December 19, 2013

The Meeting was called to order at 8:08 am PST by Chair Mike Babuin. Roll call was taken.

Members Present:

- Mike Babuin, Chair of the Board
- Peter Scudner, Independent Director
- Anne Cribbs, Independent Director
- Kagin Lee, National Organization Director
- Han Xiao, Athlete Director

Also in attendance:

- Mike Cavanaugh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Dennis Taylor, Secretary & General Counsel
- Carl Danner, Foundation Representative
- Dick Evans, USTTA Hall of Fame
- Dean Johnson, ITTF Veterans Committee

A routine call for any conflicts of interest was made, and Mr. Danner mentioned his relationship with JOOLA USA.

A. Approval of the Minutes from October 12, 2013

Kagin requested that the Board approve the alterations that he had previously emailed; Mike C. requested the opportunity to submit alterations to his remarks made as part of the CEO Vision. Upon the Secretary’s questions, the Chair determined that while the wording of Motions is fixed as of the adjournment of a meeting, the Minutes should include post-meeting revisions as opposed to being merely a record of what transpired at a meeting.

**MOTION 1:**

**MOVED to approve the October 12, 2013 Minutes, as they will be amended.**

Movant: Peter Scudner
Second: Anne Cribbs
The Motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

B. Hall of Fame Report

Mr. Evans issued a welcome to the Board from the Hall of Fame. He also invited the Board to attend the Induction Ceremony/Annual Dinner.

Attila Malek, Club Director, arrived at 8:16 a.m.

C. ITTF Veterans Committee Report

Mr. Johnson presented his report. (All referenced reports are available at http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Table-Tennis/USATT/Committees.) In addition, he stated that Reto Brazzi was very interested in setting up an international competition for USATT seniors.

The Board discussed a merger of the USATT Seniors web presence with the ITTF Veterans website. No action was taken.

Ms. Cribbs staged a senior games event last year, and she indicated that the new National Senior Games leadership is inclined to partner with USATT. However, there is not currently much communication between the USATT Seniors Committee and the National Senior Games staff. The Committee will be requested to upgrade the level of communications.

D. ITTF Equipment Committee Report

Mr. Lee submitted his report. He then proposed that all USATT members serving on ITTF committees be required to send activity reports to the USATT Board. Mr. Babuin agreed to take the lead in making that happen.

The High Performance Committee requested Mr. Lee’s assistance in securing sample poly balls as soon as possible before ITTF switches to their use in competition. Mr. Lee stated that many issues regarding the poly balls were expected to be resolved at the April 2014 AGM meeting.

E. Officials and Rules Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Tinyszin reported that four USATT members have been approved as new International Referees: Roman Tinyszin, Kagin Lee, Yelena Karshtedt, and Joseph Yick.

Also, Mr. Tinyszin noted that the pipeline for new umpires in the sport is improving.

Mr. Babuin noted that the level of umpire reimbursement is expected to rise with the adoption of the 2014 budget.
Mr. Danner requested guidance for the resolution of disputes in matches that are not umpired. Mr. Tinyszin stated that the ORAC has been working on such guidance for one year, and the final report is nearly ready.

In response to a question, Mr. Tinyszin stated that officials continue to be listed as such on the USATT website even after their memberships have expired; however, the expiration dates of their memberships are listed in red.

F. High Performance Committee Report

Mr. Danner submitted and walked through the most recent report of committee activities.

G. High Performance Director’s Report

Mr. Gheorghe submitted a report of recent results in international competition. He noted that all training camps had been cut from the 2013 budget; therefore, results were minimal. The lack of training camps is calling into question of sending of athletes to international events.

One observing the competition at the Nationals would observe a lack of practice time. The issue has been evident for over ten years, though USATT does have better juniors and cadets (than) in the recent past. USATT needs more clubs that hire coaches. Mr. Xiao stated that USATT needs a guinea pig to go through the complete pipeline program.

Mr. Scudner spoke of Archery’s Junior Dream Team concept. It is a developmental pipeline project with participants selected in the mini-cadet stage. It is unclear if the program would translate well to table tennis.

