

**Q4 USRowing Board of Directors  
Hilton @ Penn's Landing  
Philadelphia, PA  
December 5, 2015**

**Meeting called to order 7:30 AM**

Attendees: Glenn Merry (USRowing CEO), Al Acosta (SW rep), Gary Caldwell (NE rep and Board Treasurer), Jim Dietz (Male VP), Scott Gault (Male AAC rep), Sohier Hall (NW rep), Dan Herbert (Male At-large rep), Paul Horvat (MA rep), Frances Mennone (MW rep and Board Secretary), Erin O'Connell (Female VP and Board Chair), Jamie Redman (Female AAC rep). Absent: Alison Townley (Female At-large rep), Dan Newman (SE rep); unexcused. Meghan O'Leary (Female Athlete rep) to join later in the morning.

Other attendees: Beth Kohl (USRowing), Joe McCambley (Wonder Factory), Christopher Blackwall (Internal Systems Committee), Nick Peterson (Internal Systems Committee), Tom Fuller (Referee and Internal Systems Committee), Dave Dickison (Row America), Curtis Jordan (USRowing HP Director)

**Branding Session Beth Kohl of USRowing & Joe McCambley**

Beth reviews the progress of the marketing and sponsorship in 2015.

- \$424,000 awarded to USRowing in grants this year. This total is up from \$250K in 2014. USRowing uses consultants for grant writing and media /PR.
- The Veterans Affairs grant is expanding for 2016. The program produced positive experiences and as it grows will continue to require a healthy amount of time to administer.
- Other fundraising efforts beyond that as a nonprofit; Golden Oars, Freedom Rows, America Rows, Row to Rio and Rally Me
- In 2015 Media and Communication departments at USRowing have been restructured and are now one team.
- Beth will send the Board the current pitch package.
- PBS's American experience is covering "Boys in the Boat."

**McCambley and Kohl presented to Staff**

McCambley presents the Branding project that is helping redefine the internal structure of USRowing.

- The inward facing branding pillars have been defined: Unleashing the Champion Within
  - Phalanx, is the all or nothing teamwork that unifies rowers
  - Crucible, is the searing adversity that strengthens rowers
  - Tempering, is the relentless shaping that prepares rowers for life.
- The process on how to integrate them into USRowing messaging has begun.
- McCambley will analyze the website experience (with a focus on mobile) and our content beginning with an audit and then development of a content strategy.
  - Hall suggests consumer panels to advise on how to guide the experience and reboot.
- The USRowing website represents more than just a vessel for information but a representation of our brand.
  - Merry shares this has been a challenge with staff for years
  - Caldwell asks how the information is distilled in terms of organizing content on the website.
  - Mennone states she likes holistic approach.
  - Hall thinks this 100% what he is looking for.
  - Hall highlights the sign in experience is not good.
  - Caldwell notes that people shortcut straight to the file they need.

McCambley shares early concepts for improving the experience.

- Concepts include: Playlists, clubs competing against each other on a Road to Rio, anecdotal reactions to frosh student-athlete first semester experiences, posting coach-ism's as a daily tip. Goal is to get people to return.
- Caldwell suggests something unique outside of what is being done on row2k and rowing illustrates

**Internal Systems Committee Session (committee members presenting: Christopher Blackwall, Nick Peterson).**

O'Connell reiterates that original charge to the ISC from the Board included assessing the USRowing Standing Committees structure. The Board then suggested new areas to research and assess. In order to frame future decisions for the organization the ISC was asked to present the history of USRowing governance and how we got to where we are today.

Blackwall presents summary of history of USRowing's governance and highlights the milestones. This review is done to build an understanding of why some things are organized the way they are.

- Blackwall served as the first USRowing Executive Director.
- The review covers the NGB creation mandate from the USOC and federal government.
- The merger of the Men's and Women's rowing organizations.
- The incorporation of a national board structure that included regional representation.

Peterson presents.

