

## **Minutes of the USHA Annual Summer Virtual Board Meeting, Day 1, September 2, 2020.**

The first meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

President Martin opened the meeting at 8:27 am, PDT. Present were President Martin, VP Denis Hogan, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Secretary Tom Sove, and board members Matt Jorgensen, Jared Vale, Carl Porter, Ralph Fregoso, Terry Nett, Bob DeVleming, Tracy Eubanks, Gary Cruz, Rob Nichols, Ben Van Arsdale, and Alethia Mendez-Caba, as well as staff members Executive Director Matt Krueger, Sam Esser, and Vern Roberts. A quorum was present.

Martin began with a welcome to new employee Sam Esser.

Next, the entire board introduced themselves and made one statement about what they have done to grow handball and the USHA since the last meeting.

Martin presented the house rules and Zoom etiquette for the meeting.

Martin led a brief discussion of the minutes of the Winter Board Meeting. The material contents of the minutes were the issue only insofar as they documented certain tournaments and a future increase in member dues. Since Covid-19 interceded, the tournaments were subsequently cancelled and the dues increase was suspended. Martin proposed that an addendum to the minutes be added stating these facts for clarity of the board actions.

**Mendez-Caba made a motion, seconded by Cruz, that the minutes as written be accepted, with the addition of an addendum clarifying, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the tournaments did not occur and the dues increase was postponed. No discussion ensued. The motion passed 15-0-0.**

Martin reviewed the board/executive committee decisions since the last meeting. They were:

- The Board voted to support the recommendation of the Toledo Handball Club to cancel the 2020 Three-Wall Nationals due to the pandemic situation.
- The Executive Committee voted to name Tucson as host of the National Juniors when the Lattof YMCA became unavailable.
- The Executive Committee voted to postpone the Masters Singles, Doubles and 4-Wall National events to the fall, while cancelling Minnesota as the host for the 2020 4-Wall Nationals, and naming Nashville the National Singles and Schaumburg the National Doubles when they could be held.
- The Board agreed to cancel the Junior Three-Wall as recommended by the Southern California Handball Association.
- The Executive Committee voted to add a \$2,000,000 umbrella to the USHA's insurance coverage.

- The Board approved President Martin's travel expense to attend the National Collegiates in Austin.

She followed that with the president's report. The highlights were

- She attended the collegiate national tournament, and noted staffing was a minor issue with two venues, and she was enthusiastic about the change in the banquet procedures.
- These have been challenging times for the USHA and handball, noting our staff has been working hard in providing content for Court Shorts and the magazine, including working at home and the office.
- The cancellation of tournaments has been frustrating but staff is stepping up keeping people engaged in the game
- A PPP loan has been obtained with the good work of Roberts and Birrell;
- There have been three conference calls with USA Racquetball addressing a mutual problem of losing courts and larger venues. Martin and staff will cooperate and write letters to various facilities urging court retention. Martin noted the ramifications of future cooperation with USAR will entail involvement with several of USHA standing committees, notably Promotion, First Ace, Technology, and Member Services. This news was met with positive concurrence by the board.

Martin reviewed the At-Large board positions to be voted on at this meeting tomorrow. There currently is a slate of four candidates for two positions, with Cruz declining to rerun, Van Arsdale agreeing to rerun, and three new candidates. Martin asked board members to review the candidate statements prior to tomorrow.

Birrell gave the treasurer's report. He started with the fact the USHA was successful in receiving a fair BPP loan, with 80% of it forgiven. He is still striving to get 100% forgiven. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the USHA is experiencing a reduction in revenues, with a corresponding reduction in expenses. Highlighting those are the loss of income from national tournaments and a decrease in expenses due to the cancellation of a physical summer board meeting. He never-the-less optimistically expects the budget results to be very close to predictions.

In addition Birrell reported the stock portfolio was down at the beginning of the year but is making a comeback. The annual audit was performed with no deficiencies noted. He concluded with a plea for board members to obtain their annual quota of six new members, noting membership is the major source of revenue.