Mr. Malek departed at 9:18 a.m.

Ms. Gheorghe noted that state associations have been referenced in the bylaws for ten years; however, they have never been implemented. Mr. Babuin noted that implementation would provide fifty more opportunities for marketing and fund-raising.

Ms. Cribbs requested the cost-range for camp expenditures. Mr. Gheorghe gave a range of $10,000-30,000.
**MOTION 2:**

MOVED to authorize and direct the CEO to negotiate with individuals to fundraise for USATT on a commission system.

Movant: Han Xiao  
Second: Kagin Lee

Discuss: The CEO already has the authority to make the hire; however, the purpose of the Motion is to direct CEO to do it. Some believe this feels like a bigger conversation. Mr. Scudner notes that we have hired people at different times, with no results; doing it again will not necessarily raise money. Mr. Scudner noted that we could accomplish what is desired by setting policy and monetary goals in the budget. He referenced the USOC fund-raising match program and media program, also noted that we really need $5m/quad to do what we need to do. Mr. Danner stated that from a foundation standpoint, there is a down-side; the fundraiser becomes the face of the organization. One who misrepresents the association can be a detriment, and we need clear programmatic goals. Ms. Cribbs noted that fund-raising is responsibility of all Board members, and that there is a need for a clear strategic goal.

With the permission of Mr. Lee, Mr. Xiao then amended his Motion.

MOVED to direct the CEO to develop a major fundraising plan that would raise $5,000,000 per quad, in addition to our current operations. The major concepts of the plan are to be presented to the Board at the Spring 2014 Board meeting.

Movant: Han Xiao  
Second: Peter Scudner

The Motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

H. Ethics and Grievance Committee Report

Mr. Coombe’s report was entered into the record.

I. SafeSport

The SafeSport document is near completion. Mr. Cavanaugh will be finalizing the flow of the document during the post-Christmas week when HQ is traditionally dark. USATT will need to be able to manage the anticipated increase in incident reports.

Mr. Danner asked if the Board could be told which parts of the program are the result of USOC requirements and which are parts that USATT is adding. A response will be forthcoming after the document is finalized. Mr. Danner is concerned that clubs and training centers already think
USATT does not provide any assistance, and now USATT will be imposing additional requirements; he is concerned about pushback.

Mr. Xiao departed at 10:01 a.m. The quorum was lost.

The Board went into executive session at 10:03 a.m. Minutes are not kept while the Board is in executive session.

Mr. Malek returned at 10:09 a.m. The quorum was restored.

The Board returned to general session at 11:45 a.m.

J. RailStation

(nb: previously the Board gave Mr. Cavanaugh authority to negotiate an administrative technology solution contract with RailStation)

RailStation’s Mike Barnett and the Board discussed what would be required to adopt RailStation as USATT’s technology provider. The discussion involved various tasks and various funding requirements.

Mr. Xiao returned at 11:24 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 11:35 a.m.

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December 20, 2013

The Meeting was reconvened at 8:45 am PST by Chair Mike Babuin. Roll call was taken.

Members Present:

    Mike Babuin, Chair of the Board
    Peter Scudner, Independent Director
    Anne Cribbs, Independent Director
    Han Xiao, Athlete Director

Also in attendance:

    Mike Cavanaugh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
    Dennis Taylor, Secretary & General Counsel
    Carl Danner, Foundation Representative
    Larry Rose, Chair of the Tournament Advisory Committee
A quorum was not present. No official actions could be taken.

K. USTTA Foundation Report

The Foundation has given USATT an additional grant this week of $9,100. In addition the Foundation Board has voted to increase quarterly grants next year to $10,000/quarter.

L. Hot Spots

ITTF will now be allowing ITTF Hot Spots to send teams to Junior Circuit events, in addition to the national associations, if space remains after the national association has had the opportunity to send athletes.

M. USATT Assembly

There was general praise for the level of presentations. Dan Seemiller was given particular praise for his proposal to give events protection from tournaments proposed to be staged within the same region, but not to give events protection from events proposed to be staged in other regions.

