



UNITED STATES CURLING ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting
May 6-7, 2022
Odin's Room, Omni Hotel, Eagan, MN

Approved July 26, 2022

1. **Call to Order** - Chair Courtney Schmidt calls the meeting to order at 3:37 pm CT, May 6, 2022.
2. **Roll call**
 - Board Members**
 - Present** – Jeff Annis, Charlie Brown (voice, no vote), Terri Gleason, Darryl Horsman, Courtney Schmidt (Outgoing Chair), Roger Smith, Alex Agre, Steven Birklid, Colin Hufman, Alex Leichter, Bill Stopera, Tracy Lawless, Shane Coppola, Lynn LaRocca (Incoming Chair), Hawley MacLean.
 - Absent** – None.
 - Quorum** – 14 voting members are present, eight being required; we have a quorum.
 - Non-Board**
 - Committee Members** – Russ Lemcke, Rich Lepping, Jennifer Stannard, Luc Violette.
 - Staff/Non-Board Executives** – Jana Dalton, Eric Gleason (CFO), Gordon Maclean (Secretary, recording), Jenna Martin, Jeff Plush (CEO).
 - Guests** – None
3. **Appointment of Parliamentarian** – The Chair appoints Gordon Maclean as Parliamentarian.
4. **Additions/changes to the agenda** – None
5. **Discussion/approval of Meeting Minutes** – January 19, 2022, USA Curling Board of Directors meetings. Motion to accept the minutes by Annis, second by Smith. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
6. **Chair Report**
 - a. The Chair welcomes the members present and those on the phone and notes the new people in the room; Jana Dalton, Director of the proposed USA Curling Foundation (USACF), and Tracy Lawless, the new director of the USWCA.
 - b. We are in a very good position as an organization and where we are going is very positive compared to this point four years ago. The Chair notes the excitement in the staff, everyone involved in the organization, and the passion shown in everyone's work to the organization's benefit.
 - c. Chair Award – Recently, the Recognition committee established the Chair Award, giving the board chair the ability to recognize someone who has spent a significant amount of time supporting the organization's mission. The Chair grants this award to Gordon Maclean.
7. **CEO Report** –
 - a. Strategic Plan- The process for developing the 2022-26 strategic plan is underway.
 - i. The committee consists of Lynn LaRocca, Courtney Schmidt, Shane Coppola, Alex Agre, Colin Hufman, Jeff Plush, Eric Gleason, and Jenna Martin.

- ii. Strategic Plan will be focused on the pillars of; brand development, revenue generation, operational efficiency, and sporting excellence. Pipeline development in all organizational aspects, both on and off the ice, will be a key part of the plan.
- iii. The final plan will be presented at the July board meeting.
- b. Marketing – Jenna Martin reviews the past two years of marketing development
 - i. March 2020 – Evaluated the processes and tools that were in place.
 - ii. The new logo in September 2020 reidentified who we are as an organization.
 - iii. Relunched the website in February 2021- The USOPC platform no longer served our needs; it restricted sponsorship opportunities and lacked customization. New website launched in February 2021. Unique visits are up six times over the previous and over 1 million page views.
 - iv. Communication- Historically, the Curling News defined what it was to be a member, but it was expensive and cumbersome. A new monthly newsletter was launched in November 2021 and is available to members and non-members. "Whole Spiel" podcast hosted by Dean Gemmell is available on the YouTube platform. The DEI committee is actively participating in creating a culture of inclusivity, especially the Ice Breakers program and the DEI Committee.
 - v. Olympic/Paralympic bump
 - We needed meaningful, quantifiable data.
 - Find a Club Near Me website page driving inquiries to local clubs. The top 5 locations are areas where we already have clubs, indicating that there are still a lot of potential for growth opportunities (Minneapolis, Chicago, Boston, New York, and Washington DC.) This page had almost 77,000 searches and 100,000 views during Olympics/Paralympics.
 - 730 million media impressions from Columbia team uniforms rollout
 - 4.7 billion media impressions during the Olympics
 - 3.9 million social media impressions on Facebook and Instagram
 - 141,000 accounts on Instagram.
 - vi. The important aspect is that we now have data that is important to sponsors. Comment: we need to get this information to a broader audience beyond the club presidents. We can share the numbers as best as possible, but we cannot force clubs to use the site.
- c. Sponsorship/Media
 - i. Columbia – This sponsorship is the most important in terms of revenue and media exposure, even beyond the uniforms.
 - ii. Toyota – We are starting renewal discussions. They are very committed to the paralympic movement.
 - iii. New conversations are underway in several areas. These will be announced later.
 - iv. NBC Sports Network is gone. We are looking to partner with other media organizations such as CBS, Discovery Time Warner, and Amazon to provide us with future streaming platforms.
- d. Membership
 - i. We are very happy with our membership numbers for a Covid year. It looks like we will be 10% over budget with membership numbers. Taking a customer service approach continues to yield benefits. We are currently at about 19,000 members.
 - ii. Programming – Ice Tech Courses and National Learn to Curl programs add value to our brand.
- e. Olympic
 - i. All four programs participated in Beijing; Men's, Women's, Mixed Double's, and Paralympic. Overall, we are ranked 5th in the world, but we should be better than that.