Discussion ensued regarding membership revenue and segued to the possibility of getting handball in front of football coaches for a cross training activity for their currently idle players. There is a proposal in the southeast wherein a handball player will offer such a program that

would be complete with subsidizing new cross training members. This could expand to baseball as well.

The board took a 10-minute break.

Martin gave the Planning Committee report, starting with thanking Vern Roberts for his tenure as USHA Executive Director. She then announced the President's Club gift of a new USHA van. There was no President's Club meeting at the Hall of Fame event and, therefore, no further plans can be made by them at this time. Next was introduction of a bylaw amendment allowing for the removal of an inactive board member. It was noted there has been a historical belief that such protocol was in place, but it is not written formally anywhere. Such a protocol is needed for board members who are not contributing, primarily by not being present at board and committee meetings and voting on issues presented to the board. The intent is this protocol would be a last resort in addressing such malfeasance.

**A motion was made by DeVleming, seconded by Van Arsdale, to adopt the bylaw change allowing for the removal of a board member as presented, to be so incorporated in the Board of Directors section as new item 11. During discussion it was made clear a 2/3 vote was required to pass a bylaw change. The motion passed 15-0-0.**

Sove presented the Game Committee report starting with the proposal of a new concussion protocol. The committee reviewed input and advice from doctors, professors/scholars, various medical sources, lawyers, and reviewed material in concussion handouts and various web site referrals. Sove noted all terminology and jargon used is acceptable to all reference sources. Briefly, the concussion protocol will start by requiring the Tournament Director to be advised of any incident, the establishment of Medical Control, a directive for Medical Control to determine the need for a concussion Risk Assessment, and referral to a proper professional for the formal Risk Assessment. Another aspect of the protocol includes a directive of cooperation with the host facility's Concussion Protocol and Medical Control, if any.

**A motion was made by Martin, seconded by Hogan, to accept the protocol as presented and add it to the USHA Rulebook as "Rule 4.10 TIMEOUTS C.2) Concussion." Ensuing discussion centered on liability issues, the role of Tournament Directors and their ability to understand the rule, the makeup of Medical Control, and possible costs of facility Medical Control usage. The motion passed 15-0-0.**

Sove brought up the official USHA ball status and that there was a need for more feedback. He noted there was another new formulation of the ONE ball being sampled. The Zoom referee meetings/clinics were well received. Sove ended with a brief report on continuing Game Committee goals, and the probability of reviewing three rule changes at next winter's board meeting.

Mendez-Caba gave the One-Wall report. Because of the appearance of Covid-19 at the start of the season handball has been very quiet, and all but one local tournament has been cancelled.

New York City is not issuing permits to use city facilities for handball, but local play has been occurring. She noted social distancing has been the normal practice. It was noted North Dakota and Minnesota hosted one-wall tournaments this summer. Vale added he experienced one big ball event, at which there was a behavior issue. Also, the ONE ball was introduced in New York and it has been widely accepted and preferred. Vale also noted the one-wall organizations in New York had merged into a group called "The Committee." There are two smaller events coming up – small ball only. Vale praised Justin Rodriguez, the newly named State Chair, for bringing the groups together. Mendez offered a recommendation that One-Wall fall in line with 4-wall and cancel the national big ball and small national tournaments for 2020. She further shared an update from World Handball Council President Raquel Murphy that the World Championships remain slated to happen in October, 2021, in Crooke Park, Ireland. Mendez finished by stating the One-Wall Committee's 2020 goal of bringing more certified referees to one-wall was slowed by the pandemic but will be working on virtual clinics.

Porter asked about a new sample ball the ONE folks are bringing to the board as a more user-friendly ball. New samples should be seen by the board in the next month.

In the Promotion Committee report Sove started by reviewing the national tournament schedule for 2020 and 2021, both of which have been severely affected by Covid-19. In 2020, the Junior 3-wall, Wall Ball, 1-wall and 3-wall tournaments have been cancelled. The Hall of Fame, Master singles and doubles, and 4-wall nationals are all in a state of postponement. The Junior National 4-wall, previously moved from Chicago to Tucson, is in state of flux. There is a deadline of October 1 to decide to hold the event or cancel it.

