

USLA Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 30, 2023 @ 8:00PM EST
Zoom Call

Members Present: Bob Hughes, Don Simkin, Bruce Norman, Scott McIntyre, Ken Yonemura, Nonie Manion, Summer Britcher, Chris Mazdzer, Tucker West

Staff Present: Jim Leahy, Mark Grimmette, Amy Chapin

Mr. Leahy welcomed everyone and stated that Ms. Warren and Mr. Berlew would not be able to attend.

Call To Order – The meeting was called to order at 8:03PM

Approval of the May 12, 2023 Board meeting minutes

Motion to Approve by Mr. Simkin, seconded by Mr. Norman. MOTION PASSED

Approval of 2023-2024 Budget – Jim Leahy

Mr. Leahy reported on the budget that was previously sent as part of the Board packet of documents. The presentation included the budget as well as pie charts and bar graphs to showcase revenue and expense breakdowns.

A major area of discussion was the proposed increase of the Program Fee paid by all athletes in the program. The proposed increase is going from \$800 the previous year to \$1500 for the 2023-2024 year. There was lengthy discussion and comments that the current program improvements will help all athletes, but also that continued increases of the program fee is not sustainable for our athletes. Mr. Mazdzer asked Mr. Leahy if athletes were consulted or asked their opinion during the staff wide discussion of increasing the Program Fee. Mr. Leahy replied that he had not.

At this point Mr. Mazdzer stated that he could not vote on approval of the budget without revisions to the athlete marketing contract to help athletes acquire the funds to meet this new fee so close to the start of the season.

At the request of Ms. Britcher, Mr. Leahy confirmed the program fee will not increase for the remainder of this Olympic quad.

It was agreed that Mr. Leahy will set up a meeting with the Athlete Board members and Mr. Gordy Sheer to look at re-working the current agreement.

With the completion of the discussion, Mr. Leahy asked for Board approval of the presented 2023-2024 budget.

Motion to Approve the Budget by Tucker West, seconded by Bob Hughes. BUDGET UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Approval of USLA/NYS M/WBE Policy for Grant – Jim Leahy

As part of the State of NY Grant money for the upcoming World Cup in Lake Placid, New York State is requiring a Board resolution regarding NYS WMBE Policy. Mr. Leahy pointed out that Carr-Hughes Productions is the only contractor that will fall under this policy.

Mr. Bob Hughes pointed out that he no longer has an interest in Carr-Hughes.

Motion to approve by Chris Mazdzer, seconded by Don Simkin. APPROVED Unanimously

FIL Congress Update – Jim Leahy

Ms. Warren and Ms. Beverly Detwiler were recognized by the FIL for their years of service to the sport of Luge. Ms. Warren received her award at the FIL Congress, and we held a separate ceremony in the office for Ms. Detwiler.

Mr. Leahy reported that due to the current war in Ukraine a resolution was approved at the meeting that prohibits the Russian Luge Federation for participating in the 2023-2024 season.

USA Luge and ORDA made a presentation at the Congress to host the 2027 FIL World Championship in Lake Placid. We lost out to Austria who continues to receive World Championships on the 7's. After the vote many nations, included Austria, said they will support a Lake Placid bid to host the 2028 FIL World Championship which will be voted on at the next Congress in June of 2024.

There was an update on the Cortina track. The FIL remains confident that there will be a track ready for the 2026 Games in Cortina. Mr. Leahy reported that the FIL has appointed Maria Louisa Rainer to coordinate the effort on the ground in Italy.

Finally, he reported there was much discussion on standardized sleds in the future. One of the big concerns addressed is the lack of potential suppliers. Action won't take place until after the 2026 Games.

Technical Update – Bruce Norman, Mark Grimmette, Tucker West

Mr. Grimmette stated that we have a great staff in place. He is very pleased that we have good momentum with the technical projects. The Steel friction group is working well. They met recently in Lake Placid and conducted some very promising tests. He also reported that our sponsor Norton did a great job polishing 45 different runners and credited the efforts of Mr. West during some very long testing days. He finished his report by saying we have good momentum but there are other projects that we need to continue to work on.

Mr. West added that from the athlete's perspective the athletes are happy with where we are and look forward to seeing what newly hired technical coach, Toni Eggert, can bring to the team. He commented from his meetings on the technical working group that manufacturing of parts was going well but we still need to keep a focus on R & D.

Mr. Norman stated how much he appreciates Mr. West's continued input and support during testing. He also pointed out that we need to be an organization that learns from our testing. We have compiled a team of technology-oriented people and he believes we are improving the execution of our testing.

Mr. Norman shared technical data regarding the wolf pack and sled telemetry projects. He focused on how this technology will be utilized to provide on the spot coachable insight for each athlete.

DISC Assessment Update – Jim Leahy

Mr. Simkin asked for an update on the DISC assessment. Mr. Leahy reported that there are still a number of individuals who need to complete the assessment and once completed can move into the dissection of the data.

Next Board Meeting is scheduled to be an in-person meeting in Lake Placid on Saturday, October 14, 2023. For anyone who is looking for a hotel room, Dmitry Feld will be working with several hotels so please reach out to him. ORDA has offered a room at the Mountain Pass Lodge at the track. Will work with them on final details.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mazdzer, second by Mr. Hughes. Meeting Adjourned at 9:22PM