



MEETING MINUTES
USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors Meeting
September 18, 2025, 11:00am Central time in Irving, Texas

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

Other

Stephen Hess, General Counsel

Call to Order – Elisa Au called the meeting to order at 11:08 am Central Time (CT).

Executive Session

1. The Board agreed to reserve time in Executive session to discuss staff.
2. The Board agreed to renew the CEO's contract for an additional 1-year period.
3. The Board invited Michael Cain and Stephen Hess into the Executive Session. They discussed current grievances and complaints being handled by the Judicial or Ethics committees.

The meeting moved to Open Session at 12:04pm

Open Session

4. 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.
5. July 8, 2025 Minutes – motioned to approve by Tom Scott, seconded by Sasha Gerritson.
 - b. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
6. Board and International updates
 - c. Elisa Au updated the Board on USA Karate's most recent wins on the world stage, including victories at the World Games, Junior Pan American Games, and Junior Pan American Championships.
 - d. Three para karate athletes and head para karate coach, Jeff Kohn,
7. CEO and Organizational updates
 - e. Michael Cain confirmed the USA Open will be April 2-5 in Fort Worth, TX. The dual event will now have four days of competition.
 - f. Mr. Cain is exploring locations for the USA Open/JIC in 2027 and 2028.
 - g. Pittsburgh is identified as a potential host for the 2027 National Championships.
 - h. Mr. Cain reports that the current membership is 3,664 and is working to increase tournament sanctions, with an estimated 70% of all WKF-style karate tournaments in the country potentially available for sanctioning.
 - i. The board received positive news about winning a USOPC DE&I award and an associated \$5,000 grant for para karate programs.





8. Fundraising update
 - j. Sasha Gerritson shared that efforts have secured \$90,000 in unrestricted donations, with an additional \$25,000-30,000 expected by year-end.
9. The Board asked if there were any questions from members in attendance.
 - k. David Rosenberg asked for clarification on the membership numbers. He also asked what USA Karate is planning to do to increase support for Sanctioned Event tournament promoters.
 - i. Elisa Au responded that the communications team is working on a pre-event checklist to optimize promotion. She also mentioned a post-event press release tool, and finally, the staff is working on ways to amplify and promote the USA Karate ranking system.
10. Collegiate Program Task Force
 - l. A task force has been formed to explore opportunities for USA Karate's involvement at the collegiate level. The task force is awaiting athlete representation from the AAC.
11. Motion to move into Closed Session by Elisa Au, seconded by Sasha Gerritson.

The Board took a 5-minute break. Closed session began at 1:03pm

Closed Session

12. Elisa Au expanded on two issues from the Junior Pan American Championships.
13. Michael Cain expanded on an issue currently under review by the Ethics Committee.
14. Mr. Cain discussed his conversations with the USOPC regarding future funding.
15. The Board discussed potential sponsorship opportunities.
16. The Board discussed the proposed Operations plan. The high-level initiatives of the plan for 2026 include:
 - m. Event expansion
 - n. Social media growth
 - o. Event streaming
 - p. Reserve growth
 - q. Member engagement
 - r. Athlete funding
 - s. Incentives for Referees and Coaches
 - t. Sponsorship growth
 - u. International Participation growth
 - v. Member Clubs sales & marketing resources
17. The Board discussed the 2026 proposed budget. After a few slight adjustments, Elisa Au motioned to approve the budget, seconded by Patrick Hickey. The updated budget was sent to all Board members by Sasha Gerritson.
 - w. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 9; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0
18. The Board asked staff about the 2025 USA National Championships After-Action Report. The Board asked staff to gather more comprehensive feedback from all stakeholders, including the tournament director, the chief referee, JEDI, and others.
19. Motion to move into Executive Session at 6 pm CT.

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

Previously approved items since the 7/8/25 meeting

- none