



Minutes
Board of Directors Teleconference Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2019

Chair Anne Cribbs called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. EST.

1. Roll Call and Administrative Matters

The following board members were in attendance:

Anne Cribbs (Chair), Larry Hodges, Carolyn Savini, Gary Schlager, Erica Wu (7:15).

Also attending:

Dennis Taylor (General Counsel and Secretary), Mark Thompson (COO), Carl Danner (Representative of USTTA Foundation), Jörg Bitzigeio (High Performance Director), Jasna Rather (Para Coordinator), Sebastian De Francesco (Athlete), Roger Dickson (Guest), Han Xiao (Guest).

A quorum was not established at this time. Mark Thompson reported a conflict regarding discussion of the CEO search process. Ms. Cribbs stated that she wanted him on the call, sharing his perspectives, and she did not want him to recuse himself.

Ms. Cribbs gave thanks to all for taking time out of their Mondays for this meeting.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes from October Board Meeting

- The Minutes were reviewed. There were no amendments.
- No vote was taken due to the lack of a quorum.

3. High Performance Update

- A great athletic training camp was just completed at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center; training focused on physical preparation.
- The 2019 USATT Hopes Tour has started; there will be eight regional camps. (The first Regional Event: January 19 – 21 in Sacramento)
- Lily Zhang and Wu Yue now are competing at the Hungarian Open.
- Kanak Jha has signed a contract with a first division club in the Bundesliga.
- More than 20 US youth will be competing in the ITTF Swedish Youth Open.
- Pan Am Games Trials will be held March 1 – 3, 2019, in Santa Monica.

Ms. Wu joined the call at 7:15. A quorum was established.

4. Para High Performance Update

- The Para team completed National Team Trials during the 2018 US Open. The tournament went well, and five new members were added to the team.
- The team is preparing to go to the Italian and Spanish Open Tournaments which will take place in March.
- USATT is communicating with the USOC in regards to the Parapan Games. A primary topic of discussion is how many staff accreditations will be allocated. The team is large (14 or more athletes). At this time it appears that the team would need three coaches, a team leader and three personal care assistants. The picture will be much clearer in April.
- Young athletes Ian Seidenfeld and Jenson Van Emburgh are constantly improving their world ranking positions and performing well in international events. Tahl Leibovitz is listed among the top four athletes in the world in his class.
- To prepare the athletes for the Parapan Games in August, USATT will be sending the top athletes to international events and organizing training camps for wheelchair and standing athletes.

5. CEO Search Update

- Dan Parker declined to serve as the Search Firm; however, he agreed to review and comment upon the draft job description.
- According to Ms. Savini, the next task is to get the job description approved.
- Once that is accomplished, the job description will be posted.
- Ms. Savini will continue searching for a lower cost Search Firm.
- At this moment there are 6-8 applicants for the position.
- Ms. Cribbs wants the job description to be reviewed by Mr. Hodges and Mr. Taylor.
- Mr. De Francesco asked if there was para representation on the Search Committee; there is.

6. High Performance Director Retention Effort

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:44 [Note: Minutes are not kept in Executive Session.]

The Board returned to General Session at 8:22.

7. Board of Directors Obligations and Responsibilities

- Ms. Cribbs noted that all members have signed the Board Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.
- Members will do so again when the new Board is seated.
- Ms. Cribbs voiced the need for open and honest communications. However, after a decision has been made, Board members should re-read the Codes and the restrictions on bringing up the same topics again; if a member cannot fulfill the stated duties, the member should feel free to resign.
- Ms. Cribbs is concerned about information from Board meetings showing up in social media.
- Mr. Hodges objected to the use of the word “support” in the Board's Code of Conduct that

requires board members to support decisions made by the Board. He quoted multiple dictionary definitions, including ones that imply agreement. Mr. Hodges stated that while board members should agree with the implementation of Board decisions, they should not be required to agree with these decisions themselves; board members should be able to respectfully disagree. If asked, the current wording could require them to say they agree with things they do not agree with. He recommended the word "support" be taken out.

- Ms. Cribbs stated that she welcomes disagreement; however, she does not welcome comments that malign and denigrate.
- Mr. Hodges noted that the Code of Conduct also says that board members will not be critical of other members' opinions. He believes that should not be in the Code of Conduct.
- Mr. Hodges expressed a willingness to work with Mr. Taylor to create an amended version of the Code of Conduct.

8. Nominating and Governance Committee (“NGC”) Selections

- The 2015-2016 committee members selected Haynes Hendrickson and Stephanie Cheng to serve as NGC members for the remainder of the 2017-2018 term. The current committee members selected the same two to serve on the NGC for the 2019-2020 term.
- The Invitation to Prospective Committee Members was posted on the website on December 15, 2018, soliciting applications to serve as an USATT-member on the NGC for the final 45 days of the 2017-2018 term. There were three responses.
- Board members were unable to distinguish between the three applicants and declined to make an appointment.

