

USHA Board Meeting Minutes

President LeaAnn Martin called the order at 8:32 a.m. Monday, June 13, 2016 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Fridley, Minn.

Martin demonstrated and explained the gavel that Ken Starcher made for her.

Attending were: Martin, Vice President Rob Pearse, who has Steve Johnson's proxy when he's away for tournament hosting duties, Secretary Tom Sove, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Members Jim Ward, Bill Kelly, Alethia Mendez who has Willie Polanco's, Carl Porter, Ken Starcher, Terry Nett, Jeff Wall, and John Robles who has Tom Martinez' proxy. Absent were Polanco and Martinez. Johnson entered at 9 a.m.

Motion to approve the January, 2016, board meeting minutes was made by Mendez, and seconded by Nett. Motion passed unanimously.

Martin described the Board/Executive decisions since the last meeting.

- The Board approved waiving the USHA membership requirement for the Big Ball (Wallball) Nationals. The entry fee would be \$10 less for members.
- The board approved a revised mission statement the USHA Collegiate program: *It is the mission of the United States Handball Association's Collegiate Program to promote, develop, and expand the sport of handball at the collegiate level. Our goal is to increase awareness of handball's lifelong benefits to university administrators and student athletes; and support recruitment and participation in a yearly intercollegiate competition.*
- The Board approved President LeaAnn Martin's travel to the National Collegiate Championships.
- The Board created a per diem for the President's Travel of \$75 day.
- The Executive Committee (for time as vote was sent on May 16 for the June 11 event and sensitivity) approved a separate National Junior One-Wall Small Ball event to be hosted by Paul Williams and ICHA. USHA provides court permit, balls and awards. The Executive Committee approved a change in format, relief on finances and a specific number of balls for the event.

Collegiate Report: Commissioner Mike Wells came in to give his report. Wells thanked the board members for their support. He presented the new mission statement and the efforts to automate the collegiate tournament format. There is also an effort to create a manual for collegiate teams so that new coaches and teams will have some guidance. New awards were presented this past year, including most improved. The committee changed the nomenclature for events to A, B, C to align better with handball events. Finances are always an issue and he outlined the most recent event at U of Minn. Wells asked the board to consider increasing its support. The Univ. of Minnesota would like to host again in the near future.

Wells asked if the board would entertain changing the eligibility to just US institutions and/or changing the name to international collegiates. He noted eligibility of students, age, support for non-US students going overseas, etc. He asked for a straw poll before the committee got too involved. Pearse noted his desire to keep it open. Wells thought there might be another way to develop competition between US and international players. Sove suggested looking into it due to many reasons. Wells asked if we were trying to promote collegiate handball in the US or internationally. Birrell asked if having international students there enhances the event. Martin indicated that many US universities are looking for international experiences for their students. There's passion on both sides of the argument, Wells reported. Wells heard the board being on both sides and suggested the Collegiate Committee hash it

out for a report. **This plan was accepted by the board by consensus.** Porter suggested a domestic event and then an all-star international competition.

Wells asked for help on expanding the game. Retaining the players after they graduate is the goal. Wells offered the committee's support on retention. He also asked for more support on the website and offered to help with the content, including a format for a collegiate program and succession plans.

President's report: Martin thanked the board for its support. She had attended the collegiates and enjoyed the enthusiasm there. She also attended the Masters in Portland in conjunction with the WPH event. The event was well received. Martin noted she was retiring from WWU as of July 31 and they were raising an endowment to name the handball courts in her honor. Martin asked the board to fill out the questionnaire in the packet for feedback on her presidency. Monthly communication will continue. She's helping Vern, Gary Cruz and Matt with a program to grow handball at UT and U of Minn.

Martin noted the at-large election and who would be running. Ray Leidich, Steve Birrell, Michael Morgan and Ralph Fregoso would be running for the two spots. Robles explained why he wouldn't be running for re-election. He asked the board to look at what they're doing as a commitment to the association and to do more than just the two meetings. We all have great ideas but ask what you can do outside the two meetings to help.