- Peterson is the ISC Chair and served as a USRowing Board Member during the structural downsize in 2006.
- In 2003 the USOC was bloated and a significant right sizing effort was undertaken. That effort addressed; board size, election procedures, regional versus appointed seats
- Peterson speaks of the subjects that the ISC has been focusing on;
  - Values of a constituency based versus competency based board.
  - The Board ability to amend the bylaws.
  - Today's value of regional representation.
  - Election reform.
- Peterson reviews the current policy manuals and how the organization is intended to function using the manuals as guideposts.

O'Connell speaks next steps and why we are undertaking this assessment. She suggests having a full review that is deliverable by March.

- Peterson suggests the review includes all options for reform in order for the Board to see all possibilities.
- Dietz asks about the HPC and how it functions outside of us.
- Horvat suggests that we currently have a shareholder board versus a management board.
- O'Connell suggests monthly calls on this topic if need be in advance of March 2016 Board meeting.

### **2016 Strategic Goals**

O'Connell suggests that Roger and Sandy return for our March or June meeting for a review

Based on the 5 strategies developed in 2014, the 2015 goals were: Grow Revenue, Grow Membership, Increase service quality

O'Connell shares the collected 2016 goal suggestions per director feedback. There is overwhelming support to stay the course and continue with the goals set forth in 2015. These are USRowing goals supported and championed by the Board.

- Hall suggests we are still in growth mode.
- Horvat speaks about the value of affiliations and our relationships to our members.
- Merry suggests growth of indoor and expanding outward facing image.
- Hall suggests going for ripe markets first and dividing opportunities based off of long term and short term.

Frances Motions for 2016 goals to be:

- Grow Revenue
- Grow Membership
- Increase service quality
  - Highlighting assets
    - Referees
    - Events
    - Etc.
- Balanced budget

Dan Herbert seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Board of Directors projects for this year:

- Development of succession planning
- Increase rowing role within the AAC and promote leadership opportunities for current and former rowers to work on USOC initiatives

Hall asks for a business plan for the January call from Glenn.

- Merry will use the current format developed in March 2015.
- Caldwell asks for our affiliations to work for us. To co- market USRowing stuff for us. Leverage against our affiliations. Use Beth to do so
- O'Connell and Hall say go big on building relationships with member driven organizations.
- Merry highlights that this thought feeds into the admin fee 'grant' program in terms of building better relationships with partners.
- Hall speaks to activating our leverage points with coaches and admins and influencers.
- Gault talks about how we need to be great at what we do so that we can make a solid case for affiliation. What are our assets and strengths.

## **Budget Session. 2015 Review and 2016 Forecast**

Discussion on where we are currently for 2015 year-end.

Merry presents the 2016 budget

- See attachment from Merry's meeting packet for the Board. .
- Still needs to be reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Potential big revenue growth sponsors

Mark Nowak is now full time medical staff.

- Elevating athlete services.
- Merry has tasked him with creating training for other doctors and athletic training.
- Mennone asks about making an announcement outside of the athletes themselves.
- The Medical Committee is considering how to use this position to have a broader impact and potentially train the medical world on the benefits of rowing and injury management

Merry presents a balanced budget. O'Connell suggests a call in 10 days to vote to approve the 2016 budget once the Finance Committee has reviewed it.

- Hall asks for "If we have more revenue and if we need to cut something" needs to be included. Herbert reiterates. Merry will deliver that with the budget.
- Merry suggests being more strategic about where we place our venues and to use places that are not expensive.
- Horvat asks about how the finances of the IRA relationships is established.
  - Caldwell reports it is a split now being negotiated.
  - Merry and Caldwell are working with Kohl to develop a better understanding of the value of the collegiate pool for sponsorship.
  - Caldwell is looking for streamlining budget items that overlap.

## **2016 Rule Change Session Tom Fuller & John Wik**

Fuller comments on the benefits of having the Rules Committee and commends the Board for its creation- credits Caldwell.

- The Rules Committee roll out was a half-step for 2015.
- It will be completed in 2016 when both committees will be working under Wik.
- The Rules Committee will create the rules and referees will stick to the referees.
- Wik will present the changes annually or send a delegate.