**Sove asked for a motion to cancel the 2020 Wall Ball and Small Ball Nationals. Martin moved and Jorgensen seconded. The motion passed 15-0-0.**

Sove continued with a review of the entire 2021 season stating it is undetermined at this point but there are potential sites. The prime Promotion Committee goal this year was improvement of the publicity of our Organization, Coach, and Volunteer of the Year Awards. A new preface was written and will be posted on the web site. In addition, on a monthly basis this message will be a front page item on the home web page and included in Court Shorts, with a link to the forms; and emails with the same message will be sent monthly to board members, state chairs, regional commissioners, and various other ambassadors. Sove finished with a statement the next prime goal for the Promotion Committee is to establish a firm timeline for the split 4-wall nationals.

The Collegiate Committee report was conducted by Martin. This committee is working on strategies to retain players and USHA involvement after graduation. Based on this goal, they were able to develop a subcommittee composed of students to serve at a sounding board, have a Player Representative meeting at the national tournament, involve students as the primary speakers at the banquet, allow a student committee to determine recipients of the Spirit of

Handball awards, and promote knowledge of the rules. They will continue to work on student participation in write-ups of results for the magazine. The committee has rewritten a part of the collegiate manual pertaining to eligibility guidelines. Questions were raised regarding the maximum age limit of 28 being too high. A straw vote was taken regarding how the proposal was written.

**A motion was made by Sove, seconded by DeVleming, to accept the eligibility change as presented. Discussion ensued regard to desire to do away with appeals. Nichols suggested using 26 since it's a common cutoff for insurance, NCAA and more. There was also concern about needing to play singles in order to play doubles. The motion passed, 10-6-1.**

Martin will let Collegiate Committee Chair Wells know of the concern on the items discussed.

The first day of the meeting was adjourned at 11:53 am PDT.

### **USHA Annual Summer Virtual Board Meeting, Day 2, September 3, 2020**

The second meeting was conducted via Zoom.

Martin reconvened the meeting at 8:27 am PDT. There were no changes in attendees. She called the meeting to order at 8:32 am PDT.

Hogan presented the First Ace report. Due to the nationwide inactivity prompted by Covid-19 most of the programs that received grants have been idle, with only five of thirteen programs able to do anything. Likewise, travel disbursements have been shut down. Hogan reported on his own collegiate survey of college graduates and their post-college playing habits. Of note, his findings are that there are three aspects of the college experience that are most compelling: the personality of their coaches, the friendships and camaraderie of teammates and others, and the desire to play in more college tournament. In spite of this, he has found very few graduates continue to play. Learning what the issue(s) are to bringing them back is the goal. Cruz noted that some of the recent grads were having trouble finding where handball was being played in their new locale. Discussion ensued with comparisons with another survey started by Sam Esser.

Cruz then followed with Member Services, starting with their work on a rating system.

- They found there are many player rating program available to incorporate. He prefers to start the player rating program with the collegiate players, but that is problematic with no tournaments being conducted to obtain feedback; therefore this will be pended.

- Regarding social media, Instagram seems to be the most popular, yet the USHA has a very small activity there. He noted since USHA staff took over that activity has picked up.
- There is a need for more contact with new members, such as contacting them within 30 days with a welcome letter, and advising a board member of new members in their area.
- On the subject of membership retention they note the USHA needs more contact with members to maintain their membership, and is asking board members to get involved here. Also, the USHA needs to promote Booster memberships. The USHA also can offer more things online, such as referee clinics and instruction clinics
- There is a need to improve our brand, what people think when they say USHA. The marketing of handball and the USHA has not been good. The perception is the USHA has lacked innovation and is slow to respond.
- There is a need to develop a more comprehensive data base of court facilities nationwide.

Cruz made a recommendation to offer an extension of one year's membership free to all US college graduate seniors who compete in our national collegiate tournament, which will also be offered retroactively to the 2020 graduates.