Treasurer's Report: Birrell presented the annual audit and noted the smooth process. Roberts noted the inventory issue with defective balls being replaced. Birrell turned to the year to date and noted we were behind on revenues, especially in membership and merchandising. Fundraising is hard to read at this point. Birrell noted he had been talking at handball banquets and asking for membership, handing out membership applications, etc. He was concerned about the numbers for revenue sections. The board saw some new prototype gloves the staff were working on.

First Ace: Chairman Starcher introduced Matt Krueger to present the half-year grant updates. Two programs funded with the stipulation that we'd receive the 2015 reports haven't come through. That funding won't be given as a result. The half-year reports were all well received. Robles asked about requirements of the half-year reports. Starcher and Martin were to work on the reporting procedure template to make it more streamlined for the grant recipients. Krueger noted the ad in the tournament program was similar to the First Ace reception invitation. Wells would bring some of his team to the Wed. reception.

Game Committee: Chairman Tom Sove described the infraction committee's work on two infractions. Sove asked Martin to remind the board of the code of conduct and that they hold themselves to a high standard. There were two complaints filed and Sove described them and the committee's actions. One member received letter of concern and the other is having his referee certification level lowered. Porter asked about the board confirming the recommendations. **Porter moved that the disciplinary recommendations of the infractions committee be approved. Birrell seconded. In discussion, Sove was asked to review the appeal process and timing. Birrell and Porter withdrew the motion.**

Porter suggested the Game Committee be renamed the Game and Infractions committee since it's one and the same. The website will list the Game Committee, along with all other committees', responsibilities and members.

Membership Services was covered with the treasurer's report and Kelly had additional info for the Planning discussion later.

The Meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:01 and reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

Promotions Committee report: Pearse noted his committee is recommending the Masters singles to Denver and the Masters doubles to Cincinnati. The Women's Classic would be offered to Denver and Cincinnati. The committee is recommending the national four-wall tournament be split into two separate events, one for singles and one for doubles. This would be in response to our members' desire for less pressure on time and money in attending the 4-wall national tournament. Wall asked about alienating players who were coming now and Porter noted the need to travel twice would be a detriment to the major event of the year. The splitting would result in some changes, including a shorter time frame for each event. The recommendation to include all entrants in the same field (such as Open/A, Masters/Masters B), with the first-round losers dropping down to the lesser-skilled event was part of this discussion. **Mendez moved to split the four-wall nationals into separate singles and doubles championships. Sove seconded.** In discussion, Dykes asked if we found a host that would take both simultaneously, would we be OK with that possibility. There was agreement that was a possibility. Positively, there will be more events and titles offered. Timing would be a discussion point as one or more of the events could be held in the fall. Further, it was agreed the existing Master Invitational Singles and Doubles tournaments will still be offered. **The motion passed 12-4.** Mendez recommended a communications task force from Promotions to get the word out to hosts and players. Martin, Roberts and Pearse were tasked for the message.

Pearse moved that a min. number of four players and/or teams be necessary to constitute a national championship with the exception of 75 and older, juniors, Women's B and Women's age group play. Sove seconded. Motion passed 15-1.

A concern for the Worlds in 2018 was brought up with trying to find a potential backup if needed. Vern was asked to follow up with Alaska hosts.

One-Wall Update: Mendez reported on the one-wall big and small ball juniors events and the potential for having ICHA host them. There is a Wallball International Federation event in July, to be followed by a Worlds Game exhibition in Poland in 2017. Mendez noted there is a worlds big ball tour in Europe and is asking the board to increase its focus on big ball. To that end, Mendez asked that domestic one-wall big ball be referred to as wallball, being consistent with the terminology the rest of the world is using. Wall went on record saying he liked the ring to it. **Pearse moved that the USHA use the term wallball to refer to one-wall big ball. Nett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

The committee is recommending the USHA form a subsidiary to run wallball and all of one-wall in New York due to the USHA's unfavorable history in one-wall. Support in New York is garnered by running events not by membership organizations. Pearse asked about the best group to partner with in NY to grow wallball. Pearse thinks it's time to jump on board with the wallball world. Mendez will let the One-wall Committee know that the USHA wants to enhance its image in the community and explore a local partnership. The board agreed to host next summer's board meeting in New York in conjunction with the one-wall small ball national tournament.

