g., referees, umpires) and perhaps provide useful information for players and coaches as well. In response to Mr. Danner's question regarding the status of guidelines for playing matches which are not umpired, Mr. Lee said that these self-officiating guidelines should be part of the rule interpretations/precedents document which officials, players and coaches might reference.

The COB directed the Rules Committee to create drafts of the rules interpretations and precedents document and the Simple Rules of Table Tennis document to be sent to the URC for its review and input. The Board will then review these drafted documents before making them publicly available, such as in a Rules Section link on USATT's website.

9. ITTF Equipment Committee Report

The ITTF Equipment Committee has made balls the main topic of recent discussions. The committee would like to add a durability test and a friction test to the ball approval process. Prices of premium non-celluloid balls (e.g., up to $3/ball) were briefly discussed. With some non-celluloid balls being priced below $2/ball, most tournaments nationwide have elected to use non-celluloid balls. However, celluloid balls still are being used in some 1-2 star tournaments nationwide.

10. High Performance Committee (HPC) Report

Mr. Danner presented the HPC report. Mr. Xiao inquired into how athletes and their training programs would be evaluated. Mr. Danner responded that athletes will complete applications to qualify for available funding. Mr. Xiao emphasized the importance of better organization of the team selection process. The CEO said that direct athlete support is best. Mr. Xiao requested having direct support criteria and athlete applications available. The success of womens and girls teams at the Pan Am games was noted. The USATT handled Paris and security issues concerning the threat
of possible violence well by being proactive in its communications with both parents and athletes.

Mr. Danner said that the HPC and AC are both committed to developing USATT’s cadet and junior players into becoming excellent adult players. Towards this goal, both the HPC and AC support a unified training program under the umbrella of our national development program.

11. Athletes’ Advisory Council (AAC) Report

Because Mr. Xiao’s term will end in 12 months, a substitute AAC Chair must be selected. Mr. Xiao should provide the Board with a list of qualified individuals interested in this Chair position. The AAC Bylaws need to be modified, perhaps to indicate that if an individual misses a given number of meetings, he/she is removed from that committee. Ms. Cribbs suggested that the Board might meet with or talk to athletes to convince them that their voices are important and needed on this committee.

The COB mentioned the requirement for AAC members to be on USATT's Board of Directors. Possible AAC member candidates were discussed.

E. SafeSport Program

MOTION 4. MOVED to amend the SafeSport policy, such that Chair of Ethics and Grievance Committee, or his or her designee, shall be the Chair of a SafeSport hearing panel, a position currently held by the CEO.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Ed Hogshead

Discussion: The General Counsel and Mr. Lee discussed that the Board has clear authority to revise the SafeSport program. The COB directed the CEO, General Counsel, Mr. Lee and Ms. Cribbs to present a SafeSport program draft revision to the AAC and then to the Board.

Motion passed unanimously, 8-0-0.

F. USOC Update and High Performance Discussion

The CEO and Ms. Cribbs requested that the USOC fund a salaried USATT High Performance Director position. If funded, this would be a joint partnership between the USATT and USOC, whereby the USOC would input into and support USATT's efforts in all aspects of the position's decision making process. The position's baseline salary might be supplemented by other means.

The meeting was recessed at 2:09 pm. It reconvened at 2:56 pm.
G. Executive Session

The Board began its Executive Session at 2:56 pm to discuss personnel matters. No minutes are taken during executive sessions. Open session resumed at 4:01 pm.

H. Marketing and Sponsorships

The CEO provided a very brief overview of marketing and sponsorship plans and recent activities.

I. Fund Raising

The CEO commented on the success of the "Friends with Paddles" program, which will be continued. In 2016, the "Bring Back Our Balls" program will be launched. Other nationwide fund raising opportunities were mentioned.

J. Sponsorships

For balls, USATT contracted with Nittaku and Paddle Palace, as previously, with a net gain in its level of sponsorship. Sponsorship contracts for Joola table tennis tables and Butterfly clothing apparel were discussed.

K. Television Coverage

One World Sports will provide television coverage for the finals of the U.S. Nationals at the Brooklyn Bowl. USATT will also provide live streaming of Nationals matches on YouTube and through the USOC's website. About 30 million households will likely be reached. The USOC gave USATT $5000.00 in funding towards live streaming of the Olympics trials finals nightly events.

The meeting recessed at 4:38 pm. It reconvened at 5:07 pm.

L. 2016 Strategic Initiatives, Financial Objectives

The CEO presented his strategic initiatives concerning the policy underlying his 2016 financial budget. Regarding his membership initiative, membership restructuring was implemented, with the goal of increasing membership from 10,000 to 25,000 members. By January 1, 2016, all league members will have been added to USATT's database.