- f. Sports Performance and Development
 - i. Very successful paralympic year. There is a passion for getting better.
 - ii. The CEO thanks the staff for their efforts over the past two years, given the issues we have had to deal with and the successes we have had.
 - iii. Question regarding the organization's current priorities: Getting sponsorship monies is a top priority, but we need a sports director to help free up the CEO's time to pursue more sponsorships. Sport80 is still where it has been, starting discussions with alternative platforms to help us move forward. We are close to the Canadians on the ice, but there is still a major gap with them in branding and commercial success(cites the Brier and Slam as the most valuable properties in the world); we have a huge growth opportunity.
 - g. Extended discussion regarding the situation with the GNCC, including the path forward, ramifications, and potential solutions. The consensus among the board members that a united front needed to be presented, including but not limited to a board letter to the GNCC regarding the current situation.
- 8. **Officer Reports**
 - a. Secretary – Secretary's report is on file. Club membership applications from Morgantown CC, Sharks Ice Center, Puget Sound CC, and the Nashville CC were reviewed. Last-minute update to the Sharks Ice Center application, all required paperwork has been received. The Secretary has notified the CEO to expect the application to be forwarded to him for provisional approval within days of this meeting.
 - b. Audit/Finance-
 - i. FY22 YTD Operating deficit is approximately \$112,000, representing a significant but expected improvement since our last meeting.
 - ii. YTD revenues and expenses are both over budget.
 - iii. The paralympic program budget is nearly breakeven as WCF has increased their annual grant funding in 2022, which has helped to offset increased world travel costs.
 - iv. The national team programs are near budget with a current \$59,000 deficit.
 - v. We expect a full-year budget deficit of \$125,000 versus a budgeted deficit of \$85,000. The main differences are high Olympic Support, pre, and travel costs, and higher than budgeted expenses for Curling Night in America, primarily due to streaming and covid testing.
 - vi. The FY23 budget process is underway. The Finance Committee will meet in May and June, and the budget will be presented for board approval in July.
 - c. Action: FY2021 Audited Financials
 - i. No issues were found. They were reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee and will be posted on our website when available. Good marks from the auditor across the Board for our processes.
 - ii. Motion to approve the audited FY21 report by Annis, seconded by Lawless, approved by unanimous voice vote.
 - d. Action: Curl Vegas WCF Facility Loan for Curl Vegas
 - i. Curl Vegas is looking to secure a permanent leased facility.
 - ii. Coppola reviews the process for developing the loan program. There is already over \$300,000 in member secured loans. Revenue projections are realistic.
 - iii. The WCF plans to reopen the loan program in July.
 - iv. As an organization, USA Curling needs to leverage clubs that receive these loans to host events.
 - v. Motion to approve the WCF Loan, not contingent on ISS ice systems, by Horsman, seconded by Gleason, approved on a unanimous voice vote.