**Porter made a motion to accept this recommendation, seconded by Birrell. Discussion noted this will help USHA keep track of graduating seniors and could amount to 40-60 extensions. Birrell asked how it would be funded: First Ace and that was the consensus. The motion passed 15-0-0.**

Technology was next, led by Van Arsdale. He started by displaying the Membership Dashboard, which displays the regions that have the largest potential for membership improvement. Next he displayed the court database, which at this stage only shows locations of courts. There are 2300 courts identified, but not all are populated by handball players. Van Arsdale intends to refine this data. He also expects to add player numbers listed by demographics in each territory of the US. He asked for board approval to move forward on these projects, offering quarterly reports. The board overwhelmingly approved his actions by consensus. Van Arsdale finished his report with a brief synopsis of the committee goals which included education on existing technology and making Bracket Ace the standard tournament program.

Martin gave the Hall of Fame report. This committee prefers to meet in person; therefore, their activity will be postponed to when that will be feasible.

Nett gave the Personnel report. The Board Survey shows nominally better results than recent surveys. Nett was pleased with the numbers of surveys received. Discussion mostly centered on the diversity makeup of the board, specifically with representation by big ball, NE Region

seemingly dominated by New York, and the large size of the Central Region. The next goal of Personnel will be to update the Employee Policy Manual.

Birrell gave a very brief review of the Investment Committee, noting as he did in his Treasurer Report, that the stock market investments have been wavering. He is also seeking new eyes to review the portfolio and perhaps get other points of view on the USHA's management.

Insofar as the chair of the Fund Raising/Revenue was absent from the meeting, this report was tabled.

The board took a ten minute break.

The meeting resumed with Birrell giving a budget update. He presented a modified budget scaled back reflecting the effects of Covid-19, as of the end of July, 2020. With the addition of the PPP loan he hopes the USHA will break even at the end of the year. He noted the budget could be worse off without that loan, and there is still work to do to raise revenue. The board can help by pushing new and renewal memberships.

Discussion segued to alternate ways to raise money:

- Suggesting relying on membership as our primary source of revenue may not be wise in the near future with 48% of our members in the over-65 age bracket;
- This goes to Funding/Revenue Committee, which will need a new chair;
- Fund raising starts with staff;
- The Endowed Legacy Fund is not active, it should be reinvigorated;
- Now may not be a good time to ask for money considering the effect of Covid-19 on the economy.

Birrell ended the discussion stressing three major points for the rest of this year: memberships, memberships, memberships.

The next agenda item was election of At-Large board members. Cruz announced he will not run for another term. Martin and the board vigorously thanked him for his service. Van Arsdale announced he would run for another term. There were also three other candidates, Kyle Kloss, Roy Harvey, and James Bardwell. Sove detailed the way the election would work with a minimum of eight votes needed to be elected. The board took time to review all candidate statements and proceeded to vote electronically. Confidentiality in voting was maintained. After the first round Sove reported that Van Arsdale was re-elected and a runoff was needed to elect the second new member. After two further rounds without a candidate receiving eight votes, one was removed due to receiving the lowest number of votes in the preceding rounds. Kloss was the eventual winner to serve three years as an at-large board member.

Martin reviewed the slates of regional board positions up for election this Fall. Regional nominating chairs were assigned, along with the news received at this meeting that Jamie

Simon was resigning his board position and will not be rerunning. Eubanks (Rocky Mountain), Vale (Mid-America) and Jorgensen (Central), are the nominating chairs.

This was followed by a review of committee makeups. DeVleming gave another request to combine Funding/Revenue Committee with the Investment/Endowment Committee, stating they belong in one place. He also recommended Sam Esser be included in the Collegiate Committee.

The Worlds are still tentatively scheduled for October, 2021.

Martin gave her closing remarks, emphasizing thanks to Vern Roberts for his four decades of service to handball and the USHA. She then thanked all board members for their participation. She asked the board to push membership, and to welcome new members and/or players in their areas when presented.

**The next meeting is scheduled for January 22-24 in Tucson.**

Each board member was asked to declare one thing they will accomplish in the interest of handball/USHA for the remaining year. Memberships were the key topic along with what's happening regionally with courts and play as well as pushing to start some youth programs.

Martin adjourned the meeting at 11:44 am PDT.

Meeting Minutes provided and submitted by Tom Sove, Secretary.