



# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the USHA Winter Board Meeting  
January 27-24, 2024

## **Saturday, January 27, 2024**

President Denis Hogan opened the meeting at 8:04 a.m., MST at the Double Tree Hotel in Tucson, AZ. Board members present in person were President Hogan, Vice President Jared Vale, Secretary Tom Sove, Ben Van Arsdale, Rich Curtner, Rob Birrell, Rob Nichols, LeaAnn Martin, Frank Holguin, Max Langmack, Daniel Navarro, and Jim Wohl. Present virtually were Treasurer Steve Birrell, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Nick White and Carl Porter. Also present were Executive Director Matt Krueger with Development Director Sam Esser. A quorum was present.

Hogan began the meeting by reminding all to prepare to have campaign statements ready by those wishing to run for officer positions on Sunday. He then welcomed the four new board members, Frank Holguin, Rocky Mountain Region, Max Langmack, At-Large, Daniel Navarro, Southwest Region, and Jim Wohl, Central Region . This was followed by his request that Board Members review the list of Board decisions and Executive Committee decisions.

In his **President's Report** he started with a positive statement of the workings of our investment advisor, Genesis Group. He commented our Executive Director was especially pleased with their performance to date. Hogan continued with a state of the association, noting we are doing well but need to take interest in the future of our collegiate programs. They are running out of venues to host the national tournament. On the topic of losing courts the situation in St. Louis was mentioned and discussed.

**Treasurer Birrell started his Report** with a review of the 2023 Income Statement and Balance Sheet. It was a good year, performing very close to budget. He then ran through all the Funds, sharing their performance. Highlights included membership is trending on a flat line, ball sales were according to budget (while noting sales of the 55 ball were trending up especially in the 65+ age group), contributions to First Ace were low, and the need for the First Ace Committee to address the usage of the Joe Ardito Fund. The President's Club will meet in March, and our investment income was very positive this year. Projections for balancing the budget will be finalized on Sunday.

The meeting was adjourned for a break at 9:49 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

The next agenda item was **a virtual report from our investment advisor, Genesis Group**. They provided a review of the performance of our investments, especially since our change in the portfolio scheme. This change enabled a reduction in risk while maintaining positive return. We are now much more diverse. The expectations for 2024 is to not change anything, considering the economy does not change. The final analysis is that we made a change and it was a good decision.



# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

At the end of this presentation, we returned to the Treasurer's Report in which Birrell proposed a change in how we will use the proceeds of the ELF Fund. He wishes to cap spending to 4% of the Fund's value as of the end of the calendar year, regardless of performance. Currently, all amounts of profit above 4% are available for spending on Operations.

**Porter made a Motion, seconded by Mendez-Caba, to accept the Treasurer's recommendation to allocate ELF funds for balancing the budget on a yearly basis of 4% of fund value as of December 31 of the previous year, starting in January, 2025. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 15-0-1.**

**The Game Committee Report** was next. Chair Sove began with a brief review of the Committee's work on nine proposed rule changes, and one protocol change. The Committee decided on six rule changes. Sove asked for comments on the proposed changes.

**Porter made a motion, seconded by Rob Birrell, to approve all six rule changes as presented. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 15-0-1.**

Sove continued with a summary of the status of our variety of balls. There will be one more survey conducted this Spring, plus we expect some feedback from the 2024 Master 3-wall Doubles in March, in which the ONE ball will be used exclusively. With the further feedback we will revisit the topic before the summer board meeting.

**Promotion Committee** Chair Sove shared the 2024 USHA Tournament Schedule. Only the 3-wall and 4-wall Junior National tournaments need to be finalized. Sove stated the Women's Classic will be held as scheduled in St. Louis. Further on the Women's Classic, Sove asked for a consensus agreement to approve the current protocol in the tournament. There were no dissenting comments. Continuing, Sove stated the Awards Subcommittee was unable to meet before the board meeting and will convene the week following.

First Ace chair Martin reviewed the 2024 Grant requests and the Committees decision. **Vale made a motion, seconded by Van Arsdale, to accept the First Ace Committee recommendations for grant awards for 2024.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.** Martin then commented on a proposal to reinstate road shows, which will be brought up in the Planning Committee session.

Hogan presented the **Collegiate Committee** report, first noting the current chair may have to step down for personal reasons. He then made note of the excellent and comprehensive report submitted by Chair Nate Frank. Discussion ensued on the problem of procuring future venues for the tournament and the fact costs are rising for said venues. Clearly, we will be needing to allocate more funds for the collegiate experience. Hogan further reported on his and Essers's activity of calling recent graduates to obtain information on their playing status. They are getting more responses, noting one-third of those contacted have responded, and one-half of those are still playing.



# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

At this time Hogan segued back in the agenda to address the approval of the last board meeting minutes. **R. Birrell made a motion, seconded by Navarro, to approve the minutes of the 2023 summer board meeting.** No discussion ensued. **The motion passed 15-0-1.**

At 11:45 a.m. the meeting adjourned for lunch.

The meeting was reconvened at 12:47 p.m.

Nett gave the **Personnel Committee** report virtually. He commented on the fact right now we have no benefit package for our employees, because they have access to other sources, but in the future, we may not be able to rely on that. Thus, we might well have to be able to offer benefits again. Nett's discussion centered on how to fund this necessity and what sort of plans do we expect to offer. Consensus was we need much more information on the number and types of plans before deciding. This topic was directed back to Personnel Committee for investigation and to prepare a proposal at the summer board meeting.

