MEETING MINUTES
USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors Meeting
January 22, 2026, 3:00pm Central time via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance
Elisa Au
Mike Donadio
Sasha Gerritson
Pat Hickey
Brian Hilliard
Angel Johnson
Todd Meyers
Tom Scott

Staff
Michael Cain
Brody Burns

Call to Order – Elisa Au called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm Central Time (CT).

Open Session

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
    - **a.** Pat Hickey declared a conflict of interest because 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.
2. Prior to this meeting, two items were approved by the Board via email:
    - a. Athlete Safety Policy, approved unanimously by 1/22/26
    - b. Bylaw Changes, approved unanimously by 1/22/26, pending no public comment by 2/15/26.
3. Board and International updates
    - b. Elisa Au updated the Board on USA Karate's most recent wins on the world stage, including a bronze medal by Ariel Torres at the WKF World Championships.
    - c. Ms. Au notified the Board of WKF's revised rules for 2026.
    - d. She also debriefed on the signing ceremony to officially begin the MOU between the karate federations of Saudi Arabia and USA. She also updated the Board on talks with other federation presidents during the World Championships in Cairo.
    - e. Ms. Au updated the Board on her recent meeting with other NGB Board Chairs, who are all former athletes.
    - f. Lastly, Ms. Au recapped the Q1 training camp, which featured four visiting national teams. The Guatemala karate federation has reciprocated the invitation to six senior US team members in May/June 2026, with all expenses paid by their federation, including airfare.
4. CEO and Organizational updates
    - g. Michael Cain acknowledged that he will send his activity report to the Board by the second Friday of every month.
    - h. Mr. Cain reported that we 4,227 active members and 27 member clubs.
    - i. Mr. Cain stated that finances are stable and that approximately $75K in accounts receivable is expected in Q2. Elisa Au asked that all AR be added to the books and Mr. Cain said that he will make sure those are added and sent as part of the 2025 Financial Reports.

j. The 2027 Jr PKF Championships contracts are fully signed. He also reported an update on how the USOPC supports the visa process for international athletes for international events.
k. 2027 USA Open and JIC: Mr. Cain reached out to Schaumburg (Chicago), Miami Dade County, Las Vegas and Salt Lake City. He stated that Las Vegas is furthest along in the bid process.
l. Safe Sport audit was completed.
m. USOPC audit starts next week. Sasha Gerritson and Sara Plackett collaborated extensively to obtain the necessary documents.
n. Michael Cain turned the floor over to Director of Sport, Brody Burns.
o. Mr. Burns discussed the Referee Training Camp's success.
p. Mr. Burns presented an update on Sanctioned events, including a 36% growth. There are 19 sanctioned tournaments as of the meeting date, and 4 more are in the process of applying.
q. Next, Mr. Burns presented the reintroduced National Qualifiers program. The staff took into considerations based on pros and cons from the last iteration of the program. As of the date of this meeting, there were 10 National Qualifier Events.
r. Mr. Bruns stated that in 2025, USA Karate gained on average 15-25 new members per Sanctioned Tournament.
s. USA-NKF member Jo Pledge commented that the reintroduction of National Qualifiers is well-received.
t. Mr. Burns introduced the new mascot for our Youth Programs – *Waza the Wolf.*

5. Fundraising update
    u. Sasha Gerritson shared in 2025, we budgeted for $75,000 in donations and actually raised $125,000.
    v. The 2026 donation budget is $115,000.
    w. $15,750 Lifetime memberships were received in 2025, and $6,300 to date in 2026.
    x. Pat Hickey suggested that we do a referral incentive for next year.
2. Elisa Au invited members to ask questions and offer comments.
    a. Jo Pledge mentioned the financial support for AAU Karate referees published by that organization. Ms. Pledge asked USA Karate to consider more financial support for its referees.
6. July 8, 2025 Minutes – motioned to approve by Patrick Hickey, seconded by Tom Scott.
    b. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 6; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 2
7. Collegiate program task force
    a. There is nothing to report at this time, other than the task force now has athlete representation via the USA-NKF AAC. The task force lead, David Rosenberg, will update the Board at the next Board meeting or sooner.

The Board took a 5-minute break. Closed session began at 3:52pm

Closed Session

8. The Board commented on the current Strategic Plan and Operations Plan.
9. The Board held a productive discussion on Referee budgeting priorities.
10. The Board agreed to dedicate time at the next Board meeting to long-term planning, including but not limited to:
    a. Updating the Strategic Plan
    b. Fundraising

c. Financial planning – Sasha Gerritson, Pat Hickey and Safin Kasturi (pending his acceptance) to look into this before the next meeting.
d. Affiliates definition – Pat Hickey and Elisa Au will look into this before the next meeting.
e. Committee Policies & Procedures
f. Organizational Structure audit
g. Staffing structure and accompanying Quad budget – Michael Cain and Sasha Gerritson

11. There are some conflicts for Board members on the proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule, so a survey will be sent out in order to find the best date and location for 2026 Board meetings.

Executive Session

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 pm CT.