



**Meeting Minutes**  
**USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 18, 2022, 2:00pm Eastern time**

**Meeting to be conducted via Zoom**

**Attendance:**

Rahul Bawa  
Sasha Gerritson  
Tom Scott  
Elisa Au  
Brian Mertel  
Brian Ramrup  
Patrick Hickey  
Matthew Ralph

**Also Present:**

Phil Hampel  
Elizabeth Poloni

- **Call to Order – Rahul Bawa**
- **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
  - None to declare from any Board Members
- **Comments from Rahul Bawa**
  - Set meeting to 3 hours and if needed topics can move to next meeting
  - Would like to have a more frequent cadence of meetings suggesting every 6 weeks
- **Approval of September 1, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes**
  - Motion to be approved – Sasha Gerritson; Second – Brian Mertel
  - Approved - 6; Pat Hickey Abstained
- **Approval of December 9, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes**
  - Motion to be approved – Brian Mertel; Second – Matthew Ralph
  - Approved - 5; Pat Hickey and Brian Ramrup Abstained
- **Approval of December 15, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes**
  - Motion to be approved – Patrick Hickey; Second – Brian Ramrup
  - Approved - 6; Brian Mertel Abstained



- **Board Election Update (ASO and Independent positions)**
  - Independent position – the initial candidate nominated by the Nominating and Governance committee has withdrawn his candidacy. As a result, the Nominating & Governance committee is working to identify another candidate to recommend to the full Board.
  - There was an additional candidate identified and Nominating and Governance has started the conversation to see if they would accept the position. The candidate has asked to talk with Phil Hampel about the federation. That call is scheduled for next week.
    - Pat Hickey raised concerns over the process and thought the board should have been provided a set of candidates to select from. Phil Hampel explained the process that is used and the evolution from the Nominating and Governance Committee having the authority to select the board member to the change to allow the board to accept or reject the candidate. We will need to create a documented procedure for how the bylaws are being implemented.
  - Approved Sports Organization (ASO) position – still unresolved in a tie since there were only 2 ASOs approved in 2021 and each ASO had nominated a candidate. We are working with the USOPC to resolve this issue. We will also make an update to our Bylaws to address any ties in the future.
    - We are scheduling a meeting with our attorney to review options the board can take that align with the bylaws, the Ted Stevens Act and Colorado Not-For-Profit Law.
  
- **2022 Budget Overview and Approval**
  - The approved quadrennial budget (2021-2024) was sent out prior to the board meeting along with the adjustments for 2022 for the new board to review before the meeting. Additionally, charts were provided to illustrate sources for revenue and expense. Rahul Bawa stated the intent is to make sure the new board members understand the budget and wants to have everyone on the same page.
  - Phil Hampel explained with the budget there is still a lot of unknown. There is considerable uncertainty around how events will rebound due to the pandemic. Revenue is slightly pessimistic, but a lack of participation would create a shortfall. Supply chain and labor issues are likely to impact costs.
  - We do not have USOPC support for high performance, which we had through 2021, to fund the development of Olympic Athletes. In 2022, we have 2 areas of support from USOPC the NGB Services grant and Digital Media Agreement
    - Digital Media Agreement is support for USA Karate being on the Team USA Web Platform. We get funding based on unique pageviews to the website – not social channels. It provides a

fixed amount based on tiers and includes reimbursement for cyber media insurance. The agreement was due to end last year and the USOPC expended 1 year at last year's levels. The agreement will end this year and the structure of future agreements and support is being defined by the USOPC.