Mr. Lee joined the meeting at 9:09 a.m. A quorum was thus established.

Continuing the Assembly’s discussion regarding sanction protection, Mr. Rose spoke of using player density as a guide for protection as opposed to strictly going by regional borders. In addition, a proposal was made that the Open and the Nationals should be the only tournaments given any date protection. The Tournament Advisory Committee will review sanction protections and provide report, with recommendations, at next Board meeting. This review will include a review of the current region map, with possible recommendations for modification.

N. Tournament Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Rose reported that the new star system for tournament evaluation has been implemented, and feedback has been received. Most significantly, he noted that waivers for minimum requirements (e.g., ceiling height and lighting levels) have been given to some traditional 3-star and 4-star events in order for them to maintain their traditional quality evaluations.

In addition, Mr. Rose stated that there was a need to list on the USATT website the total prize money an event offered. In the past, that was generally taken care of by basing the evaluation of a tournament on the amount of prize money, but the new system is based more on playing conditions than money.

Mr. Malek joined the meeting at 9:28 a.m.
The Sanction Request form is now in format of an Excel spreadsheet, allowing for instant star calculation.

Mr. Rose noted the increasing number of unsanctioned tournaments. USATT needs to remove barriers to running sanctioned tournaments and to find ways to encourage USATT-sanctioned events to be better than unsanctioned events.

Mr. Rose stated that the membership mistakenly believes Tournament Advisory Committee has some authority over Open and Nationals. This is not correct, but Mr. Rose stated that the Committee should have some authority over those events. A suggestion was made that a committee be formed, and formally recognized, to oversee those events.

**MOTION 3:**

**MOVED to define the US Open and US Nationals as protected events for sanctioning purposes.**

Movant: Kagin Lee

Second: Han Xiao

Discussion: The general topic has already been given to the Tournament Advisory Committee to study; however, there has been a suggestion for this specific proposal. In addition the Board discussed definitions of “protection” and possible exceptions to protection.

The Motion was withdrawn.

O. Athletes’ Advisory Council Report

Mr. Xiao noted that the Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC) has several new members. Also, the primary functions of the AAC are to oversee athlete concerns and to nominate athletes to serve on committees and task forces. Most AAC activities have been through email; teleconferences have not been well-attended.

The AAC negotiated for training benefits for Paralympic athletes, but it needs to be more active in its consultation regarding the selection procedures for National Teams. In addition more athletes need to be involved in AAC activities. About twenty athletes qualify for the AAC, and some who do not meet the qualifications want to be active.

Mr. Xiao left the meeting at 10:04 a.m.
P. Clubs Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Malek reported that there are an increasing number of clubs focusing on junior development; he believes that USATT should support them more. Also, he thinks USATT should partner with the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association in the development of university clubs, and USATT should contract with manufacturers to provide discounted equipment for all of these clubs.

There are now 62 full-time training center businesses/clubs; however, Mr. Malek feels that number is outdated. New clubs are being created all the time.

Mr. Malek stated that National team members need to train together more in high performance clubs. (nb: “high performance clubs” was not defined.) He noted that support for high performance clubs has been put into high performance plan submitted to USOC, though money could come from sources other than USOC. Mr. Malek urged USATT to hire someone on commission to raise funds for athletes in the high performance clubs. He also recommended that USATT award $100,000, divided between four high performance clubs. The funding for clubs should be motivation for clubs to compete in order to get the results that would lead to receipt of the funds. Mr. Danner proposed giving $8,000 of the $9,100 granted earlier in the week by the Foundation to those who had trained this year’s Junior National Team members. No action was taken.

The question was asked regarding when the Board would receive a proposal regarding discounted equipment for clubs. The answer was that Board has had a proposal, for giving clubs the opportunity to purchase Butterfly equipment at a discount, in front of it for two years. The next step is to contact Butterfly and put the ads in the magazine. Mr. Malek stated that USATT needs to offer other companies the opportunity to offer similar plans. The basic plan outline is that club gets a discounted price, USATT gets a cut, and the club coach gets a cut. In contrast, Mr. Danner noted that most high performance clubs already have relationships with manufacturers.

