

**USRowing Board of Directors**  
**Jacksonville, Florida**  
**December 6 -7 2014**  
**Annual Meeting and Luncheon 1:30PM**

**“We are USRowing, fostering community, cultivating excellence and developing Olympic Champions.”**

President Erin O’Connell remarks on the year’s progress with regard to the new strategic planning efforts. Progress cards were available reviewing achievements from the year (Attached.)

USRowing Treasurer and AAC Athlete Representative, Esther Lofgren gave a healthy report on the most recently audited organizational financials (Attached).

Northwest Representative Sohier Hall presented the strategic plan developed throughout the year. Focusing on the five strategic initiatives, the presentation described the holistic approach to the organizational overhaul launched in 2014 (Attached).

**Fourth Quarter Board Meeting**

**Call to Order: 2:36PM**

**Attending:** Chris Liwski, Paul Horvat, Dan Herbert, Gary Caldwell, Erin O’Connell, Pete Cipollone, Sohier Hall, Esther Lofgren, Frances Mennone, Tom Feaster, Jim Dietz, Glenn Merry, Scott Gault.

**Absences:** Meghan O’Leary & Alison Townley

**Annual Referee Report: John Wik, Tom Fuller**

Throughout 2014 the Rules of Rowing were heavily restructured This project is introduced by Tom Fuller, Referee Committee Chair. (Attached). This is the most significant change to the Rules of Rowing in recent time. Tom Fuller reports a very positive reaction to the new format from referees.

Laura Kunkenmueller presents on the restructured rules. The new format breaks the current rule book into three sections or chapters; Rules of Racing, Referee Procedures Manuals & LOC Procedure. She impresses that this draft has been reviewed line by line but that we ought to be prepared for scenarios that were inadvertently overlooked. It should be treated as a living document.

- Discussion includes a clarification from Glenn Merry asking if there is a procedural difference for protests. Fuller responds that there are no intended changes.
- Chris Liwski asks if there are any other organizational documents that point to the old version that would need updating as well. There are none known.
- Sohier Hall asks about a system for capturing any gaps. That is done through the Referee Committee.
- Discussion ensues around the wording for rule 1-202 Other Definitions “Weigh in Window”. Chris Liwski asks about the racing cadence rules. They now closely match the FISA rules.

President Erin O’Connell thanks Laura Kunkemueller, Kirsten and Howard Meisner for their authoring of the restructured rules.

Gary Caldwell adds his personal thanks stating that this is a great example of the culture we are trying to create nationwide. This effort hits on several strategic initiatives developed in 2014; Internal Systems, Strengthening the Brand, etc. Gary thanks the three authors, as well as Tom Fuller and Jon Wik.

**Gary Caldwell motions to approve the restructure and the incorporated annually received rule changes. All in favor, MOTION PASSES 11-0**

**Project Accelerate Strategic Initiatives; New Markets via Coastal Rowing- John Wik**

John Wik presents an aggressive plan he has developed to encourage and develop a new market around coastal rowing.

Discussion:

- Chris Liwski asks about ensuring safety. John ensures that our current underwriter is okay with this.
- Frances Mennone asks about the name of the events as “regattas”. Gary Caldwell asks about the new membership categories. Frances Mennone asks about the LOC and USRowing relationships for new events.
- Glenn Merry speaks to the model of working directly with the tourism offices. Paul Horvat asks about market feedback for popularity and revenue sources.
- Sohier Hall asks about the availability of manufacturers and the feasibility of the current plan for a 2015 launch.
- Paul Horvat suggests taking on more partnerships to make this work. Paul Horvat asks about the similarities to Dragon boating business model.
- Tom Feaster suggests that the demand on the referees will be great. This is an active referee job- harder work.
- Sohier asks about any plans to reach out to the current surf boat community.
- Gary Caldwell asks about piggy backing with a 2018 Sarasota bid. He asks if other FISA partners have been approached (Canada).

Glenn highlights that USRowing would be creating the market. Glenn and Wik to flush out safety issues and perusal of a strategic partner/affiliate. John will follow up with directors for potential donors leads.