9. At 6:39 pm chair calls for a recess until 9:30 am, Saturday, May 7.

10. The meeting reconvenes at 9:31 am, Saturday, May 7

11. Revenue Development

- a. USA Curling has completed the legal framework to establish the USA Curling Foundation (USACF). Jana Dalton has been hired as the Foundation's Director. The Foundation will be a single-entity LLC and a 501(c)3. The USACF will become the fundraising arm of the organization. The Foundation has the following goals for FY 2023:
 - i. Establish a customer relationship management (CRM) to focus on reporting and membership integration.
 - ii. Establish a USACF Board of Trustees with 12-15 members. Looking for individuals who are willing to make a four-year commitment, are geo and talent diverse, are passionate about curling, and are willing to make a significant contribution to sit on the Board.
 - iii. Grassroots fundraising through email, social media, and club outreach.
 - iv. Launch a Major Gifts program with multi-year commitments.
 - v. Fundraising events tied to Curling Night in America and other events.
 - vi. Develop committees and task forces within the Board of Trustees.
 - vii. Build a monthly giving donations platform.
 - viii. Build and grow relationships with major donors.
- b. Incorporate into the "pipeline" long-term aspects of organizational development.
 - i. Granite society will be revised and become part of the major gifts program
 - ii. Question regarding the dollar-in/dollars-out strategy versus dollars for specific purposes. Reply - Need flexibility based on what the donor wants and build towards having both strategies available. In addition, we need to develop a "rainy-day" fund.
 - iii. There will also be the potential to have naming rights tied to a dedicated facility.
 - iv. An eye towards alignment with sponsorship opportunities.
 - v. We will be looking for donor intent and trying to facilitate giving by aligning with donor preferences.

12. Action: Approval of USA Curling Foundation

- a. Motion to approve the single-member USACF LLC (full text of the motion appears in Appendix A below) by H MacLean, seconded by Gleason. Motion passes on a unanimous voice vote.

13. World Curling Federation

- a. Former USA Curling director Beau Welling is running for WCF president.
- b. The Spring meeting of WCF occurred in Geneva in preparation for the fall Members Association meeting.
 - i. The opening of the president's Chair offers an opportunity for a significant change in the WCF's direction.
 - ii. We are striving for gender equality and a skills base board and moving away from an operations board to a policy board.
 - iii. Stewards of Curling (large member countries) met in Geneva. There is concern about communications between the Members, the Board, and the Operations group.
 - iv. Board member Catherine Lindall of Sweden is stepping down. She is currently the only woman, and WCF Constitution requires at least one member of each gender on the Board.
- c. The "Maximizing the Value" group, which Allison Pottinger sits on, will be discussing the "8 versus 10 ends" issue and the no-tick rule in the fall.
- d. The first Pan-Continental Championship will be held in Canada this November.
- e. Support among the Stewards to provide counseling, guidance, and expertise to the operation groups as those move forward.

