

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

Friday, December 4, 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, December 4, 2020.

1. Welcome Remarks – K. Sims

- Mr. Sims welcomed staff and Board members present. Board and committee reports were approved.

2. Membership – J. Farnsworth

- Jeff Farnsworth encouraged the Board to consider members and membership in all decisions. Care of members must be the Association's primary consideration. Our goal should be to exceed members' expectations.
- Membership growth and services must also be central.
- Discussion of whether goal of 30,000 members is realistic.
- Request made for year-over-year historical membership data, both total individual memberships and full memberships.
- Question regarding whether we can now identify coaching level of our members. Mary Hoffman reported that we are collecting that data when people sign up for various advocacy groups, so we are gathering the data.
- Ms. Hoffman further explained that next year's update of Fonteva will provide an opportunity for members to update their information when they renew membership.

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- Discussion about whether furlough is affecting our ability to respond promptly to member needs.
- Lynn Berling-Manuel stated that based on industry standards, membership growth for trade associations is categorized as follows: 9-10% is very good; 4-8% average; below 4% is considered flat.

3. Staff Reports

- **Education – I. Barker**

- Ian Barker demonstrated the use of technology in coaching education.
- Mr. Barker discussed Matchday, Give & Go, and the E-learning suite. He reported that the goal with e-learning is to produce at least 4 products/year at 1-2 hours/product. These products are behind the member paywall.
- Development courses (4, 7, 9, 11, and Pre-National) are now offered fully online and have met budget expectations.
- Mr. Barker reported that the Association has seen success in filling special topics courses. The High School Diploma has also been successful.
- The relationship with the Scottish FA has been expanded, which is a positive for education purposes. The Scottish FA grants us access to UEFA courses; Scots who are in the process of getting their A & B licenses will attend this year's Convention.
- Mr. Barker then explained the presentation of blended courses, as Advanced Courses are now provided in this format. Phase 1 is asynchronous learning; Phase 2 is comprised of a series of synchronous calls; Phase 3 – in person, long weekend; Phase 4 – assessment is self-filmed and sent for review by Mr. Barker and Vince Ganzberg. A positive feature of this is rolling enrollment, so that all participants do not need to start the course at the same time.
- The Board expressed appreciation for the innovation that Mr. Barker and others in education have shown during the COVID period.

- **Membership – M. Hoffman**

- Ms. Hoffman reported that a membership survey will be sent out later this month. She stated that the internal membership goal is to add approx. 7% new members each year (inclusive of losses).
- The staff is currently reviewing whether 30-day free memberships are yielding members.
- With respect to high school memberships, Ms. Hoffman stated that the goal is to establish a membership agreement with every state association.

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- Ms. Hoffman further reported that the area of greatest challenge right now is member clubs. Youth registrations nationally are down approximately 30% this year; for this reason, the staff has decided to relaunch the member club program in 2021, with a focus on lapsed members.
- Technology developments in membership include auto-renewal. Staff is also looking at auto-conversion for 30-day free memberships.
- One of the membership initiatives currently under exploration is the viability of the creation of an “online community.”
- **Convention – G. VanDeusen**
 - Mr. VanDeusen informed the Board that the relationship with the Scottish FA has yielded 500 new memberships and Convention registrants.
 - Staff is currently in the process of recording and editing 54 Convention education sessions and award acceptance speeches.
 - Finishing touches are going into the Convention program schedule and the schedule will be released on Dec. 10.
 - Mr. VanDeusen reviewed the timeline leading up to Convention.
 - Ms. Hoffman noted that six staff members will be devoting time exclusively to customer and technology service during the Convention, in an effort to create an experience similar to in-person.
 - Shawn Chevreux explained how the studio will be used during the Convention.
 - Mr. Van Deusen reviewed Board responsibilities relating to the Convention. At present, 1,500 members have registered for Convention. Budget figures are based on 4,000 attendees, but later registration was expected this year given the digital nature of the Convention (no need to book hotel, flights, etc.).
 - Good news on the exhibitor front, as we are currently running ahead on the number of exhibitors registered for the Convention.
- **Financial – B. Sullivan**
 - Beth Sullivan reported that the Association’s Payroll Protection Program loan was fully forgiven as of Nov. 24.
 - We are still running positive on our financials year-to-date.
 - Annual audit is complete and Ms. Sullivan has started working on the annual tax return.
 - Convention expenses are still within budget.
 - Ms. Sullivan stated that the ad hoc cash flow subcommittee of the Audit and Finance Committee has provided good feedback and accountability.

