



MEETING MINUTES
USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors Meeting
April 25, 2025, 3:00 pm Central time via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

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

Staff

Michael Cain
Brody Burns

Call to Order – Elisa Au called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm 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. January 23, 2025 Minutes – motioned to approve by Elisa Au, seconded by Senthil Thiyagarajan.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
2. Board and International updates
 - a. Elisa Au thanked all staff and members for contributing to a successful 2025 USA Open. Some highlights included record-high participation, international athletes, and the new K23 category for athletes with autism. The para karate division had nearly 40 athletes.
 - b. Ms. Au also shared some deliverables from the recent brand and identity refresh project completed in Q1.
 - c. Eddie Sagilyan, Sakura Kokumai and Ariel Torres qualified for The World Games
 - d. 13 Karate1 medals this year to date
 - e. Successful international kata camp led by Javier Mantilla
 - f. Organizational Growth
 - g. The rebranding project was completed in Q1, and social media numbers continue to increase.
 - h. Ms. Au attended a meeting of National Federation presidents hosted by the WKF.
 - i. USA Karate is assisting Sony Pictures in publicizing the upcoming Karate Kid: Legends movie.
3. CEO and Organizational updates



Member, United States
Olympic & Paralympic Committee

- a. Michael Cain said that he is in constant updates to invite Karate Kid: Legends actors to the Sr National training camp in May.
- b. Mr. Cain talked about the high participation numbers at the USA Open. The financials are not ready to present to the Board yet but will be sent once they are.
- c. A \$50,000 payment from Fort Worth is expected by June.
- d. Elisa Au asked if the Q1 financial reports were ready. Mr. Cain said that we would have them ready by the end of April.
- e. Mr. Cain secured the 2026 USA Open to April 2-6, 2026.
- f. Mr. Cain said he and Brody Burns are working on Nationals RFPs for 2027 and beyond.
- g. Mr. Cain said there are 5 sanctioned events for 2025 and 3,252 active members.
- h. Mr. Burns emphasized that the sanctioning events and membership tiers are paying off.
- i. Mr. Burns also talked about the increased participation and coaching staff in the para karate program.
- j. Mr. Cain mentioned that the U.S. Center for Safe Sport is undergoing leadership changes.
- k. Pat Hickey asked if there was any data on the geographical dispersion of new members. Mr. Cain said he would get that information for us.
- l. Mr. Hickey also asked if we anticipate any issues with birthright citizens on our national teams as they travel internationally. Mr. Cain said that he would look into it.
- m. Senthil Thiyagarajan asked if the 2026 USA Open/JIC will be four days. Mr. Cain said they are considering making it a four-day competition event.
4. 2022 & 2023 Audits – motioned to approve by Elisa Au, seconded by Todd Meyers
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
5. Fundraising update
 - a. Sasha Gerritson shared event P&Ls for memberships, national training camps, and international competitions YTD.
 - b. Mr. Cain thanked Ms. Gerritson for leading the donation and philanthropic efforts.
 - c. Ms. Gerritson is also pushing for additional donations for the upcoming national championships.
6. Committee updates – Ms. Au gave each committee chair the floor to update the Board on any activities.
 - a. Judicial – Jordan Fox was present and had no additional updates besides the report submitted.
 - b. Medical – Dr. Kathy Bailey was present and said they have been consulted throughout the year.
 - c. Ethics – Adam Older was present and discussed the transition of members in this committee. Ms. Au asked Mr. Older to complete the Code of Conduct training.
 - d. N&G – Vince Koehl was present. N&G completed the elections in 2024.
 - e. Technical – Cleve Baxter was present and looks forward to working with the Coaches' committee and Director of Sport to prepare for coaches certification.
 - f. Referee – Fariba Madani was present and talked about the referee corp's success in growth and performance. Ms. Madani also thanked the board for approving the referee budget in 2025. Ms. Madani asked the federation to implement Sportdata for all tatami at Signature Events.
 - g. Para Karate: Jamie Green was present and spoke about the success of para karate participation and the new autism event.
 - h. JEDI – Cheryl Murphy was present and talked about continuing to be a presence at USA Karate events. Their goal is to be a liaison, not a reporter. Ms. Murphy also spoke about the success of the Guardian Girls event last March in New York.



- i. AAC – Will Gatch was present and had no additional updates besides the report submitted.
 - j. Masters Caucus – no representative was present.
 - k. Selection – Ms. Au did not call on the Selection Committee, but Tony Mendonca was present. He later said that he had no comments that were not included in the committee's annual report.
7. Motion to move into Closed Session

The Board took a 5-minute break. The meeting resumed at 4:10 pm CT.

Closed Session

- 8. The Board moved their fall in-person meeting in Chicago to September 18-19, 2025.
- 9. Board Donation Policy
 - a. Pat Hickey motioned to approve the Board Donation Policy as written and have Michael Cain look into whether we need to expand it to non-board members.
 - i. Seconded by Mike Donadio
 - ii. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
 - iii. Mr. Cain said he would forward the policy to Heidi Roche to demonstrate USA Karate's initiative.
- 10. Committee Policies & Procedures
 - a. The Board discussed which committees should fall under the purview of the policies vs. the bylaws.
 - b. Mr. Hickey asked if the committee is receiving policy training. Ms. Au said that the policies are reinforced at quarterly meetings.
 - c. Mr. Cain said that some committees still do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities. He will take a deeper dive this quarter into ensuring that policies and understanding are clear.
 - d. Pat Hickey motioned to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Sasha Gerritson.
 - i. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
- 11. Referee Policies
 - a. No changes were made to the existing policy.
- 12. There is an open Technical Committee position. Ms. Au will present a nomination at a later date.
- 13. The Board discussed bylaw update proposals. After discussion, the proposed changes will be distributed to the Board and posted on the USANKF website for public review before the board votes to finalize them.
- 14. 2025-2028 Strategy
 - a. The Board had a healthy discussion on what they would like to see in the Operational Plan (aka Impact Plan) as it relates to the Strategic Plan.
 - b. Key points include improving the quality of our events and media productions, attracting sponsorships, and increasing event organization.
 - c. The Board and CEO also discussed the potential to increase our membership numbers.
 - d. Board members discussed the idea of introducing a new regional league, open to all, which would create more competition opportunities in the region and attract members from outside the USA Karate network.
 - e. The Board asked Michael Cain to bring a draft Impact Plan to the next Board meeting. Details do not have to be worked out, but a framework with actionable plans is expected. Then, a finalized plan can be approved at the fall Board meeting.





15. Michael Cain will continue to submit monthly status reports to the Board. Elisa Au asked that quarterly financial reports be completed no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter. The Board requests 2025 Q1 financials, regardless of whether or not the USA Open accounting has been completed.
16. Motion to move into Executive Session at 6 pm CT.

Executive Session

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:10 pm CT.

Previously approved items since the 1/23/25 meeting

- Approved JEDI section of Committee policies
- Approved Cedric Barksdale 7th Dan