Mr. Malek indicated that USATT also needs to give money to Centers of Excellence. The Centers have been requesting either money or more recognition. Mr. Malek stated that every year USATT spends its money the same way, and it gets the same results.

Mr. Malek urged USATT to set a goal of professionalizing clubs, which are currently not regulated at all. Mr. Danner noted that there are non-monetary ways to improve club situations, e.g., mandating joint camps.

Mr. Babuin expressed surprise that the bylaws do not say much to support interaction between USATT and clubs. He will be proposing a change in the USATT mission statement to rectify the situation. Mr. Cavanaugh reported that, in contrast to clubs, Centers of Excellence undergo an
annual review, which comes under the auspices of the High Performance Committee, the Clubs Advisory Committee, and the Coaching Advisory Committee.

Q. Junior Advisory Committee Report

The Board acknowledged receipt of the Junior Advisory Committee report. The report was received without comment.

R. ITTF Officials Committee Report

Mr. Ibrahim stated that umpires face a significant challenge because players do not know how to execute serves that comport with the rules. He suggested that USATT require service rules to be discussed at all coaching clinics. Coaches need to be as interested in teaching their students to play by the rules as they are in their students winning matches.

Mr. Ibrahim indicated that seniors always feel neglected, although they are the ones facilitating junior practice and competition.

Mr. Ibrahim further indicated that sponsors like to see crowds. USATT used to invite school groups or scout groups to tournaments; however, we now get no crowds.

The question was asked as to where USATT will next be holding the Open and the Nationals. It was noted that the major tennis tournament stated by the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club is not known to players and fans as the England Open; rather, it is known as Wimbledon. Therefore, a suggestion was made that if USATT stages events in Las Vegas, they should be called, “Las Vegas.”

It was noted that governments decide if foreign players will come to USATT events; therefore, USATT needs to direct marketing efforts that direction.

Finally, Mr. Ibrahim noted that last year, the ITTF added a whole section to its rules that addressed behavior; bad acts will be publicized. He stated that an article about the rules change was sent to USATT Magazine, but it was not published. Mr. Cavanaugh requested that the article be sent to him.

S. Editorial Advisory Committee Report

The Board acknowledged receipt of the Editorial Advisory Committee report. Comments were deferred until the USATT Magazine item on the agenda.
T. ITTF Media Committee Report

Special Advisor Sheri Ciorsolan reported via email that she will be meeting with ITTF in January to get a full explanation of what ITTF’s expectations are for a Special Advisor. She will report to the Board after that clarification is received.

U. Upcoming USATT Tournaments

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the next three USATT events are penciled in for Las Vegas. Ms. Cribbs noted that due to the Curling Competition in Las Vegas she is producing in January 2014, she has developed good contacts with LVCVA and the state govt. She offered help with the increasing USATT contacts for events in Las Vegas.

V. Committee Performance

Mr. Babuin noted that USATT has one Board member who lives in another country and does not attend Board meetings. Bylaw 7.11 requires that the Board evaluate the circumstances that caused the individual to fail to attend, and accordingly vote whether or not to remove the individual from the Board. As for committees, he noted that there have been three requests for committee Chairs to submit required the annual reports, yet many did not respond. Discussion was requested regarding how to improve responsiveness. Mr. Scudner noted that Mr. Taylor had essentially given the Nominating and Governance Committee report. He also noted that the hardbat and league committees are advisory, and he asked if either committee had been asked for advice in the past year. Ms. Cribbs argued against removal of non-reporting Chairs and members; being on a committee is supposed to be fun.

Mr. Babuin suggested that maybe the Board needs to give more guidance as to what the Board needs from committees. Mr. Lee suggested putting space on the website for committee reports; where no reports are submitted, USATT could affirmatively state that no report was received.