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4. Nominations and Elections – M. Price

- Missy Price reported that the Nominations and Elections Committee has met. The nominees for the Board have been narrowed down to three candidates and the Committee is scheduled to meet to determine its final recommendation on Tuesday.
- The three prospective candidates were disclosed to the Board for initial feedback. Discussion ensued about the appropriate number of candidates – two or three. Considerations on this issue included providing the membership a broader slate to choose from and concerns over diversity. Ultimately, the Board noted that the Committee may exercise its discretion to recommend the number and qualifications of candidates.
- Ms. Price then presented her candidate to replace At-Large Board member Warren Mersereau, who will cycle off the Board in January, 2021. Ms. Price proposed Dr. Nef Walker for this At-Large position. Dr. Walker is the Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, as well as an Associate Professor in the McCormack Department of Sports Management at the Isenberg School of Management. Dr. Walker does not have direct soccer experience, but she is a former basketball coach. Ms. Price made a motion to add Dr. Walker as an At-Large member of the Board, filling the Business/Marketing position on the Board. Following a second, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Strategic Plan Activation – L Berling Manuel

- Ms. Berling-Manuel reviewed each of the goals that the Board developed for the new strategic plan.
- She commented on what the staff is working on and how they are using member-centric activation, member personas and member communications to help us reach these goals.
- Mr. Farnsworth wants the staff to remember that the strategic plan's goals should have membership growth and satisfaction at its core and felt it wasn't spelled out in the presentation. He reminded the Board that member benefits should exceed a member's expectation and that the metric of satisfaction should be membership growth. Mr. Farnsworth stated that members join not only for their own benefit but also for the love of the game and that is something that the Association needs to support and understand that when building community.
- Ms. Berling-Manuel said that the staff is always talking to the membership to make sure that the Association's services meet their needs. Each element

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shown in the presentation is aimed at understanding and satisfying our membership. If we can accomplish this it will appear in membership growth.

- Ms. Berling-Manuel discussed how the staff is using Design Thinking to help understand our membership.
- Dr. Carr expressed appreciation for the new education products but also concern over whether the workload can be sustained over the long term. Ms. Berling-Manuel agreed but stated that under current budget constraints the Association is doing what needs to be done to ensure quality educational opportunities for our members. Ms. Berling-Manuel also said that she shares the concern over whether the current approach with blended education is scalable long-term.
- Haroot Hakopian said that he finds our new membership registration process improved but still clunky. Mr. Hubbard and Ms. Berling-Manuel agreed the process has room for improvement, but that system updates are coming as mentioned in Ms. Hoffmann's morning report.

6. Awards: Presidential Recognition Awards, Letters of Commendation and Certificates of Appreciation – K. Sims

- Mr. Sims provided a list of names that have been nominated for awards. Discussion revolved around the criteria between the Letters of Commendation and Letters of Appreciation.
- The Board had no objections to the list of nominees for recognition and thanked the Awards Committee members for their work.
- Mr. Sims notified the Board of potential Presidential Recognition Awards recipients and sought feedback on the nominees.

7. Q&A on activities of the Foundation Committee – W. Mersereau

- Warren Mersereau reported that Giving Tuesday numbers were really strong, and the Foundation received about \$29,000 from 80 donors, with all Board members participating. Mr. Mersereau also mentioned that the Foundation Committee has been very impressed with its current staff liaison.

8. Advocacy groups discussion – S. Ryan

- Sue. Ryan provided her report in a new format and got favorable feedback from the Board.
- Ms. Ryan discussed the need for creating two chairs for the Youth Advocacy Group, one for Boys' Youth and one for Girls' Youth. This suggestion was supported by the Board.

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- Following discussion, it was also decided that Ms. Ryan and Ms. Fontes-Comber should move forward with the establishing a plan for the creation of social affinity groups (like a veteran coaches group).

9. Long-term Topics – K. Sims

- Mr. Sims closed with a brief discussion of various topics that he believes the Board should focus on process improvements. These include: the CEO review process and the creation and assessment of annual CEO goals.
- Mr. Sims also expressed his view that the Association should adopt the practice of doing exit interviews whenever a staff member departs.

Following this discussion, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved.