

2024 U.S. Masters Swimming Annual Meeting — Virtual

Committee Name: Northwest Zone
Committee Chair: Jill Wright
Minutes recorded by: Sally Dillon

Session #: n/a
Vice Chair: n/a
Date/time of meeting: August 28, 2024, 6 pm MT

Actions taken: MSA to reaffirm the NW Zone's support of Rob Heath as our candidate of choice.

Number of committee members present: 18 **Absent:** 6 **Number of others present:** 5

Delegates present: AK – Ken Winterberger; IW – Paige Buehler, Mike Hamm, Rob Heath; OR – Bob Bruce, MJ Caswell, Christina Fox, Jayette Pettit; PN – Kathy Casey, Jim Davidson, Sally Dillon, Lorraine Masse, Steve Peterson, Walt Reid; SR – Jim Clemmons, Jill Wright; UT – Bruce Schroeder, Jerry Treiman.

Delegates absent: MT – Jeanne Ensign; OR – Arlene Delmage, Kristina Franklin, Allen Larson; PN – Linda Chapman, Jane Moore

Others: OR – Sandi Rousseau, Joy Ward, Tim Waud (all OR); Jessica Reilly (NO), Ed Coates (BOD)

The meeting was called to order at 6 pm MT.

A. General Business

1. Actions taken between meetings:

a. The minutes of the June 3 meeting were approved via email.

2. Chair report: Jill had an enjoyable summer filled with open water swimming and Mission Viejo nationals. She asked for an accounting of how many zone members attended the MV meet.

3. Financial report: Ken reported that the current balance is \$9209.18. The 50¢ per-swimmer fees have been collected from all 7 LMSCs. Expenses in 2024: \$374.36 for 2nd place ribbons, \$9.80 for mailing ribbons for OW championship. Ken said that his efforts to pay Matt Miller (our web host) hasn't gone through. Matt hasn't completed the necessary paperwork and is slow to reply to emails. A fillable reimbursement request form is on the website, along with the EFT authorization required by USMS.

4. Webmaster report: Dave Cabrey was unable to attend the meeting. Jill noted that he is doing a fine job keeping the website up to date.

5. Records report: Steve Darnell continues to keep the Zone records current.

6. Zone Chatter report: Christina completed the newsletter, and it was sent to all members of the leadership teams prior to the meeting. Rob suggested it include the participation numbers from nationals and Paige's report. Christina will send out a revised issue. LCM nationals' attendance numbers: AK (2), IW (3), MT (1), OR (22), PN (17), SR (6), and UT (4).

7. Secretary report: Sally keeps busy taking notes, writing minutes, maintaining membership lists, and helping Jill when asked.

8. NW Zone At Large Director report: Paige shared information regarding board activity since June:

a. The USMS Board met in July at its "Summer Meeting". 6 hours of substantive and strategic discussion including review and approval of 990 tax return for 2023, external auditor's report. Finance committee and auditors are elevating the issue of increased risk in the growing cumulative balances of our 51 LMSCs. Board has minimal internal controls over those funds beyond the annual tax returns required to be submitted.

b. Governance committee facilitated a Board Assessment Survey in the spring (produced and administered by BoardSource). They focused on lower than peer scores in recruiting and orienting new board members. Further discussions in July focused on qualities and skills needed for Board members who should have the responsibility for recruiting volunteer board members and what barriers exist.

c. Some, but not all Zone + BOD meetings had occurred, so the board discussed feedback regarding CCS/Bridge auto membership, GUS and Lanemate products, taking Swimmer

Magazine digital, how LMSCs are spending their reserves, closed BOD meetings, and eliminating sanction fees. Having a staff person on the call was valuable. Calls took about 2 hours.

d. Dawson Hughes asked for directional guidance on program work to use in creating the Budget Assumptions that delegates will see at the annual meeting. They include adding 3 contractors for regional club and event development, adding value to the existing USMS traditional membership experience with improvements to the USMS+ product, improving event results processing and SafeSport. Fee increases will be proposed to the HOD in line with inflation as we need to get back to a non-deficit budget. At the August 11 meeting the board unanimously approved the proposed recommendations and the various fees.

e. Several board members had personal experiences with GUS and reported joy in seeing people at the events having so much fun.

f. The board is proposing a continuation of the same annual meeting cycle: 2025 hybrid with location in Kansas City, MO, '26 virtual, '27 hybrid TBD.

g. As a testament to the board having robust conversation, the decision on the emergency legislation proposal on temporary change to the club transfer period to 55 days (due to shortened period between Spring and Summer nationals) was a tie and President Ed had to cast the tie-breaking vote in favor.

h. Reports from the History & Archives and Records and Tabulation task forces were posted to the BOD forum for offline work. Discussion on next steps will take place after the annual meeting.