Chris Liwski suggests that we adopt a coastal membership now as the staff continues to sort out issue affiliated with a new market. The current 2015 budget proposal includes roll out of coastal rowing.

**Frances Mennone motions to approve the new coastal rowing membership category in order to move forward with conservative advancements toward coastal development. All in favor. MOTION PASSES 12-0.**

**2015 Budget Synopsis**

Glenn Merry describes the 2015 budget proposal as reviewed by the Finance Committee. There are in planned overages. Our Boathouse Sports relationship has been designed to encourage sales from both partners.

Some of the 2015 variances from 2014 include: the Rowing Magazine and membership growth project, Veterans Affairs adaptive grant increases of about 250K, increased USOC funding for 2015 of 500k and increased registration fees and revenues from events. Event budget numbers appear differently because referee expenses have been moved to membership.

Discussion:

- Paul Horvat asks when we will have a good sense as to if we are hitting out positive new membership targets. Paul asks when we will know during 2015 if we are hitting targets and if we could take a course correction then. Glenn indicates allowances are made for course corrections.
- Gary Caldwell asks about the 13 month renewal for an annual membership. Glenn Merry indicates that is being addressed through our new improved Regatta Central interface.
- Tom Feaster asks about Marines involvement. The Marines are sponsoring this convention and have showed enthusiasm for more rowing related collaboration.
- Esther Lofgren asks how we are going to meet membership targets. Glenn Merry cites the new membership growth plan created and rolled out by Susan Smith. Glenn highlights the benefits of a relationship with Regatta Central. It is one stop for waivers and registration. All current USRowing databases will roll up to Regatta Central. This is the completion of a multi year effort to improve USRowing's data.

Liberty Mutual is coming online for a major sponsorship for 2015. Gary Caldwell asks about fulfillment costs. The Golden Oars Awards was critical for this relationships development. The USOC was helpful in developing the Liberty Mutual relationship.

The proposed budget was well vetted by the finance committee.

**Pete Cipollone motions to approve the budget with the coastal rowing line item; MOTION PASSES. 9-1**

**Frances Mennone motions to adjourn. MOTION PASSES. 10-1**

**5:45PM Meeting Adjourned**

**December 7 2014**

**Called to Order: 8:15 AM**

**Attending:** Paul Horvat, Dan Herbert, Gary Caldwell, Erin O'Connell, Pete Cipollone, Sohier Hall, Esther Lofgren, Frances Mennone, Tom Feaster, Jim Dietz, Glenn Merry, Scott Gault.

**Absences:** Meghan O'Leary, Alison Townley and Chris Liwski

### **Strengthen our Brand-Marketing Presentation, - Beth Kohl USRowing Marketing Director.**

Beth Kohl explains that for sponsors and partners there is no better time to be involved. The new campaign is based on a follow up to the 'Row to London' campaign. In order to ensure it stays fresh it will roll out in the first quarter 2015. The campaign focuses on USRowing members, non-rowers, sponsors and media with a goal is to showcase the sport and the many ways to activate engagement. She shares several potential partners: several different corporate firms. Beth highlights key components like Brand Ambassadors, Row to Rio anchor teams, hiring a publisher as we did for London, and pushing membership.

Discussion:

- Dan Herbert asks about the overlap between USOC sponsorships and NGB sponsorships. Beth explains the USOC 6 week black out period.
- Sohler Hall asks about the timeline for rollout, goals around sponsorship pitch and asks about preparing the various pitches or angles so that we are ready to sell a particular angle.
- Frances Mennone asks about marrying the various marketing pieces with Susan Smith's membership effort and Beth's.

Beth touches on the RFP currently out for third party help with our brand refresh. That was aided by support from the Project Accelerate Branding Working Team (Townley, Herbert, O'Leary and a team of help). More to come in 2015 on that effort.

Beth highlighted fundraising via many mechanisms especially the new Rock n' Row events. All types of groups invited. Rock n' Row and Golden Oars funds go to USRowing and NRF. It is grass roots fundraising, that helps support the America Rows Fund.

Gary Caldwell commends Beth Kohl for a successful 2014 Golden Oar Awards.

### **Annual National Team Report- Curtis Jordan**

Curtis Jordan speaks to the following history and plans of the national team.