Hall of Fame: Dau asked the board to relook at the inducting of a person in two categories to the Hall of Fame. Mike wanted the board to know that the committee voted unanimously against it. Sove suggested the board take the committee's position seriously as they do the board's work. Dykes noted the committee's recommendations come to the board and are approved so the board is not telling them what to do but to make their own decision. Porter noted Dau may have felt the other awards the USHA give out would be lessened as a result. **Porter moved that the board accept the Hall of Fame Committee's unanimous recommendation that a person can be inducted only once into the hall of fame but remain eligible for other prestigious USHA awards. Dykes seconded. The motion passed 14-1-1.**

Nationals: Johnson noted the band would start playing at the banquet at 6 pm. Sponsorships were noted and recognized. The banquet and hall of fame presentation would be on Thursday at the hotel.

Personnel: Chairman Nett will be looking at the employee guide by the next meeting. He noted some items that needed re-working. Martin asked Nett and the Personnel Committee to continue this work. The board looked at the self-evaluation ratings and Nett noted the need to look at two scores that needed work. Fundraising and monitoring progress toward goals scored lower than other items and he suggested working on those. Comments included the state of the association, in general being a concern.

Robles asked for a job description for the Executive Director and Nett will re-work the one he has.

Planning: Chairwoman Martin presented a brainstorming document that was compiled from previous meetings. She assigned Crowdfunding to the task force headed by Birrell. The "Magazine" was assigned to Martin and Roberts. Incentives and services for membership growth went to Johnson and Membership. Outreach and promotion went to Pearse and Promotions. Tournaments and Nationals went to Martin and Roberts. Merchandise to Johnson. Pro players went to Pearse. Investment and Funding went to Wall. Board organization would be headed by Martin with help from Roberts.

Every meeting will be started by going around the table asking "what have you done to promote handball and the association?" At the end of the meeting, the question will be "what will you do to promote handball and the association?"

Kelly suggested looking at other organizations, such as racquetball and wrestling, to see what's worth emulating. Kelly passed out two suggestions regarding promotions, including adding board bios to web page. He would contact the USRA and wanted to get a gift registry for junior development off the ground. Roberts noted the racquetball folks are easy to talk to and would be interested in working with us in a collaboration to keep courts.

Investment: Chairman Wall presented the investment report that included a slight gain in the endowment fund for the first quarter.

New items: Mendez suggested doing more in technology with information systems such as Wiggio. She finds it helpful for archiving. The Big Ball Task Force is now the Wallball Task Force and Alethia is asking for support to host and promote the wallball event in Toledo. Tom Martinez, Dykes, Alethia and Polanco are working on raising the additional funding.

Election: Birrell committed to rerun for the at-large position and presented his campaign statement. Robles spoke on behalf of Ralph Fregoso and his excellent qualifications and personality. Martin spoke of Leidich's long support of USHA and handball. Martin and Kelly spoke of Michael Morgan's passion for the sport and its development. Secretary Sove counted the votes and Birrell was re-elected. Ralph Fregoso earned the second seat. Roberts requested candidate campaign statements for the Regional elections be in his possession by Sept. 1.

Roberts reported on the President's Club work this past year including a new Hall of Fame Digital display.

Kelly congratulated Pearse on being inducted to the Canadian Handball Hall of Fame.

Committees: Add Tom Flores to Wallball Task Force. Mendez will ask Fregoso to join that task force.

The next meeting will be at the DoubleTree in Tucson in January.

Pearse congratulated LeaAnn on the job she's doing and is happy she won the election as Pearse now serves as Vice President.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25.

Submitted by Tom Sove
Secretary
June 21, 2016