Questions regarding the report:

- Sandi asked about “risk” to USMS (“a” above) from the growing accumulative LMSC balances, noting that OR LMSC had a good grasp of their financial status. Paige said there is risk that fraud, waste, and abuse could happen at the local level. The auditors said this is one of USS’s exposures.

- Jill pointed out that this was brought in one of the convention documents.

- Kathy asked if LMSCs are required to do an audit each year. Apparently not.

- Paige noted that 3 zones have not yet met with board members.

- Paige clarified that a \$75 membership fee will be proposed; hold for 3 years at that level.

- Rob shared that there would be a GUS meet at Yost pool in Redmond on September 9. Info can be found at www.Grownupswimming.com.

USMS President Ed Coates stopped by to say “hello” and “thank you” for all we do locally.

9. NW Zone Championship event update: The LCM meet in July at KCAC in Federal Way went well. Unfortunately, the scheduled SCM meet (also at KCAC) has been canceled due to staff issues at the facility. A new host is needed. Rob offered to contact the folks at Whitworth U in Spokane. Bob Bruce is running a meet in Bend in late October and could make it a 3-day event to include SCM. Jill asked that a bid to host the SCM meet be submitted to her ASAP if a team is interested in hosting.

10. Introductions: Jill asked all attendees to introduce themselves and state their preferred events to race.

B. New Business

1. Contact information on website: To limit “bad actors” from accessing our emails, it was suggested we remove the direct links to zone leaders. MSA to remove contact emails on the Zone website and replace them with “contact us forms”. Ken suggested we allow an attachment to be sent; we will check with webmaster Dave Cabrey about that option.

2. Profit guarantee for zone meet hosts: Jeanne Ensign submitted suggestions in writing but couldn’t attend the meeting. It was suggested that the proposal and comments from Rob, Bruce, and Jerry (via email) be discussed online and the topic be revisited at the December meeting.

3. Zone championship rotation for 2025: Jill reported the rotation scheduled for 2025: SCY & LCM are to be hosted in OR LMSC, OW in SR LMSC, and the SCM in any LMSC other than OR and PN.

4. Rules/Legislation/Long Distance Proposals: Discussion of “hot topics”

a. Long Distance: Jim D said there is nothing complicated or controversial. The biggest change is related to lining up LD rules with pool disabled swimmer rules. There is a slight change to tieback suit rules for women and some discussion about the use of personal buoys in championship events.

b. Rules: Kathy reported that three proposals were recommended for adoption. One deals with ways to limit the lengths of national meets. Another deals with accepting lead-off times for records if the relay fails to finish the race. Jim C pointed out that the Championship committee is focused on limiting meet days to 10 hours (benefitting the officials as well as the competitors and other volunteers). Caps on some events are being enforced.

c. Legislation: With no representative from the committee at our meeting, Sandi addressed OR's proposal regarding open board meetings (which was endorsed by numerous other LMSCs in our zone (and outside of it). She is concerned about the BOD's written response, which doesn't replace discussion and ideas. It was noted that final decisions are made before the minutes for the previous meeting are made public. That allows zero oversight from the membership before policies are approved. Paige mentioned Peter's concerns about keeping up with policies and reviews and the discussion veered to concerns that policies are not updated. Kathy noted that they are difficult to find on the website as well.

5. Reaffirm support of Rob Heath as the NW Zone At-Large Director candidate: It was MSA to reaffirm the NW Zone's support of Rob Heath as our candidate of choice.

6. Documents to review before the HOD meetings begin: Everyone needs to read the following reports:
2025-2027 Unified Fee Revenue Distribution to LMSCs
2024 CEO report
Preliminary 2025 Business Plan

C. Other business as time allows

1. How much to budget for Relay and how do we recruit? No time to discuss but Sally offered to share what PN did this year via email post-meeting.
2. Financial assistance: Jill reminded everyone that the zone has funds available to assist members wishing to attend Relay or the National Coaches Clinic. The application form is on the website!

The meeting adjourned at ~7:30 pm MT.