- Curtis captures realistic expectation national team. Since 1988 we've won 2.9 medals every Olympic year. Most ever is 4 medals in one year. Appropriate goals are good for the team and coaches.
- Our performance is budget based. Our best 'assets' (not money) are our athletes. Excellent coaching returns excellent athletes. Excellent athletes who are well supported stick around and perform well.
- In 2012 USRowing narrowed and prioritized various boats. We fund every gender and every weight class. In 2013 we narrowed to 7 and dropped the Women's double.
- 2014 started very well with performances in Lucerne. A Worlds we won four Olympic class medals. Best performance in 10 years. Dan Herbert commends the teams for the 2014 performance.

- 2015 plans looking for return on investments. Excited about 40% increase from USOC and the NRF has fundraising efforts have ramped up. 2015 is critical for 2016 success. It is important for funding because the extra steps to qualify if you miss the first opportunity to qualify are costly and potentially distracting.

The emphasis on local clubs has proven effective. Curtis hopes to add value to the clubs through USRowing.

- The USOC appreciates this cooperation with the clubs.
- There is a new consultant worked with athletes in Boston and OKC.
- CRC and Gary Rogers have been very helpful with men's and women's sculling.
- Craftsbury added high performance coached by Dan Rook.
- Boston Rowing Federation is supporting high performance athlete regardless of what club they hail from. Lightweight mens sculling and Gevie Stone with the single. Curtis called Scott Rook and asked him to coach the 4 scullers in Boston.
- Vesper last year hired Johnny Parker and several heavy men and light women are training there.
- OKC has been a huge help to the womens 2x

Curtis and the HPC are planning a to make a bigger and more public event around the Olympic trials during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April 2016. The decision still open for location, though the preferred location is Sarasota.

Curtis Jordan closes by applauding his team of Matt Imes, Liz Soutter and Mike Zimmer.

Gary Caldwell thanks Curtis for all he doing. He sees a better image being built in the collegiate community towards our national and their selection. Gary adds that our collegiate system does significantly support and feed the US NT.

### **Nominating Committee- Scott Gault**

Discussion regarding the At-Large Nominations.

Nominating Committee recommends that a policy regarding annual donations from the Board of Directors should be drafted and adopted at the March 2015 meeting. Frances Mennone volunteers to work with Glenn to create the policy language.

**Tom Feaster motions to adopt a policy that requires annual board donations. MOTION PASSES 11-0 All in favor.**

- 1) The Nominating Committee recommended the nomination of Ruth McNamara as the At- Large Representative to the Referee Committee.

**Gary Caldwell motions to nominate Ruth McNamara to the Referee Committee. MOTION PASSES 10-0 approved. Dan Herbert had been dismissed to catch an international flight.**

## **Project Accelerate Working Group Progress Reports**

### **1) strengthening the Brand; Dan Herbert working with the team of Alison Townley and Meghan O'Leary**

Dan Herbert presents a written status report. The Brand Working Group has been actively working with Glenn and Beth towards a holistic rebrand of USRowing.

### **2) Internal Systems; Frances Mennone reports on the work of Pete Cipollone and Gary Caldwell.**

In an effort to allow enough time for 2015 short term goal discussion, this report will be delivered electronically. The Internal System Working Groups has also been actively working on the bylaw project. A team of Nick Peterson, Don Langford, Tom Fuller, Christopher Blackwall & Joanne Iverson has been created. Chris Ahrens has also expressed interested in serving but did not make the initial telephone call. Nick Peterson has been named as the Project Leader.

Please see the attached draft of items slated for review during the bylaw work.

## **Short Term 2015 goals of the Project Accelerate Strategic Planning Discussed**

Discussion regarding 2015 goals inside of the new strategic initiatives.

- Keys
  - Measurement of current service assessment.
  - Glenn to develop most expedient revenue options.
  - Expanding and improving communications.
- Glenn Merry will create a revenue assessment for new revenues.

**11:45AM Frances Mennone motions to Adjourn. MOTION PASSES 10-0**

**Next Meeting:**

**Q1 2015 San Diego, CA**

**March 28**