The **Technology Committee** was next, and Chair Van Arsdale reported on his efforts with Jeff Wall on further development of Bracket Ace and efforts to get it online. Use of BA went very well at the last collegiate tournament. Van Arsdale commented on complaints regarding R2 Sports, specifically the increased cost for usage. Perhaps BA can replace R2 as a tournament managing application. Van Arsdale added BA might be able to accommodate a ranking system in the future, but not at present. He concluded with a report there has been a pick-up of usage in our online Court Map and there are now 591 court facilities identified nationwide.

For the **One-Wall Report** chair Mendez-Caba confirmed the date for the summer national tournaments. She then stated the selection process for the one-wall World Tournament shall be robust and competitive, and they appreciate their financial support from the Promotion budget. Further regarding the World's, the Wall Ball Nationals has been moved up a week to not conflict with the World one-wall schedule.

Insofar as the One-Wall Committee's 2023 goal was to develop initiatives to grow one-wall membership, this year they expect to build awareness of that goal with transparency and visibility of their work in the one-wall community. Their aim is to give more benefit for the USHA membership other than tournaments. A Task Force was created to advance this objective. They will be developing incentivization to get all organizations to collectivize and work together in New York City, as well as to promote the best USHA policies. A Separate Task Force was created for this objective. They look forward to branching out to venues outside of NYC, and establish a one-wall regional tournament. Another prime goal is to make it clearer Wall Ball is specifically included in our rule book.

Mendez-Cabe remarked on the ICHA intent in 2024 to hold multiple city-wide tournaments this year, culminating in a final event. She further commented on the topic of the acceptance of the term "Wall Ball" for big ball one-wall handball, noting locally the term does not clearly include that discipline of handball. The Committee will deal with this in 2024. Mendez-Caba was asked if the Committee has



# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

any thoughts about reaching out to incarcerated one-wall players. This topic will also be referred to her committee.

The **Planning Committee** report was led by Martin, starting with a proposal to reestablish road shows. The intent is to raise revenue for First Ace, increase memberships, and further the good will of the USHA. The format will be similar to the “Share the Passion” road shows, with the inclusion of offering playing time with a pro player. The goal is to travel four weeks a year and offer a show at 3-4 separate cities each week. Various funding options are available. **Langmack made a motion, seconded by Nichols, to approve the formation of a committee to oversee and execute road shows. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.** The next item was to offer published rankings for junior players and collegiate players. Discussion was positive and President Hogan directed Sove to form a committee and implement it.

The meeting was adjourned for a break at 2:02 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 2:12 p.m. with a discussion of reinstating a Pro Player Representative Subcommittee to develop anything the USHA can offer pro players. Sove and Langmack were tasked with developing the possibility.

At this time the meeting was handed to consultant Craig McGee to administer his professional review of our Board of Directors. The intent is to identify the strengths of the board, assess how effective the bi-annual Board meetings are, assess the current committee structure, and identify areas the Board is currently not doing that would better serve our membership. The session lasted two hours.

The meeting was handed back to President Hogan at 4:09 p.m. and sent directly into a resumption of the Personnel Committee. A review of employees’ performance and their salary structure was conducted virtually by Chair Nett. After discussion, **Sove made a motion, seconded by R. Birrell, to accept the Personnel Committee’s recommendations for employee’s salary structure for 2024 as presented.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 15-0-1.**

The Saturday session was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

## **Sunday, January 28, 2024**

President Hogan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. All were present except for Mendez-Caba and White. Their proxy votes were recorded by the secretary. A quorum was present.

Treasurer Birrell began the morning with a review of the budget. Discussion was nominal in that Birrell was able to propose a balanced budget by using some of the ELF proceeds. All funds now show a budgeted positive net. **Porter made a motion, seconded by R. Birrell, to accept the balanced budget as presented by Treasurer Birrell.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**



# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

President Hogan reviewed the Regional Board positions up for reelection this year and assigned nominating committee chairs for each Region. He then reviewed our election process and suggested we will soon be needing to offer electronic balloting for our members.

Election of officers was next. Hogan asked for the identity of those wishing to run for offices. Hogan reran for President, Vale reran for VP, Sove reran for Secretary, and S. Birrell reran for Treasurer. No other nominations were forthcoming. **A motion was made by Martin, seconded by Wohl, to approve the candidate slate by acclamation.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.** Hogan will serve as president for the next two years; while the three other positions have a one-year term.

Following this was updates of all committees. New chairs were established for Personnel, Member Services, and First Ace. Each Board member then confirmed their intent on serving on various committees. No new chair was identified for Funding/Revenue Committee at this time.

Election of the Executive Committee was next. Hogan reviewed the four officers were automatically on the Committee, leaving room for three other positions. There were three nominees for the position. **A motion was made by Vale, seconded by Navarro, to accept this slate of nominees for election to the Executive Committee by acclamation.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.** After the motion passed, a member declared they were not able to submit their name for the Executive Committee vote due to a disruption in the virtual meeting stream. After discussion, **a motion was made by Hogan, seconded by Navarro, to rescind the accepted candidates by acclamation and conduct an election with four candidates. The motion passed 16-0-0.** Secretary Sove then conducted a closed ballot election, resulting in **the Executive Committee being completed with the addition of Martin, Van Arsdale, and Nichols.**

This was followed by the selection of the venue of our summer board meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the rotation we recently developed and what our options were. Our choices were the four-wall nationals at Los Cab in May, or the three-wall nationals in Toledo the end of August. Hogan conducted a raised hands election resulting in the decision to hold the summer Board Meeting in Fountain Valley, CA in May.

Hogan made his closing remarks, and then requested each board member comment on their intentions to help handball in the months leading to the summer Board Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m. MST.

Submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T. Sove".

Tom Sove  
Secretary