



MEETING MINUTES
USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors
July 8, 2025, 9:00am CDT in Fort Worth, Texas

Board Members in Attendance

Elisa Au
Mike Donadio
Sasha Gerritson
Pat Hickey
Brian Hilliard
Angel Johnson
Safin Kasturi
Todd Meyers
Tom Scott
Senthil Thiagarajan

Staff

Michael Cain
Brody Burns

Call to Order – Elisa Au called the meeting to order at 9:04 am Central Time (CT).

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

1. Pat Hickey declared a conflict since he is the Chair of the USA Karate Federation, which could be considered a competing organization to USANKF. Mr. Hickey stated that the USA Karate Federation has no interest in becoming the National Governing Body (NGB) for Karate in the US.

Open Session

1. April 24, 2025 Minutes – motioned to approve by Elisa Au, seconded by Angel Johnson.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
2. Board and International updates
 - a. Elisa Au gave an update on the current international medal count for American athletes in 2025, including the 2025 Senior and U21 PKF Results: 9 gold, 4 silver, 6 bronze, 2 para gold, 3 para bronze. USA topped the medal count for a fourth consecutive PKF Championship.
 - b. Ms. Au was named Secretary of the WKF Rules & Ranking Commission.
 - c. Ms. Au gave an update on potential PKF and WKF events that USA Karate would be able to host. The 2027 Junior PKF Championships have been awarded to the U.S. WKF did not grant USA Karate a 2026 Youth League event, and we ultimately declined to offer a bid on a 2026 Premier League. USA Karate is currently exploring the possibility of bidding on a future WKF World Championships.
 - d. Ms. Au talked about the value that our partnership with the Karate Kid: Legends movie premiere brought to the federation. Over 200 new club contacts were

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made and over 140 USA Karate members attended the movie premiere in New York City.

- e. Ms. Au hosted a roundtable in New York last June – various dojo owners, parents and supporters of USA Karate attended and gave us a lot of useful feedback.
 - f. Ms. Au updated the Board on a webinar she attended that was hosted by the USOPC for all NGB CEOs and Board Chairs. The keynote speakers were Dr. Sutton and Marina Park.
 - g. Ms. Au invited MacKenzie Morse from the USOPC to speak with our senior national team at their last camp in Texas last May. MacKenzie reviewed athlete benefits for Team USA athletes and clarified who is eligible to receive these benefits.
 - h. Ms. Au thanked the Athletes Advisory Council for initiating the two-phase Junior Team Selection process, which was ultimately approved and implemented for the first time at the 2025 National Championships and Team Trials.
3. CEO and Organizational updates
- a. Michael Cain stated that overall, USA Karate is financially stable.
 - b. Mr. Cain said that there is approximately \$706,000 cash on hand, with a \$130,000 outstanding bill from the Paris Hotel, that will be negotiated and settled shortly. This was later corrected by Brody Burns to be an AP of over \$200,000.
 - c. Mr. Cain announced that all 2026 Signature Event dates and locations are set.
 - d. Mr. Cain said that he is working on a long-term deal with Fort Worth through 2031. In 2027-28, the Convention Hall is available (not arena), and in 2029, the Convention Center is not available at all.
 - i. Elisa Au asked if the intention is to host the USA Open events in Fort Worth every year. Mr. Cain said yes.
 - ii. Senthil Thiyagarajan asked if hosting the USA Open in Fort Worth every year is what the members want. Mr. Cain said that we won't know until we host one more event in Fort Worth in 2026.
 - iii. Dr. Angel Johnson asked if international participants choose whether or not to attend based on the host city.
 - iv. Ms. Au said that after talking to international participants, they are interested in the tourist appeal, which is why Las Vegas was a large draw.
 - v. Generally speaking, the Board agreed that Mr. Cain should consider cities other than Fort Worth that have an appeal to international athletes, such as Orlando.
 - e. Mr. Cain stated that we currently have 3,615 members.
 - f. Mr. Cain is currently working with Pittsburgh to host the 2027 National Championships.
 - g. Mr. Cain is also talking with Florida Citrus Sports to host a potential event in Orlando.
 - h. Patrick Hickey asked Mr. Cain to provide a high-level budget for all proposals. It would help the Board to evaluate the proposals effectively to see the overall income, expenses and estimated bottom line for each proposed event.

The Board took a break at 10:18am. The meeting resumed at 10:29 am CT.



