

Minutes of the USHA Winter Board Meeting,
January 21, 2021.

The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom. President Martin opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m., PST. Present were President Martin, Vice President Denis Hogan, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Secretary Tom Sove, and board members Matt Jorgensen, Jared Vale, Carl Porter, Kyle Kloss, Quinn Foley, Bob DeVleming, Ben Van Arsdale, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Tracy Eubanks, Rob Nichols, Ralph Fregoso, and Terry Nett. Also attending were staff members Executive Director Matt Krueger, Sam Esser, and Vern Roberts. All board members were present at the start.

Martin welcomed Terry Nett and Rob Nichols back to the board as well as Kyle Kloss as an at-large member and Quinn Foley as the Central Region's representative.

Mendez-Caba moved to approve the minutes from the Summer Meeting. Nett seconded and the motion passed, 16-0-0.

Martin asked the board members and staff to introduce themselves and share what they have done to grow handball and/or the USHA since the last meeting. Members shared whether handball was being played in their cities. Some areas were able to play inside as well as outside, including one- and three-wall during the pandemic. Board members were working on keeping the lines of communications open in their area.

Martin asked for names of those planning to run for an officer's position available. The President has one more year in that term. So far, existing officers are planning to run for re-election.

This was followed by a review of Executive Committee and Board decisions made since the last board meeting. The Board voted as follows:

- New Women's Commissioner Appointed – Kristen Hughes.
- Cancellation of the 2020 National Junior Four-Wall Championships.
- Support the EGBAR Foundation with budgeted funds (from canceled golf event).
- Support the Technology Committee's Recommendation and agree to participate in a Court Database Project.
- Support the Collegiate Committee's Recommendation to postpone the event scheduled for February 2021.

The Executive Committee voted as follows:

- Coney Island Players Championship to be the USHA One-Wall Men's Open Singles National Championship.
- Meet Virtually for 2021 USHA Winter Board Meeting.

Martin thanked Vale for bringing this year's one-wall nationals to fruition with a large Open Singles draw. Vale noted it was held on one day and he had a strong group running the tournament.

President's Report: Martin noted the lack of events resulted in a loss of camaraderie but there have been communications with players. It has been painful to cancel tournaments, as well as the effect on our budget. She noted her appreciation to staff for keeping interest in handball through efforts to find topics for the magazine and Court Shorts, as well as communicating with state chairs and ambassadors. The status of our Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and progress on our new court data base were

discussed. Martin, along with staff, has been meeting with the USA Racquetball group to keep courts available for our sports, and has made efforts to remain in contact with WPH. She remains hopeful and optimistic about the future of handball and looks forward for the chance to kick-start play again when it's possible.

Treasurer's Report: Birrell noted the challenging 2020 financial year that resulted in less income but also less expenses due to so fewer events. He also noted the USHA's efforts to garner PPP funds from the SBA. Thanks to PPP funding, contributions to Alive and Well, and investment income, the USHA ended the year in the black. That resulted in additional funding being moved to the contingency funds. Since some grant recipients were not able to use funds in 2020, it was agreed to roll those grants into 2021. Martin noted there could be higher equipment expense when gloves and eye guards should no longer be shared by participants. There was concern for the loss of memberships and resulting income. Vale suggested allowing auto-pay with credit cards in addition to bank accounts. A sales report was generated for balls and gloves with the slower sales through the past year.

For the 2021 budget, Birrell noted there would be additional PPP funding available. He also noted that tournaments were not being considered since the income and expense would not create a net positive or negative dollar amount for the most part. Prize money is still included in the Promotion budget in hopes events can be held. First Ace included some funding in the budget for funds unable to be used in 2020. The 2021 budgets presented were mostly balanced.

Game Committee: Sove presented potential rules changes as recommended by the Game Committee:

Sove moved to adopt an amendment to Rule. 4.10 C 1. regarding leaving the premises for treatment of blood issues. Mendez-Caba seconded. The Motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove moved to change the wording regarding ball skids due to wetness in Rule 4.7.A.1. Martin seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove moved to allow wording allowing for the adding of a technical on top of an avoidable by adding part C to Rule 4.9. DeVleming seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove noted the committee completed its 2020 goals regarding the referee certification program and the concussion protocol. The 2021 goal is to update the referee guide. One future goal of creating a referee clinic video will be scrapped due to the use of Zoom virtual clinics, which were well attended and well received. It is considered better to have live virtual clinics in order to: provide current information, interpretations and rule changes; to be able to answer questions timely; confirm attendance for certification; and they can be recorded for reference on the web site. The goal of eye guard education will be addressed in 2022; however, Sove mentioned the USHA has a head start on this with the publication of an eye guard article in the next magazine.