The CEO's long term financial objective is to increase USATT's revenue stream. U.S. Open/Nationals tournament passes for sessions, days or events are being sold. With recent added Nationals tournament events, the number of events increased from 4.8 events per person to 5.8 per person. The CEO wishes to increase the attendance at U.S. Open and Nationals events from about 780 now to 1600 - 2000.
Mr. Lee joined meeting telephonically at 5:12 pm.

The possibility of having a separately held Junior Nationals was discussed by Mr. Danner, Mr. Hodges and the CEO. USATT will sponsor the July, 2016 Pan American Junior Championships for which USOC funding has been requested. USATT and Canada hope to hold three (3) ITTF events in the Americas by 2017. The CEO wishes to create a CEO Advisory Board as a fund raiser with benefits associated with becoming a member.

Athlete funding and sponsorships were discussed by Mr. Danner and the CEO. The CEO presented his marketing idea to sell suggested a "Use Our Balls" advertising campaign as a fundraiser.

M. Other Initiatives

Ms. Savini noted that NBC television studio formed a partnership with Gold Map to promote Olympic sports events, such as the bobsled and skeleton events. If USATT forms a partnership with a television studio, it can choose athletes of each gender to feature as a fundraising program. The CEO said that he is working with broadcasting individuals, and he mentioned the possibility of starting a professional league in the U.S. in 2016 with USATT's support.

N. Guidelines for NGB Elections for USOC AAC Representatives

Mr. Xiao presented the above guidelines, noting that USOC AAC Bylaws require that all AAC election procedures be reviewed and approved by the USOC AAC before AAC NGB elections take place. Required USOC election procedures were provided.

O. USATT Board Approval of Foundation Board Member Positions

The USTTA Foundation's Articles of Incorporation require that its Foundation Board members be approved by the USATT Board. Mr. Danner requested that the USATT approve Foundation Board members for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 staggered terms.

MOTION 5.MOVED to approve the USTTA Foundation members of its Board of Directors as stated in Mr. Danner's document request, with the staggered terms as described therein.

Movant: Carolyne Savini
Second: Anne Cribbs

Discussion: none.

Motion passed, 7:0:1, with Mr. Hodges abstaining.
Mr. Danner’s document request will be attached hereinafter.

P. Hidden Serve Rule Discussion

MOTION 6. MOVED to approve the following Resolution:

It has come to the attention of the USATT Board of Directors that illegal hidden serves are being allowed, and that when umpires are not sure about the legality of a serve they often do not call them. This is unfair to their opponents. The Board would like to see the rules enforced as they are written.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Mike Babuin

Discussion: Mr. Hodges expressed his concern that doubtful and illegal serves are not being called as faults by umpires. He expressed his opinion that even at the cadet level, players are now hiding their serves without faults being called by umpires. In response, Mr. Danner opined that no good evidence has yet been presented to the Board which unequivocally shows that umpires are not making proper service call decisions. Mr. Hodges disagreed, citing his photographic evidence as proof. He also quoted the Olympic Oath which states that sports participants should "... respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them," committed to "the true spirit of sportsmanship."

Mr. Lee raised two points: First, if the purpose of the motion is to encourage officials to enforce the service rules, this motion is unnecessary because umpires are already directed to fault all illegal serves as part of their job. Enforcement of the service rule is routinely discussed at every U.S. Nationals and Open umpire briefing. Secondly, Mr. Hodges' understanding of doubtful service legality is incorrect. An umpire can never be 100% certain about the legality of any serve, and therefore the umpire must set a threshold for the degree of uncertainty to permit; otherwise all serves could be faulted according to the language in the rules.

Mr. Hodges disagreed with the both points. On the first point, he argued that referees and umpires would have greater incentive to enforce the rules if they are aware that USATT supports them on this issue. On the second point, he argued that calling more faults on illegal serves is good policy, resulting in fewer illegal serves. He added that umpires did not fault hidden serves because they were uncertain whether the ball was visible to the receiver, arguing that these serves of doubtful legality should be warned and then faulted, as required by the rules.

Mr. Danner noted that if U.S. umpires were to be overly strict on enforcement of the service rule, U.S. players could be at a significant disadvantage in competing successfully internationally. Mr. Hodges argued that U.S. players can learn both illegal and legal serves as some international players do, who may serve illegally, then switch to legal serves when rules are enforced. He added that if and when the ITTF begins
enforcing service rules, the U.S. players would have an advantage—USATT should encourage such enforcement.

Mr. Hogshead observed that calling service faults is a subjective decision where human factors are involved. Since umpires are virtually all volunteers, it would be counterproductive for the Board to severely criticize their performance as suggested. Mr. Hodges disagreed, arguing that no criticism was implied of any umpire who enforces the rules.

Mr. Kondo made additional points: First, the viewpoint from the umpire’s chair on the sidelines is different from the view from the endline. An illegal serve (e.g., "hidden"), when viewed from the endline, would not be so readily observable as a "fault" from the umpire’s chair. Mr. Hodges pointed out that his pictures included a two page section called "Umpires Perspective" with four pictures from the umpire’s perspective.