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- i. Brody Burns provided a program update
 - i. New coaches added to the staff, including Para Karate coaches.
 - ii. Outstanding National Team performance in 2025 so far.
 - iii. Referee Staff program is doing well – 129 new referee licenses issued in 2025 and 24 referee courses held. Mr. Burns said that with the regional program, we have accountability to ensure the quality of our referee level at Signature Events. Referee leadership is working on developing mentors to help build up the level of our referees as they enter the system.
 - iv. Mr. Thiagarajan asked if there is any plan to fund referees to international events in 2026 and beyond. Ms. Gerritson and Mr. Burns said that they would consider it for the 2026 budget.
 - v. Mr. Hickey asked for a report showing membership growth by month.
 - vi. Mr. Burns presented the updated Coach Certification Program.
 - vii. USA Karate is partnering with Positive Coaching Alliance to bring resources to our coaches.
 - viii. Q3 & Q4 program priorities include expanding club membership and developing regional championship policies for 2026.
 - ix. Mr. Hickey asked Mr. Burns asked if he could expand more on Mr. Cain's operational plan, specifically about the elite athlete development program starting in Q1 of 2027. Mr. Burns was unaware of the initiative.
 - x. The Board thanked Mr. Burns for his work and for preparing the presentation.
- j. Mr. Cain said that he met with David Patterson, Senior Governance Advisor, and Katie (Grunik) Koenig, Manager of NGBC Services, and that USA Karate is meeting all expectations with the USOPC. USA Karate is scheduled for a full audit in 2026.
- k. Mr. Cain listed five potential sponsorship deals that he is working on in order of likelihood to close:
 - i. Order – credit card processing company, introduced by Mike Donadio
 - ii. Dick Sporting Goods – 2027 Event Sponsorship plus a potential general sponsorship
 - iii. Bell Bank
 - iv. Vision Martial Arts (Tusah)
 - v. Sports Centrall – app builder
- l. The Board agreed that the current USA Karate Sponsorship Deck can be made public and available for public access, but without actual dollar amounts published.
- m. The Board directed the CEO to provide an after-action report no more than 30 days after any Signature event. The report shall include feedback from the Tournament Director, Head Referee, Technical Committee Chairperson, Medical Committee Chairperson, and JEDI Committee Chairperson.
- n. Mr. Thiagarajan asked that we do a roundtable in Texas soon.

The Board took a break at 12:12 pm. The meeting resumed at 12:22 pm CT.



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4. Fundraising update
 - a. Sasha Gerritson provided a comprehensive YTD account of incoming and outgoing funds relating to events, excluding the USA Open. This includes all camps, courses and team trips of June 2025. She also included membership and donation revenues for this year to date.
 - b. The Board agreed that there is potential to grow the Club memberships as early as the second half of 2025.
5. Collegiate program task force
 - a. Ms. Au asked the Board to endorse a Collegiate program task force. This task force will be responsible for researching opportunities and challenges for USA Karate to provide a transition for collegiate athletes to continue to compete in our sport during their college years. The Board endorsed this initiative, and the task force will be formed and asked to provide an update by the next Board meeting in September.
6. Motion to move into Closed Session by Elisa Au, seconded by Sasha Gerritson.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 8; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0

The Board took a break at 12:47 pm. The meeting resumed at 1:19 pm CT.

Closed Session

Todd Meyers left the meeting.

7. Motion to approve Dr. Angel Johnson's second term as Independent Board Director (2025-2028) by Elisa Au, seconded by Sasha Gerritson.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 7; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 1
8. Motion to approve proposed bylaws, dated July 8, 2025, by Patrick Hickey, seconded by Angel Johnson.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 8; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
9. Update on hosting WKF events in 2026-27
10. 2025-2028 Operations Plan
 - a. The Board, Michael Cain and Brody Burns had a healthy discussion on the operational priorities for the remainder of the quad (2025-2028).
 - b. Michael Cain's listed the following items as top initiatives:
 - i. Hosting more events (12-15 sanctioned events per year)
 - ii. Increased social media presence
 - iii. Streaming events (an 18mo + initiative)
 - c. The Board listed these items as what they would like to see as top initiatives:
 - i. Increase our cash reserves to a target of \$1M
 - ii. Increased member engagement
 - iii. Athlete funding
 - iv. Incentives for coaches and referees
 - v. Sponsorships
 - vi. International participation in USA Karate events
 - vii. Marketing and Sales resources for members
11. Motion to move into Executive Session at 4:54pm CT.





Executive Session

12. The Board agreed to reserve time in Executive session to discuss staff.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:45 pm CT.