Mr. Cavanaugh raised the issue that nine months were required this year to collect Conflict of Interest forms from committees. Mr. Scudner suggested that possibly RailStation could provide an online form and a reminder system.

Attila departed at 11:04 a.m. The quorum is lost.

W. 2014 US Open Preview

Dell Sweeris, representing the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), was joined by Connie Sweeris, Mike Guswiler (Western Michigan Sports Commission), Chris Schroeder (Amway Grand Plaza Hotel), and Joe Dault (LOC). The LOC presented a progress report, although the LOC noted that the information was not final. The LOC stated that it needs the entry form to be finalized as soon as possible. Moving forward, the city of Grand Rapids would like to continue its relationship with
USATT. Thinking toward the future, Grand Rapids is working on cross-promotions with other events, such as the Laugh-Fest.

X. Media Report

Sean O’Neill has been appointed to the role of USATT Director of Communication. He presented a report of USATT’s 2013 web and social media activities.

Mr. Xiao joined the meeting at 11:49 a.m. The quorum was restored.

Mr. Malek joined the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Mr. Kahler joined the meeting via telephone at 12:32 p.m.

Y. Marketing and Fundraising Committee Report

Mr. Kahler reported for the committee. USATT needs to determine its margins on individual memberships, and then compare to the value of sponsorships. The committee recommends adoption of a free rating system that could be offered to a corporate partnership to sponsor. A challenge will be reaching an unknown mass of people to bring them in a simple membership

Ms. Cribbs departed at 1:15 p.m.

Z. Executive Session

The Board went into executive session to discuss contract issues at 1:30 pm. Minutes are not kept for executive sessions. The Board reconvened its general session at 2:15 p.m.

Mr. Malek departed at 2:15 p.m.

AA. Discussion of Bylaws Amendment Proposals

Mr. Babuin, Chair of the Bylaw Review Task Force, presented a redline showing proposed amendments to the Bylaws. No vote could be taken; although, the proposals had been distributed earlier to the Board, the Board had not had the required thirty days to review the proposals. Therefore, the purpose was to vet some of the new initiatives. Mr. Scudner proposed to table the discussion because the Task Force had never had a meeting with all members present, because the athlete representative on the Task Force had only recently received the proposals, and because the athlete representative on the Task Force had not yet commented on the proposals. In the alternative, Ms. Scudner suggested that the Board could discuss issues which would be sent to the Task Force to develop a proposal in response to those issues.

The Chair decided to do an issue discussion. Issues discussed were:

- Change in mission statement
- Membership categories
• Regional divisions
• Director qualifications
• Board member attendance
• Election procedures for directors
• Officer roles
• Meeting minutes
• Budget deadlines
• Committees
• Grievance procedures
• Include references to SafeSport
• Diversity enhancement
• Code of ethics
• Wordsmithing cleanliness

**MOTION 4:**

MOVED to amend the composition of the Bylaw Review Task Force by adding Han Xiao as a fifth member.

Movant: Han Xiao
Second: Kagin Lee

The Motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

**BB. Budget**

Staff presented its proposed 2014 Budget. Significant discussion followed the walk-through of the proposal. Areas of particular discussion resulted from: the budgeted amount of prize money for the Open does not match the amount the Local Organizing Committee intends to offer, and there has been noticeable advertiser push-back against the cost of ads in the November-December 2013 issue of USATT Magazine because that issue has not yet shipped.

Mr. Xiao departed the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Mr. Malek joined the meeting at 4:21 p.m.

Dell and Connie Sweeris returned to address concerns related to the budget projections for the 2014 Open.

Sean O’Neal, who has been promoted to the position of Director of Communications, returned to address potential adjustments to the USATT’s communications strategy.
MOTION 5:

MOVED that USATT will operate on a balanced budget in 2014, using the staff-presented budget as the basic framework. The Board will be reconvening within 30 days to finalize the 2014 budget around the topics of marketing, communications, and sponsorships.

Movant: Peter Scudner
Second: Anne Cribbs

The Motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m. PST

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Taylor
Secretary