- In the budget there is \$25,000 in fundraising that is not identified. This is a standard target we use but have not met. As part of the upcoming strategy discussion the board to look at how to generate additional fundraising.
  - 2021 books not closed so we don't have the 2021 actuals in the budget analysis. Will be added as soon as the books closed.
  - Board would like to have the prior actuals to review.
  - Board would also like to have a discussion to align strategy to budget before approval
  - Table approving the revised budget until the strategy discussion occurs
- **2022 Priorities**
    - Rahul Bawa explained that these priorities are his 1<sup>st</sup> cut at the priorities and that they are not final priorities and not the strategy.
    - **Improve Communications**
      - Shared a link with the board of a presentation Elisa Au created on Communications
      - The perception amongst membership is that the communication is not where it needs to be.
    - **Re-examine Committee structure**
      - Rahul Bawa asked every committee chair to send specific information on the committee. He was not satisfied with the responses that he got and would like to reexamine the structure every committee. Most committees responded but the specifics and understanding of their role was not consistent.
      - Wants to make sure we have functioning committees
    - **Enhance Junior Team Support**
      - USOPC focus is on Sr Team
      - At a macro level we focus on the Sr National Team.
      - We need to develop the Junior Team since they are the up and coming athletes for the Senior Team
    - **Fight for karate to be include in LA 2028**
      - This needs to be a necessity as the decision on sports will be made next year.
    - **Complete all actions from the USOPC Demand Letter**
    - **Feedback from the board**
      - Brian Ramrup – How can we get people involved and be able to count on them. Members aren't responding to requests and there is a lack of engagement
      - Elisa Au – committees may be Q3/4 activity to align strategy

- Pat Hickey – thinks the committee needs to be improved and have people willing to do the work. Thinks Para-Karate needs representation.
  - Sasha Gerritson - would like to add a deep dive into the bylaws as a priority.
  - Brian Ramrup – need an improved committee onboarding process. They did a transition with AAC and had a good transition to the new AAC
  - Pat Hickey – conversations with committees indicate that they don't understand what they can and can't do
  - Adding Bylaw Review and Developing a Strategy to the priorities
  - Motion to approve the list of five priorities provided in the agenda and Bylaw review and Develop Strategy as the seven 2022 Priorities – Pat Hickey, Second Matthew Ralph
    - In favor – 7; opposed - 0
- **Board Subcommittees for agreed-upon priorities**  
*Table to discuss at a later board meeting after strategy is defined*
  - **Review Elisa Au's Communications presentation**
    - Perceived feeling that people have around communication in USA Karate is poor.
    - Want to focus on “what do we want them to know, believe and do”
    - Missed Opportunities
      - USA Karate should do a recap of the Town Hall for those members that missed it to show the support that is being provided to the athletes
      - Sasha Gerritson engage key people in USA Karate to engage in Board Meetings to increase engagement
      - Rahul Bawa committees present to the Board on what is going on in their committees
      - Pat Hickey recommended a full day convention on USA Karate separate from the Signature Events.
      - Rahul Bawa is asking that his email be added to the website and asked the other board members to consider this. It is important for Board members to remember they are responding as board members
    - Phil Hampel provided some feedback on the communication:
      - We have resource limitations when it comes to Social Media
      - Web platform is complicated and we are working with a contractor to update
      - Content creation is the challenge not the mechanics.
    - Pat Hickey has raised issues on the web content and will look to identify the errors on the website.
    - Rahul Bawa asked if anyone on the board can help with communication content.