- f. Marketing concerns among some regarding the WCF's ten-year extension of InFront's contract. InFront has no presence in the US or Canada but will be managing media rights and marketing for world events held in North America, including the Pan-Continental Championship.
14. **Action: WCF Representative Term and Responsibilities Policy Update**
- a. Modification of Policy 21-06 to update and further refine the duties of our WCF representatives and introduce WCF representative term limits (see Appendix B, below.) Motion to approve the changes by Gleason, seconded by Lawless. Motion passes on a unanimous voice vote.
15. **Elections**
- a. Election of USA Curling Board Chair. Current Chair Courtney Schmidt is term-limited. Gleason moves to place Lynn LaRocca's name in nomination for the position of Board Chair, Lawless seconds. Schmidt calls for any further nominations. None are put forward. LaRocca's nomination is approved by unanimous consent. **LaRocca assumes the position of Board Chair** and expresses her thanks and appreciation. Jeff Plush expresses his appreciation for the time and effort from Courtney over the past years. Schmidt expresses her thanks for being part of this organization for the past eight years and her optimism for the organization's future.
 - b. The Nominating/Governance group met and put forward Rich Lepping to serve a second term as WCF representative (Meeting Minutes in Appendix C, below). Motion to re-elect Lepping by Annis, seconded by Agre. Committee Chair Lemcke calls for nominations from the floor. None are presented. Lemcke closes the call for nominations. Motion carries by unanimous consent.
16. **AAC/USOPC Update –**
- a. Reviews upcoming elections to add a new pool of individuals to the AAC. The AAC has discussed with the USOPC to redefine the eligibility definition for our "ten-year athlete pool." The USOPC agreed to this change. This expands the pool of eligible athletes to anyone who has participated in any national event in the last ten years. We are looking to vet and elect members to USA Curling non-board committees. The AAC is looking forward to a year of all championships being held.
 - b. The USOPC has updated its organization chart; Sports Performance and Athlete Services have been combined, as have General Council and Operations. USOPC is drafting gender inclusion policies and looking for help from the AAC. We can provide valuable information based on recent USA Curling actions in this area. USOPC-AAC General Assembly is coming up.
17. **USWCA Update –**
- a. Lawless introduces herself and reviews her credentials
 - b. USWCA recently celebrated its 75th anniversary
 - c. The two-year delayed Scots tour of the US will take place this October
 - d. The new Gifts and Grants Program and Patches Program were summarized
 - e. All bonspiels are back up in running
 - f. The next meeting is in September, in Chicago.
18. **Old Business – None**
19. **New Business – None**
20. **Key Items of Agreement –** Communication Strategy for GNCC, Elections, Policy Update, Foundation creation
21. **Next Board Meeting –** July 26, 7-9 pm ET teleconference.
22. Motion to move to Closed Session by Gleason second by Agre. Secretary leaves the meeting at 10:48 am CT.

Appendices

Appendix A – Motion to Approve the Creation of USA CURLING FOUNDATION, LLC

Appendix B – Motion to modify USA Curling Policy 21-06

Appendix C – Minutes of Nominating/Governance Committee to forward the name of Rich Lepping for re-election as World Curling Federation Representative

Appendix A –

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF
USA CURLING FOUNDATION, LLC

A motion to approve the formation of a single member LLC, USA Curling Foundation, LLC, whereby the only member will be USCA. It shall be formed as a limited liability company under the laws of the State of Minnesota as per applicable Minnesota law.

Appendix B

Policy 21-06

External Representation Policy

Adopted October 1, 2021; Amended May 7, 2022

1. Purpose

Allows for the nomination and election, by the USA Curling Board of Directors, of all external representation of USA Curling, including but not limited to the World Curling Federation. No element of this policy shall be interpreted to contradict any of the USA Curling Bylaws.

2. Applicability of Policy

This policy applies to the USA Curling Board and any external representation of USA Curling.

3. Definitions

WCF

The World Curling Federation

4. World Curling Federation representation

The Board of Directors shall elect representatives to the WCF in such number as the USA is entitled under the Constitution and Bylaws of the WCF Federation. A director on the Board of Directors may concurrently be a USA WCF representative.

The WCF representatives shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Report to the Board on all WCF activities;
2. Represent the best interests of USA Curling as a Member of the WCF;
3. Deliver information from the WCF to USA Curling staff, Board, and the AAC (interested parties);
4. Receive feedback from interested parties, analyze, and make decisions as a group;
5. In making decisions that lead to votes with other Members of the WCF, representatives should collect information from all interested parties and act as a group. All representatives shall vote as a block or as agreed; and,
6. Perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

A representative may be elected by USA Curling to a maximum of three (3) three-year terms.

When this policy amendment is adopted, any current WCF representative who has served more than two (2) three-year terms, may be elected to serve one more three-year term.

5. Other external representation

The Board of Directors shall elect representatives to other external organizations not already covered by the duties and responsibilities of the Board Chair, or the CEO acting as Secretary-General of USA Curling, to terms of office and re-election eligibility as the Board determines.

Appendix C

Nominating Governance Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2022

Present: Deb Horn, Russ Lemcke, Jennifer Stannard

Absent: Steve Emt

Moved by Russ Lemcke second by Jennifer Stannard to propose Rich Lepping for another term to the WCF. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Russ Lemcke, Chair