Secondly, umpires generally are already doing their best to call service faults in matches. Thirdly, Mr. Joseph Yick, URC Chair, scheduled, for the first time, an Advanced Umpire’s Seminar, where he will provide high level training to national and international umpires, undoubtedly giving informative advice to them regarding enforcement of the service rule. Mr. Hodges opined that this would not help because most umpires choose not to enforce the hidden service rule. Mr. Kondo noted that most umpires likely would disagree with Mr. Hodges on this point.

Mr. Babuin suggested that since the current service rule is difficult to enforce, then USATT should communicate with other ITTF countries regarding adoption of a service rule which is more readily enforced. The Rules Committee has been discussing service rule proposals for possible presentation to the ITTF.

The motion failed to pass by a vote of 1:6:1, with Mr. Hodges in favor and Mr. Xiao abstaining.

The meeting was recessed at 6:34 pm. It is scheduled to resume at approximately 9:00 am on Monday morning.

Q. Roll Call, Quorum Established, Monday, December 14, 2015

The COB called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Attendance was taken, with Mr. Scudner, Mr. Hogshead, Mr. Babuin, Mr. Xiao, Ms. Savini, Ms. Cribbs, Mr. Danner. Mr. Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Kaye present. Mr. Kondo joined the meeting at 9:05 am. The COB noted that a quorum was present. No conflicts of interest were reported. Mr. Hodges joined the meeting at 10:00 am. Mr. Lee joined the meeting telephonically at 10:07 am.

R. Simply Compete Computer Program

The CEO introduced Mr. Sujay Karve, Simply Compete, who provided a PowerPoint presentation demonstration of his software program. He described his USATT
membership portal which includes close to 100,000 members now. This website contains member rating information based on tournaments and league matches processed, readily searchable local tournament information, tournament sanctioning information for tournament directors, membership payment options, coaching information, officials' information, and search engines to locate local leagues and players nearby with similar ratings to one's own with whom to play. Members have the option to share their own personal profile information with other members or to keep it private. The idea is to create a "Linked In" like program for table tennis players, where one can post pictures, videos, rating, and personal information online. Credit cards can be used for USATT fees payment.

The Simply Compete program will contain links to social media websites such as Facebook and Instagram. Security of information on this website is a top priority and is anticipated to be at the same high standards as Google or Facebook.

Larry Hodges joined the meeting at 10:00 am. Mr. Lee joined the meeting telephonically at 10:07 am.

S. Hardbat Classic Table Tennis Report

This report was emailed to Board members last night.

T. New Business

Mr. Hogshead suggested that USATT, which is currently incorporated in Illinois, might wish to investigate possible advantages of incorporating in another state (e.g., Colorado). The COB noted that General Counsel can investigate this issue.

U. Financial Information - Programmatic Budget Presentation

The CEO presented a programmatic budget presentation for the Board's approval and said that he would present the line item budget separately. Sources of funding and proposed expenditures would center around various programmatic areas. The CEO discussed aggressive budgetary goals. Caesar's Palace is our sponsor for the 2015 U.S. Nationals. For upcoming events, title sponsors for the U.S. Nationals and Open are being sought. USATT also seeks to receive grant funding for an International Para Open. The ITTF has given USATT $25,000.00, and the USOC has provided $30,000.00 for our Olympic Trials.

The U.S. Nationals now will be held in July 2016 and the U.S. Open will be held in December 2016--the CEO has received positive feedback regarding this date switch. The upcoming World Veterans competition was briefly discussed. The budget for the High Performance Director will be $60,000.00.

The meeting was recessed at 11:02 pm. Ms. Cribbs and Ms. Savini left the meeting at 11:02 pm. The meeting resumed at 11:43 am.
The COB directed the CEO to provide Board members with a revised budget proposal version. This version should explain which expenses are tied to new revenues and which are connected to existing revenues.

V. Board Meeting Schedule

The Board will schedule a teleconference call at 7 pm EST on Monday, January 4, 2016 to discuss this budget.

Possible dates for 2016 in person Board meetings were discussed. The Board will meet in Greensboro, North Carolina in February in conjunction with the Olympic Trials. A Las Vegas meeting will be scheduled at the U.S. Nationals in July. There will be a December meeting in Las Vegas at the U.S. Open. A Fall meeting (e.g., September, October) was also discussed.

W. General Assembly Meeting Agenda

The General Assembly meeting agenda was determined by the Board, in accordance with USATT bylaws. The agenda will include a review of 2015 initiatives and performance, with an overview of strategic initiatives and programs for 2016, and a question/answer session.

X. Executive Session

The Board entered closed Executive Session at 12:20 pm to discuss legal matters. No minutes are taken during executive sessions. The Board resumed open session at 12:33 pm.

Y. Old and New Business

There was no further old or new business.

Z. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lee Kondo
Assistant Secretary