On the goal of acquiring more data in order for the Board to decide on the viability of the ONE Ball, Sove noted that the current inability for our general population to play has greatly hindered activities to garner further feedback. Therefore, this goal is currently in limbo; yet, it will be an ongoing goal. Sove turned this discussion over to Krueger for more detailed information on the state of the ONE Ball.

Krueger noted the ongoing work with testing new variants of the ONE Ball, hoping for a more user-friendly ball. Another batch is due for testing this Spring, and samples will be given to each Board

member. As for the ONE Ball in its current state, Krueger emphasized the need for more feedback when normal play is able to resume.

Membership Services Committee was chaired by Gary Cruz who is no longer on the board and Martin presented his report that included a request for a new chair. A player rating effort is in the works for when play can take place again. An extended one-year free membership option for graduated Collegiate National Tournament players in 2020 has been implemented. Twenty-two past players have been contacted with twelve responses.

Cruz's report included a goal to improve our branding image, what members think of the USHA. This dovetails with a Personnel Committee suggested survey, to be discussed later. Otherwise, Cruz suggested the conduct of regional focus group Zoom meetings to get this information, as well as to increase our communication with our players. It was noted Foley, Van Arsdale, Esser and Kloss have already held a Central Region focus group via Zoom that was well received and well attended.

Cruz further suggested the committee look at the distribution of merchandise and what benefits the USHA can offer distributors. A 2022 goal for the committee is to address relationship with all other handball organizations. Cruz concluded with a call for a new Chair; Kloss volunteered to serve in this position.

Investment/Endowment chair Birrell noted some growth in all the funds over the past year. While the last four year's revenue has been satisfactory, he talked of his desire to seek consultation from other financial professionals and will be scrutinizing the USHA's portfolio in depth. Birrell's goals include growing the funds in order to have the potential for helping the operating budget.

Funding / Revenue Committee is missing a chair and has not met so there was no report. There was general discussion about raising revenue that included subjects such as renewing road shows, acquiring a large sponsor, and utilizing craft beer breweries.

Martin offered the Planning Committee's review of filling committee membership and the work of the committees going forward. While some efforts are duplicated among committees, each has separate potential outgrowths. Foley noted his interest in following up on road shows that Sove brought up and serving as chair of the Funding/Revenue Committee.

Mendez-Caba presented the **One-Wall Committee** report and noted the first goal was to increase the number of certified one-wall referees. The goal will be moved to 2021 due to the pandemic when events and clinics can be held. She wants to have three virtual referee clinics this year and asked for support. Sove/Krueger agreed to cooperate at her convenience. Establishing one-wall regional events will be the goal for 2022, hopefully starting with a PA, NJ, NY and CT event in New Jersey. One-Wall wishes to have a paid referee program similar to that of four-wall, and committed to make it mandatory paid referees will need to be certified. She then brought up several issues regarding the Wall Ball Nationals and the Small Ball One-Wall Nationals and Sove made a motion in that regard. However, before the motion could be seconded discussion centered on addressing the issues in Promotion Committee. Sove withdrew the motion.

Vale noted a need for a one-wall ambassador for the players in Florida. He will reach out to the Regional Director.

General discussion followed, centering on the best way to reach one-wall players. Mendez-Caba stated social media was most important, depending on individuals of the community, followed by reaching out to the local organization.

The board broke for lunch at 12:04.

The board reconvened at 1:05.

Collegiate Committee report was submitted by Chair Mike Wells and presented by Martin. Their 2020 goals were successfully attained, including running a successful national tournament, identifying future hosts, publishing an updated Collegiate Manual on the USHA web site, and updating eligibility rules. In addition, the 2020 goal stressing involving collegiate players in their current handball activities in order to better prepare them for participation after graduation was also overall successful. Plans were to form a subcommittee consisting entirely of collegiate players for input on salient issues; hold a player rep meeting at the national tournament; speak and present awards at the national tournament; and compose articles for the magazine. Another idea was to investigate methods to improve referee performance, perhaps requiring referee certification to participate in the national tournament. There needs improvement in certifying referees and assigning articles. The goal for 2021 is to rebuild existing collegiate programs, especially if needed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 goal will be to improve retention of players after graduation; 2023 goal is to increase the number of collegiate programs.

