

**Summary of the Meeting of the
Board of Directors of the United Soccer Coaches Association**

Friday, August 7, 2020

Board Call



Board Members in attendance: Lynn Berling-Manuel (non-voting, *ex officio* board member – CEO), David Carr, Ashlee Fontes-Comber, Jeff Farnsworth, Andy Haile, Haroot Hakopian, Greg Hubbard, Warren Mersereau, Rusty Oglesby, Missy Price, Sue Ryan (voting, *ex officio* board member – Advocacy Council Chair), and Kevin Sims.

Staff Members in attendance: Ian Barker, Shawn Chevreux, Mary Hoffman, Beth Sullivan, Geoff VanDeusen

Call to Order

President Kevin Sims commenced the meeting at 9:00am Eastern Time, Friday, August 7, 2020.

1. Welcome Remarks – K. Sims

- Mr. Sims thanked the National Office staff members who were present at the meeting for their flexibility and creativity over the last five months.

2. Director Q&A – K. Sims

- Discussion with the National Office staff indicated some positives and some concerns that have resulted from the changes brought about by COVID-19. On the positive side, we have seen cooperative and helpful responses from business partners and members of the Association. There has been a strong demonstration of interest in remote learning, with record numbers of online learning course participants. All staff members have shown their willingness to work as a team and to pull together. As for concerns, the biggest concern expressed was about the degree of uncertainty the Association faces. It is impossible to know how long the effects of the virus will continue to affect the Association's operations and all of our lives.
- The Board and the Directors engaged in extensive discussion about the impact of hosting a digital, interactive Convention. Examples of the issues discussed included: what the "lead in" will be to the Convention (*i.e.*, whether there will be "teaser" programming to generate interest); and, whether single day passes

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will be available and, if so, whether those participants will have video access to other days' programming.

- Questions relating to the membership department were also addressed, such as whether the Association is still looking to move to automatic membership renewal in the fourth quarter (yes). Membership trends were discussed, particularly as relates to club memberships and college services.
- Overall, the Directors reported that each of their areas face significant challenges resulting from the virus. That said, there are opportunities to grow certain areas (like online education), while trying to reduce inevitable losses in others (like college services memberships).

3. 2020-2021 Budget Presentation – G. Hubbard

- Greg Hubbard, Treasurer and chair of the Audit and Finance Committee, presented the 2020-2021 budget recommended to the Board by the Audit and Finance Committee.
- As specified in the notes to the proposed budget, the proposal is based on an assumed 30% reduction in membership revenue and a significant reduction in the net profit from the Convention (due to its shift to digital delivery).
- Despite the significant revenue reductions, the budget shows an over net profit of approximately \$135,000, through reduced expenditures. Of course, this bottom line figure is subject to variance due to unforeseeable developments (such as a greater loss of membership revenue or lower profit from the digital convention).
- The Board engaged in a robust discussion about the assumptions in the budget and the uncertainties, particularly around revenue, that could affect the bottom line.
- Following a lengthy discussion, the Board considered a motion to adopt the proposed budget. That motion was approved, with two dissenting votes. One dissenting member of the Board expressed a desire for more cost-cutting measures immediately, to hedge against the uncertainty in revenue. The other Board member opposed the budget as presented because of a reduction in membership staffing.
- Based on the concerns expressed, the Board determined that it would be prudent to appoint a subcommittee of the Board to monitor the Association's cash flow. Mr. Hubbard will chair that subcommittee, which will include at least two other Board members (Mr. Haile and Mr. Sims), as well as one or more members of the Audit and Finance Committee. The subcommittee will work with CFO Beth Sullivan to determine the best way to ensure that the

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Board remains informed of future changes in cash flow that might require adjustments to the budget.

4. Red Flag Concerns – A. Fontes-Comber

- Ashlee Fontes-Comber identified several issues that present potential challenges for the Association: digital Convention, membership growth (especially in the time of COVID); internal staff turnover; and the role of education in light of the changing education landscape (both due to decisions made by the U.S. Soccer Federation and because of travel restrictions that affect attendance at educational programming).
- Ms. Fontes-Comber asked staff how we, as a Board, can best help in addressing these challenges.
- A substantive discussion ensued with both general and specific suggestions. For example, with respect to the digital Convention, Board members may be able to use their contacts and connections to help bring high-profile speakers to the program. This is especially the case given that the digital delivery of the Convention will allow for a broader geographical range of speakers.
- Other concerns, such as staff turnover, may be a matter of perception given the relatively small size of the National Office. Ms. Berling-Manuel reported that turnover is consistent with other similarly-sized organizations.
- Other specific questions were discussed, such as recent efforts to increase membership. In particular, the question was asked about conversion rate from 30-day free memberships to full memberships. Approximately 5% of the free memberships convert to full membership.

5. Advocacy Discussion Points – S. Ryan

- Sue Ryan provided a report about the Advocacy Council. There has been significant maturation of the Council as an avenue for active member participation over the last several years. Many of the Advocacy groups are fully engaged and creating great value for their members. A few groups are still developing or are in transition. For example, there is not an active pro coaches group. The Board discussed how this and other less active groups might be encouraged. Much of the success of the most vibrant groups has related directly to the strong leadership of those groups. Identifying strong leaders and providing programming tailored to the interests of the less active groups were discussed as strategies for increasing participation from those groups.
- The Board also discussed the process for creation of new Advocacy groups. At present, 200 member signatures are required to create a new Advocacy

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group. The Board discussed the possibility of creating social affinity groups that would not require that number of signatures. The social affinity groups would play primarily an organizing role in facilitating gatherings of coaches with similar backgrounds or interests. For example, a group of military veteran coaches has expressed interest in forming a group but it may prefer to establish a social affinity group rather than a full-fledged Advocacy group. Board members expressed support for allowing and supporting this alternative, less formal type of group.