9. Bylaw Amendments

- Mr. Schlager suggested further refinements to the proposed new mission statement.
- Ms. Profit has a suggested amendment for Article XI. Mr. Taylor will distribute in time for the February meeting.

NOTICE 1. On February 11, 2019, the Board will be considering an amendment to Bylaw 3.1. The proposed language has been amended. The current proposal is to replace the current mission statement with one reading, “The Mission of USATT shall be to support, develop, and inspire the table tennis community; and to provide resources that enable athletes to achieve sustained competitive excellence and pursue Olympic and Paralympic success.”

NOTICE 2. On February 11, 2019, the Board will be considering amendments to Article X of the Bylaws as proposed by the Ethics and Grievance Committee.

10. Strategic Priorities Update and Follow-Up

MOTION 1. MOVED to amend 2019-2024 Strategic Priorities document by incorporating the recent suggestions of Gary Schlager.

Movant: Carolyne Savini
Second: Gary Schlager

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote 5-0-0

Staff and USOC representatives will coordinate in the development of an implementation plan.

11. Foundation and Fundraising Update

- The Foundation began its fundraising efforts, but had an unfortunate surprise; a charitable organization usually needs to register in each state in order to raise money in that state. (note: that requirement would apply to USATT as well as the Foundation.)
- Currently the Foundation has limited resources; it makes more sense for the Foundation to work on fundraising in conjunction with USATT.

12. 2018 Financials Report and 2019 Budget Projections

- The Board is quite eager to know the final state of the 2018 financials and management's proposed 2019 budget.
- Mr. Thompson stated that HQ is very close to completion of the 2018 financials, and it stands by numbers emailed today; however, the numbers are not yet final.
- A primary reason for the lack of finality is that US Open expenses are still being processed.
- Ms. Cribbs wants another call next week. That call will only be to hear the financials.
- Mr. Thompson guaranteed that numbers would be ready. At the moment the most complete source of current numbers is in Mr. Kaye's head. The books have not been easy to interpret.
- Ms. Cribbs reiterated the criticality of receiving timely financial reports.

NOTICE 3. On January 22, 2019, the Board will hold a Special Purpose teleconference to receive and review the 2018 financial statement.

13. US Nationals Preparations Status Report

- The 2019 US Nationals will be held in Las Vegas. Mr. Thompson is developing the prospectus, with the goal of a February 1 delivery.
- The event will be held in the South Hall. The tournament hotel is directly behind the Hall.
- Discussion continues regarding the number of days of the event.
- The format will basically return to the traditional format, as opposed to the Elite-Performance tracks used for the 2018 US Open. The goal is to balance quality and profitability.
- The JOOLA table sponsorship has expired; renewal negotiations are in progress.
- Mr. Thompson reminded the Board that the 2019 US Open needs to be discussed sooner

rather than later.

- Mr. Thompson estimated that organizing an Open or Nationals takes up approximately 60% of the staff's time.
- Outsourcing will be a major discussion topic. Another topic will be whether staff can plan, execute, and achieve the Strategic Priorities while organizing both tournaments.
- Ms. Cribbs speculated that if the summer event was organized by staff, then maybe the winter event could be outsourced.

14. Location of In-Person Board Meeting in April of 2019

- The proposed locations are either DC or Denver. The proposed dates are April 14-15 or March 30-31.
- Ms. Cribbs and Mr. Schlager will review dates, locations, and budgetary implications.

15. Old Business

- The Board reviewed USATT's Olympic selection procedures.
- Mr. Danner described how they were created and approved.
- The first decision point is a match with Canada to determine which country sends one and which country sends three athletes per gender to the Games.
- Mr. Hodges voiced a point of view opposing the current procedures, urging that the Olympic Team should include four of a possible six athletes chosen by Trial, rather than the possibility that four of a possible six athletes could be chosen by discretion.
- Ms. Rather gave her perspective, supporting all spots from trials.
- Ms. Wu wants the Board to be fully aware of the issues; trials are not perfect; financial inequality affects international competition, putting some at a disadvantage; trials simulate the pressure of the Olympics; committees can get it wrong; playing styles are in play with committee opinions; and the process is confusing. In her opinion a maximum of one per gender should be included on a team as a discretionary pick.
- Mr. Schlager responded to Ms. Wu's opinion by stating that this is why athletes are on the Board.
- Mr. Bitzigeio gave his comments.
 - the High Performance Committee and USOC have already approved the selection procedures;
 - USOC is aware of the likelihood of qualification prospects in the various categories;
 - the High Performance Committee was unanimous in its approval; and
 - selection procedures will never make everyone happy.
- He continued by asking if someone who never attended international tournaments should wind up at the Olympics.
- Ms. Cribbs stated that the decision has been made and should be supported.

16. New Business

- No new business was raised.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dennis Taylor
Secretary