Discussion included Van Arsdale suggesting a juniors committee comparable to what First Ace offers and Kloss offered to help. Martin noted it would fall under the player recruitment task force. Hogan noted his effort to survey recent college graduates and bring them back to the sport if they had left it. The USHA needs to improve the collegiate player's transition to adult play, perhaps by introducing them to the handball community before they graduate. The Board understands it is incumbent on the USHA to track players after graduation and not the coaches. An alumni event will be planned when possible.

Promotion Committee started with the nominations for this year's Volunteer Awards. There were nominations for Coach and Volunteer, but none for Organization. The Awards Committee settled on two selections, which were unanimously approved by the full Promotion Committee.

Martin motioned that we accept the nominations for Coach of the Year and Volunteer of the Year as presented. Jorgensen seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove noted the committee's goals have been put on hold until events can be held.

The next Promotion issue was the USHA tournament schedule for 2021.

Sove moved to approve the tournament dates for the 2021 Wallball Nationals of June 25-27, and the dates for the 2021 Small Ball One-Wall Nationals to be Aug. 6-8, noting the reduced time from five days to three days. Mendez-Caba seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove moved to approve a uniform tournament fees to the 2021 Wallball and Small Ball One-Wall nationals as follows: Pro/Open events \$60 first event and \$20 second event, amateur events \$35 first event and \$15 second event. Vale seconded. Motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove moved to approve a uniform temporary membership fee of \$20 per person for the 2021 Wallball nationals and Small Ball 1-Wall nationals. Hogan seconded. Motion passed 16-0-0.

Sove moved to approve the use of the ONE Ball as the official ball for the 2021 Small Ball One-Wall nationals. Fregoso seconded. Kloss asked about availability of the ONE ball for the players and Vale noted the ONE ball is readily available, and is the preferred ball locally. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Sove noted that no other events were scheduled for the 2021 season at this time and the next decision will be needed for the Collegiates, potentially to be in April. The Four-Wall Nationals had been tentatively scheduled for Portland but that facility's availability is undecided. The Masters events are still up in the air. It was noted a decent planning period will be needed to organize and announce future tournament dates, perhaps more than two months advance notice.

First Ace report started with Esser's review of the grant funding for 2020 and proposed for 2021. There were nine programs proposed for new 2021 funding and it was suggested that any remaining funds from 2020 be made available in 2021. The budgeted amount for total grants was \$15,000.

Martin moved that the First Ace Grant recommendations be funded as presented. Van Arsdale seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Chair Hogan noted the first-year goal will be to reach out to Kinesiology Departments regarding the benefits of teaching handball. Esser noted a "road show" format to promote the First Ace program for funding as well as starting youth programs. Sove will conference with Esser, Foley and others to discuss road shows.

Hall of Fame had nothing to report since Chairman Mike Dau did not want to meet virtually to discuss nominations.

Technology Committee report was presented by Van Arsdale with a review of the 2020 goals. Becoming familiar with existing technology was the 2020 goal and promoting the use of Bracket Ace which can even be used at the Collegiates. Van Arsdale asked for Board support to use the software. There are advantages for handball specific applications, including refereeing with one's phone through Ace Referee which will give real-time score, court availability, and potential bracket updating by interfacing with Bracket Ace. The USHA Court Database is designed to show people where handball is being played throughout the nation. Van Arsdale was ecstatic with the amount of input he has received to fill in the places to play on a map of the USA that can be filtered by type of game, ball, etc. Van Arsdale asked to have the database be built a bit more thru the ambassadors before taking it to the entire membership.

In **Planning**, Martin noted the board's summer meeting adopted rotation would be in New York this year. Toledo was to host last year and Martin suggested the board meet there over the Labor Day event, which would give the board more time as well as the more likely chance the later event would happen. Nett asked if an in-person meeting could happen at another event should Toledo be canceled again. Logistically, the question would be if there is enough time to plan to get to New York. Hosting the summer board meeting in Toledo was approved by consensus. Martin discussed the Committee's desire to continue the current planning process of requiring committees to set goals, thereby giving focus and accountability and aligning joint efforts. The board agreed by consensus.