- The Board agrees that communication will need to be important in 2022 and agrees with the recommendation Elisa made.
- Elisa to work with staff to execute the communication plan and support content curation
- The Board gave a specific and clear direction to staff regarding the 2022 communication plan. Phil Hampel and staff will work with Elisa on updating the communication plan and present at the April board meeting
  - Motion to approve - Patrick Hickey; Second; Matthew Ralph
  - In favor – 7; opposed - 0
- **LA 2028 Update**
  - We have had conversation with the WKF regarding a plan for LA2028. Rahul Bawa, Phil Hampel and Elisa Au are actively working with the WKF and there have been WKF commissions formed with Toshi Nagura as the chair of an Executive Committee and Elisa Au as chair of the practical committee.
  - A letter has been sent to the Chairperson of the LA28 Games that Karate would like to be included.
  - Phil Hampel provided the board some history on the evolution of IOC's Agenda 2020 and where we are at with the Games program.
  - After 2020, the organization of the Olympics has been changed. This has to do with numbers of Athletes (Core vs Local Sports)
  - For LA28 the total number of Athletes participating in the Olympics cannot pass 10,500. This number includes added sports, discipline changes etc.
  - For LA28 3 sports – Modern Pentathlon, Boxing and Weightlifting were removed for governance issues with a path back in and Surfing, Skateboard and Climbing were added. These will take up some of the open spots created by the removal.
  - There are at least 30 sports looking for inclusion in the LA28 Games and on the call there were several sports looking to expand their disciplines.
  - What needs to be provided to be considered for possible inclusion will be announced at the end of March early April. There likely will not be an open invitation to submit more likely there will be some selection and invitation process.
  - Youth appeal and financial viability seem to be key right now.
  - Our plan is to support the WKF in the process.
  - The USOPC and LA28 are asking communication from the NGBs to go through the USOPC and IF Communication go through the IOC
  - We are looking to help create awareness and visibility for the sport.
    - We had an initial conversation with PlayLA to see how the NGBs can work with them
      - They have opportunities to create introductory type classes in underserved communities.
      - We have to look to see if there is any way our Southern California members could support.

- When we get additional information, we will reach out to the members
  - Elisa has set up a “Pass the Torch” event to highlight the Olympians at the US Open to raise awareness
- **Youth Olympic Games**
  - There has been some conversation on Social Media about the Youth Olympic Games in Drakar in 2026. Karate is included in the Games but the USA will likely not be allowed to participate in karate.
  - Each National Olympic Committee gets an allocated number of athletes to participate across all the sports. That number is around 70-75 athletes and allocation has not been set for Drakar. The USOPC does not expect a significant change from the past Games.
  - The USOPC will have a selection process that limits the athletes. Not all sports are included in the Youth Olympic Games.
  - The probability of Pan Am Only Sports getting in is low.
  - In the US we have large number of athletes competing in all sports so the allocation goes quickly. In 2018 there were Olympic Sports that did not get allocation.
- **USOPC Demand Letter Status**  
*Will discuss at the next board meeting*
- **USOPC Audit Results and Actions**  
*Will discuss at the next board meeting*
- **Review of USANKF Board Microsoft Teams Site**  
*Will discuss at the next board meeting*
- **Board Meeting frequency for 2022**
  - Discussed at start of meeting
  - Next Board Meeting is going to be set for 3/19 via Zoom
  - In person meeting in Chicago will be 4/1-2
- **New Business**
  - Coaches Compensation
    - Brian Mertel - Coaches believe a lot of money is being raised from the Team Camp events and they feel like they should be paid more for their participation
  - Referees liked the lunch better at the US Open than having the VIP reception and we will continue the improved lunch.
  - Bylaws allow for members to attend board meetings
    - Rahul Bawa wants to communicate the board meetings and allow access starting with the 3/19.
    - Sasha Gerritson recommended that as a standard agenda there should be 3 sections an open, closed and executive session
    - Board members were in agreement to have open sessions

- Motion to discuss the missed items in the next board meeting; Rahul Bawa; second; Pat Hickey
  - all in favor – 7, dissenting – 0
- Reminder to all board members to use their usankf emails for usankf business not personal email
- Olympian Event at the 2022 US Open
  - “Passing the Torch” – event to highlight the Olympians from Tokyo and support staff.
  - Recognition to our Olympians, Coaches and Referee
  - Free event for registered athletes 12 and up
  - 2-4pm on Thursday
  - Capped at 120 athletes
  - Elisa is trying to get sponsors to cover shirts, marketing, and small gifts for participating.
  - Looking to capture video and images for social media content
  - Discussed how to get celebrity support
- **Motion to Adjourn; Rahul Bawa – Second; Matthew Ralph,**
  - **All in favor 7, dissenting – 0**