

# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the USHA Summer Board Meeting

June 22, 2023

President Denis Hogan opened the meeting at 8:20 a.m. EDT at the offices located at 1605 Voorhies Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.

Hogan noted the delayed meeting start was due to limited access to the meeting room. Board members present in person were President Hogan, Vice President Jared Vale, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Ben Van Arsdale, Rich Curtner, Rob Birrell, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Rob Nichols, Kyle Kloss, and Terry Nett. Present virtually were Swehosky, Foley, and Porter. Also present was Executive Director Matthew Krueger, with Development Director Sam Esser attending virtually. Absent were Martin, White, and Secretary Sove. A quorum was present.

Hogan welcomed board members in attendance and those attending virtually. The first item addressed was reading the minutes of the winter board meeting. **Mendez-Caba made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by R. Birrell. The motion passed 14-0-2.** The abstentions were White and Sove. Martin submitted her proxy vote to Hogan.

Next was a review of the decisions of the board and Executive Committee since the last board meeting.

### Board decisions:

- USHA president's travel to Collegiate National Championships in Tucson
- USHA president's travel to four-wall nationals and Wallball nationals
- Summer board meeting (New York in conjunction with Wallball nationals)

### The Executive Committee approved the following:

- Approved the Eike Consulting Handball Fund
- Keep the A divisions "as is" versus moving selected players to the Amateur Open division

Hogan mentioned the upcoming elections for at-large board positions at the summer meeting, Kloss indicated he would not be seeking reelection. Van Arsdale would seek reelection and deliver an oral campaign statement to the board. Max Langmack submitted his candidate statement for the at-large position.

Hogan gave his **President's Report**, noting that the winter board meeting went very well, with various issues discussed and addressed at that time. He also reviewed a successful National Four-Wall Championships, held over Memorial Day weekend in conjunction with the World Handball Council Invitational. Lisa Fraser Gilmore's Hall of Fame induction ceremony was also well-attended at the nationals in Minneapolis.

Next, Krueger discussed the 2022 audit conducted by Heinfeld Meech. Krueger shared the representation letter, engagement letter, and final audit report submitted by the accounting firm. Krueger reviewed that the firm indicated everything was in order and the USHA was following proper protocol. There was a mention that more detail is needed for payables. While the office provided explanations for all payables, the firm recommended having more detail in the future. Krueger noted the cost of the annual audit and detailed the



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procedure. He also indicated it was a good service for the USHA to maintain and recommended that we engage Heinfeld Meech more often and invite them to present at each board meeting.

Hogan reminded everyone that they provide the complete receipts and information required for reimbursements.

**Birrell gave his Treasurer's Report**, noting that the USHA was doing well near the year's halfway point. The latest four-wall nationals did well. Memberships were up and meeting the budget requirements at this point in the year. Handball and glove sales were also exceeding budget goals at this point in the year.

Krueger discussed handball and glove revenues and shared that there has been an increase in play, with activity returning to pre-pandemic levels. There was a discussion about handball pricing and the increased cost of materials and shipping. Krueger noted that the ball increase recommended by the board would take place in the last quarter of 2023. Swehosky asked that the Treasurer's Report be distributed to the board when it's available for review.

Hogan and Mendez-Caba reviewed the **Planning Committee** update discussing the need for a public relations effort by forming a task force (of Hogan, Van Arsdale, and Mendez-Caba, with Esser and Krueger) for the following areas: membership outreach, member satisfaction, continuing awareness to outdoor community, higher engagements, planned giving. One idea is to submit articles to our membership and handball players (e.g., a handball article detailing manufacturing and why we have different handballs and utilizing our social media outlets). Swehosky added that he hoped to see outreach and engagement with indoor facilities and schools. Foley mentioned that we are considering allocating some of the budget for social media agencies. Hogan recommended a task force be formed before the next meeting, getting no more than six participants to form a strategic plan.

**Hall of Fame Committee** discussion. Swehosky mentioned looking for specific citations listing Hall of Fame candidates' accomplishments compared to the guidelines that merit a Hall of Fame induction. Krueger asked the Hall of Fame Committee chair to confirm criteria with the board for achieving Hall of Fame honors or any other USHA Hall of Fame awards. Krueger shared the committee chair's notes. Discussion ensued about Hall of Fame criteria reviewed by committee members Nichols, Vale, and others.

Secretary Sove joined the meeting virtually at 7:48 a.m. PDT. Swehosky made a motion to delay board action on this year's Hall of Fame nominations until the board receives a specific citation for each. Seconded by S. Birrell. The vote was one for and twelve against, with three abstentions. The motion failed.

This was followed by another motion made by Hogan, seconded by Vale, to approve the slate presented by the Hall of Fame Committee. Discussion included questioning what vetting was done by the committee, as well as some general positive comments about certain nominees. The vote was 14 ayes, 0 nays, and 2 abstentions. The motion passed.

Next was a motion made by R. Birrell, seconded by Van Arsdale, requiring the Hall of Fame Committee to provide highlights of accomplishments justifying nominees' selection to the Hall of Fame. Discussion included



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comments that the actual citation for each nominee be presented rather than merely listing bullet points. The vote was 15 ayes, zero nays, and one abstention. The motion passed.