Fuller presents the findings of the Rules and Referee Committees.

As a special note to the suggested rule changes, the new Rules Committee believes we should work to remove lightweight rowing at youth nationals by 2017 and move to age categories. They ask the organization to review this concept.

- Horvat asks for data points on the value of this. He shares that he does not like this idea.
- Discussion occurs around the value of this concept.

The board has asked Merry to study this further and report by June. Merry will ask Wik to do this.

Caldwell motions to approve the complete 2016 recommendations by the Rules Committee and Referee Committee in their entirety. Seconded by Dietz. All in Favor. Motion approved.

**Mennone motions to go into Executive Session Horvat seconds. All in favor. Motion approved.** Move to Executive Session.

#### **Transgender Policy Discussion- Merry**

Merry has been asked by members what USRowing's transgender athlete policy is. Currently, we accept whatever the athlete declares. Example: The high school recognizes the athlete as a male then USRowing recognizes athlete as a male..

- He has studied other NGBs and how they deal. Most use the very conservative USOC biometric that refers back to male or female DNA.
- 13 states have ruled on this in a liberal way for high school sports participation. (See attachment.)
- Athlete representative, Redman and O'Leary support this effort to get ahead of the discussion.
- Herbert asks about NCAA's language.

Caldwell motions; The Board thanks Merry and staff for their proactive work on transgender policies and to continue to explore this issue further and create a transgender policy that is inclusive and fair. Dietz seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

#### **New Partner Affiliation to encourage national growth: SFA and RowAmerica - Dickison**

Dickison provided an overview of the conversations that began in October 2015 between USRowing, SFA (Sports Facilities Advisory, L.L.C) and Row America. The overall theme was to explore a strategic development planning process aimed at identifying opportunities to grow the sport of rowing and determining the steps

necessary to achieve that growth. Through this scope of work, SFA was tasked to review existing data related to the sport, conduct an on-site strategic planning meeting with project team representatives from RowAmerica, USRowing, and Rowing News, and produce this strategic development summary report to outline the results and next steps in the process. (See attachment)

Board of Directors morning session is adjourned.

### **1:30 USRowing Annual Meeting – convention floor.**

1. President Erin O’Connell welcomes and thanks convention attendees. Highlights annual progress cards available on the tables (attached & linked to the notes for online distribution)
2. Treasurer Gary Caldwell presents the 2015 budget report (attached & linked to the notes for online distribution)
3. Sohier Hall is introduced and reviews via slides the progress made since the strategic planning done in 2014. (attached & linked to the notes for online distribution)
4. O’Connell presents Paul Horvat with a commendation thanking him for his service to the board.

**2:40 Board of Directors afternoon meeting resumes.** O’Leary joins this session.

### **National Team Year in Review Session –Curtis Jordan**

- Jordan reviews the 2015 Worlds results.
  - Acknowledged Tom Tehaar’s considerable success
  - Reviews the performance of the Men’s 8.
  - The Men’s 4 is in the medal hunt
- Jordan reviews the schedule for next year.
  - May 6<sup>th</sup> is the Oklahoma City festival
  - Olympic Qualification event- May 15-17
  - End of March NSR for the pairs
  - April 18-24 Olympic Trial Festival in Sarasota
    - 9 different events, para events
    - NRF is hosting their annual meeting then
- O’Leary asks for the development of more clarity of the athlete development pipeline
- Mennone highlights the changes to the HPC structure going into affect in 2016. All will be appointed; all committees are advisory to the CEO or his designee, all committees moved to the CEO policy manual.
- The Board thanks Jordan for his service.

## Board of Directors Meeting Dates for 2016

Q1 March 12-13: San Francisco

Q2 June 18: Denver

Q3 September 7: via telephone

Q4 December 3: Springfield, MA (Convention)

## Scott motions and Dan Herbert second to descend into executive session

Arise out of executive session.

Paul makes complimentary goodbye comments.

- States that the organization is headed in a very good direction.

**Meeting adjourned 5:15PM**