Personnel was started with Esser leaving the session. Nett then asked Krueger for his comments regarding the office staff. With a small staff, Matt Krueger noted everyone has stepped up. Krueger noted a 2021 goal of helping staff develop professionally. Krueger suggested base salaries and a bonus schedule for staff. Without a full-time person at the front desk, Krueger was asked to let Nett, Birrell and Martin know if some more help was needed there. Krueger noted he felt comfortable asking and would consider hiring part-time help when needed. Krueger then left the session. Staff and Board evaluations of Krueger were discussed confidentially. Birrell presented the salary and bonus recommendations that he built into the budget. Nett moved the Budget recommendation be approved. Porter seconded. After discussion, Nett withdrew his motion and Porter agreed.

Nett moved to approve a different recommendation for employee compensation. Porter seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

The 2020 goal of the committee was to effect replacements for the positions previously occupied by Roberts and Krueger. The goal was achieved with the hires of Krueger and Esser, respectively. Nett will get a new policy manual updated and out for review in 2021. Nett is also working with a consultant who will visit the Tucson office and make recommendations for office procedures and efficiency, as well as to suggest guidelines for a proposed Wellness fund. Finally, a survey of players was recommended to grade the association as well as to get more info on the players. All was agreed to by the board by consensus.

The first day's meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m. PST.

Friday, January 22, 2021

The Meeting reconvened at 8:31 am PST, also virtually via Zoom.

Present were President Martin, VP Denis Hogan, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Secretary Tom Sove, and board members Matt Jorgensen, Jared Vale, Carl Porter, Kyle Kloss, Quinn Foley, Bob DeVleming, Ben Van Arsdale, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Tracy Eubanks, Rob Nichols, Ralph Fregoso, and Terry Nett. Also attending were staff members Executive Director Matt Krueger, Sam Esser, and Vern Roberts. All board members were present at the start.

Martin noted she had contacted the Volunteer of the Year regarding this year's honor.

Birrell presented the salary structure agreed to yesterday and then showed the adjustments to the budget. He also noted a larger amount expected from PPP Funds in 2021. The net effect resulted in .1 Operating Fund showing a \$173 projected profit, and .2 Promotion Fund showing a budgeted gain of \$46. There was a review of the prize money being budgeted for national events with a slight increase based on some fundraising for the one-, three-, and four-wall events.

Martin moved to approve the budget as presented by Treasurer Birrell. Eubanks seconded. Sove asked to see the bottom-line numbers again. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Martin thanked staff and Birrell for the easy process of budget balancing and approval this year.

Board Nominating Committees were formed. Martin and Mendez-Caba have expiring terms. Fregoso and Van Arsdale will chair the committee to gather nominations for these board positions for the

Summer Board Meeting. Regional elections taking place this fall are the Northwest, Northern California and Southeast. Nett will handle will Northwest, Nichols will handle Northern California, and Eubanks will garner candidates for the Southeast. Campaign statements are expected by mid-September. Martin emailed the board responsibilities of nominating chairs.

Officers' elections were conducted with Sove, Birrell and Hogan stating their desire to continue as Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President and providing campaign statements.

Nichols moved to accept the slate and approve it by acclamation. DeVleming seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

The board turned to forming the remainder of the Executive Committee. Three members were required. Running were Porter, Vale, and Nichols.

Jorgensen moved to accept the slate and approve it by acclamation. Mendez-Caba seconded. The motion passed 16-0-0.

Board members were asked to update their committee membership. Kloss was added to First Ace. Cruz is leaving the Collegiate. Kloss will join Collegiate. Foley will chair Funding/Revenue. DeVleming and Hogan will join Investment/Endowment. Kloss will chair Membership Services. Foley will join Promotion. Kloss and Foley will join Technology. Hogan and Kloss will join Player Development / Recruitment Task Force. Foley will join the Big Ball task force. Jorgensen will replace Van Arsdale as chair of Player Recruitment. The new listing will be posted on the website ASAP and Martin asked board members to check the accuracy of emails posted on the website.

Jorgensen asked about adding a Juniors Committee, akin to the Collegiate Committee. Martin noted First Ace was the Committee responsible for the Juniors.

Martin asked the board members to share what they plan to do to grow handball and the USHA before the next meeting. Getting back to playing, hosting events and growing indoor and outdoor groups within the USHA's family, and procuring memberships were some of the most common plans. The Board and staff were thanked for a positive and productive meeting.

The next board meeting is tentatively planned to be held in Toledo during the Three-Wall Nationals.

Martin adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m. PST.

Submitted by
Tom Sove
Secretary