The **Game Committee** report was next. Sove gave a summary of the committee's discussion and an update on the handballs being used for USHA national and USHA-sanctioned events. Primarily, which ball will be used at the National Three-Wall Championships in Toledo. Sove also discussed the marketing plan for the new 55 ball that will be introduced in the summer of 2023. We will write articles regarding the ball in various outlets for our membership and players. We would like to see continuity from "batch to batch" for each order, and with the latest technology in manufacturing, we are given an opportunity to achieve that.

The committee also addressed the one-wall site at the most recent nationals and world invitational in Minneapolis. Players did not want to continue because of safety issues that arose during the event: a path wore the dirt down and there was a drain close to the playing surface. While tournaments are regularly played at this site, in the future (for national events), the USHA wants to conduct a firsthand review of suggested sites to verify safety and playability.

Discussion segued into that of a match in which a player had to forfeit owing to a head injury. It was suggested that the concussion protocol should have been applied sooner than it was. Comments ensued on the situation, resulting in the conclusion that more education on the concussion protocol is required.

Sove continued with the **Promotion Committee** report by disclosing the 2023 tournament schedule, noting it is completed for the year. The 2024 tournament schedule is not complete at this time. The venue for the Wallball nationals in 2024 is incorrectly listed. It is important to get this corrected for the permit application for the City of New York.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12 p.m. EDT.

The meeting reconvened at 1:35 p.m. EDT.

The **One-Wall Committee** started with a discussion of indoor options for the Wallball nationals considering a chance of rain of 90%. The committee's goal is to increase one-wall memberships, promote one-wall by certifying more referees, and develop a regional tournament for both small-ball and Wallball. It was noted that the reduced membership cost for participation in the New York national tournaments seems to be working to induce sign-ups.

The **Collegiate Committee** announced a new commissioner, Texas's Nate Frank. A brief review of the recent collegiate national tournament showed the numbers of players and teams have remained steady. It is encouraging to experience no further losses of programs. The committee continues to work on finding future venues for the tournament. The committee is constituted by a good group of young former players. One discussion centered on the possibility of incorporating one-wall with the four-wall collegiate tournament. It was tried before, on a local basis, and was not well-attended. There are no one-wall collegiate programs, and there is no venue that can accommodate all disciplines. Nevertheless, it is good to encourage colleges to broaden their thoughts on programs.



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Esser gave the **First Ace** report starting with the statement that 2023 grants have been finalized, noting there are twelve this year, up from ten last year. All programs have been assigned a First Ace Committee liaison. The mid-year reports have been received, and all are positive. The Ohio State program is having some difficulty, but they have been encouraged to keep going. Esser further gave a summary of all grants and equipment generated this year. First Ace once again supported the Women's Classic tournament and the collegiate nationals. A group in Alaska is getting invested with First Ace with their new venue.

A statement was made that our PR group needs resources, and First Ace is a worthy place for them to cooperate and assist. Treasurer Birrell reminded that there is \$5,000 in the budget for First Ace PR. Another statement was made about encouraging all programs to have certified instructors and perhaps requiring certified instructors in order to receive grants in the future. A question was posed asking about the status of First Ace donations, coupled with the statement that this budget item should be made a formal part of the First Ace report. Right now, the First Ace funds are down a bit, but it is normal to get a spike by the end of June.

**Member Services** was next on the agenda. The committee's goals are to offer more value for a membership, thereby increasing retention as well as generating growth through the proper use of ambassadors. There is a need to recruit new members to this committee — perhaps non-board members. At this time, committee chair Kloss cited his intent to step down from the board owing to time constraints.

Discussion segued into membership value and opportunities, such as offering discounts for merchandise for USHA members, holding monthly raffles for webstore merchandise, and providing a member player directory. It was also noted that showing where member dues are spent is important. Commission sharing was briefly discussed. It is important to realize some players join the USHA because they play tournaments and are required to join. Maybe we are not reaching other communities we need to, and we need to offer more. Finally, the last discussion centered on the committee's vision, which is not necessarily to raise money through generating membership but to grow handball.

The **Funding and Revenue Committee's** topics were addressed earlier. The main goal right now is to invest in a social media agency for the USHA.

Nett gave the **Personnel Committee** report starting with the update on the Executive Director evaluation. This was followed by the board self-evaluation, noting the rating highs and lows. Some discussion ensued on the topic of board training, if any. Some comments regarding board improvement centered on sharing the workload and the possibility of providing financial advice for Heritage Giving using the resources of our financial advisor, Genesis Group. Nett finished with the statement our office evaluation was postponed because of certain changes and has been rescheduled for October 2023.

The **Investment Committee** shared the suggestion by our financial advisor, Genesis Group, to consolidate all our separate funds into one fund. The disadvantage of doing so is the loss of transparency for each fund, while the advantage is a better return for all funds based on the power of one mega fund. Discussion ensued on ways to identify each fund's relative value if this advice is followed.



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Van Arsdale presented the **Technology Committee** report. The Court Map on the website has been updated with more courts, and he reported the use of Bracket Ace at the 2023 collegiate nationals went very well. He looks forward to the implementation of the suggested improvements.

The at-large board member elections were next. In view of the fact the slate only consisted of two nominees, Mendez-Caba made a motion, seconded by R. Birrell, to accept the slate by consensus. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0. Thus, Ben Van Arsdale was re-elected as an at-large board member, and Max Langmack was elected to the board as the other at-large member.

Hogan assigned proctors for the upcoming regional elections. This was followed by updates in all committees.

Hogan invited the Executive Committee to attend a meeting with our financial advisors, Genesis Group.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m. EDT.



**Tom Sove**  
Secretary

