

U.S. Masters Swimming — 2023 Meeting Minutes

Committee Name:	Colonies Zones	Session #:	1
Committee Chair:	Douglas Sayles	Vice Chair:	Jeremy Gross
Minutes recorded by:	Sue Nutty (edited by DS)	Date/Time:	August 1, 2023, 7 p.m. EDT

USMS BOD Members: VP of Admin Chris Colburn, Breadbasket Zone At-Large Director Sue Nutty, Colonies Zone At-Large Director Charles Cockrell

Colonies Zone / LMSC Reps: Zone Chair & NE Membership Coordinator Douglas Sayles, Zone Vice Chair & DV Chair Jeremy Gross, AD Chair Bob Singer, CT Chair Rob Duguay & Vice Chair Eric Gordon, DV Vice Chair Steve Dougherty, MD Chair Rand Vaillancourt, NE Chair Alana Aubin & Sanctions Chair Jason Weis, PV Chair Brett LaPlante, NJ Member Coordinator Chris McGiffin, VA Chair Caycee Buscaglia, Unidentified Google Pixel 4a.

Absent Zone / LMSC Reps: MR, NI

Minutes:

1) Roll Call / Introductions

- a) Meeting convened at 7:03 p.m.
- b) Doug introduced everyone on the call.
- c) Chris overviewed the meeting agenda and stressed the board's desire for attendees' feedback.

2) Topic #1: USMS Mission-Vision-Values

- a) Mission
 - i) Existing: "To promote health, wellness, fitness, and competition for adults through swimming;"
 - ii) Proposed: "Empower adults to improve their lives through swimming."
 - iii) Comments: Like that it is more action and community oriented. "Improve" is a bit harsh because it implies people lack something. Curious how these changes affect grassroots members.
 - iv) Suggestion: Shorten to read, "Empower adults through swimming." Simpler and more memorable.
- b) Vision
 - i) Existing: "USMS will be the premier resource for adult aquatic fitness in the United States and will make fitness through swimming available for as many adults as possible."
 - ii) Proposed: "Foster a nationwide adult swimming community through lifelong fitness, competition, and education."
 - iii) Charles added context: The BOD subcommittee focused on creating a set of guiding principles — Mission is what we are about; Vision is where we are going; Values are supposed to be enduring.
 - iv) Comments: Consensus approval of new vision.
- c) Values
 - i) No existing values. Proposed values: "Fitness. Camaraderie. Inclusion. Learning. Excellence."
 - ii) Comments: Split opinions regarding using one-word values and/or concise phrases. Some people may consider "inclusion" politically charged, but the BOD subcommittee believes it is essential that USMS be an inclusive organization. Discussed "camaraderie" versus "community."
 - iii) Suggestion: Since they are all equally important, list values in alphabetical order.

1) Topic #2: Club & Event Development Programs

- a) Grants to date: 5 awarded, 6 pending, enough funds for 25 potential future grants.
- b) Since program rollout, 74 club growth discussions with USMS Club & Coach Services staff.
- c) Six grants matched by LMSCs (IN, SR, HI, NC, NE, PNW) with 3 more potential matches pending.
- d) Grants meant to keep existing clubs healthy, develop new clubs, and help clubs recover from pandemic.
- e) Unlike the Covid Relief Program grants, these Development Program grants must have a ROI for USMS.

2) Topic #3: Health of the LMSCs

- a) CT: Still hard to secure pool space due to time and space challenges. Promoting a bottom-up approach — i.e., swimmers asking facility to dedicate Masters lane space — because top-down approach not working.
- b) NE:
 - i) Small and unorganized workout groups disappeared during the pandemic whereas larger and well-organized groups managed and rebounded.
 - ii) Biggest challenge is securing pools for multi-day LMSC championship meets that can accommodate hundreds of swimmers. Few suitable accessible pools. Low priority for facilities. Rental fees have increased drastically. University policies limit the feasibility of multi-day meets.
 - iii) It is difficult to find qualified, communicative meet directors who understand the Masters community and the differences between USMS and USA Swimming championship meets.
 - iv) Doug: NE and the Colonies Zone are starting to run large meets themselves out of necessity. Suggest that USMS create a meet director educational curriculum and/or mentorship program.
- c) MD subsidizes meets and requires clubs to host and run them, but most meets are < 100 swimmers.
- d) VA prefers that the facilities run the meets.
- e) NE LMSC and the University of Rhode Island CCS team are co-hosting a 350 to 400 swimmer, dual-recognized, USMS-insured, combined USMS-CCS meet on November 12.
 - (1) Co-hosting with the college club facilitates pool access and reduces the facility expense.
 - (2) If this meet model gains traction, USMS, CCS, and Club Assistant may need to update the regulations, registration system, fee structure, etc. to better accommodate combined meets.
- f) Doug asked why so many LMSCs do not have LMSC championships.
 - g) Discussion: DV offers and supports one meet per month. Full season of mini meets promotes attendance at the end-of-season championship. On the other hand, many swimmers do not have the bandwidth to attend multiple mini meets and just focus on championships. Championships also enable multi-venue clubs and workout groups to come together as unified teams.
- h) CT only supports local programs that require USMS membership because some CT officers believe that supporting a program that allows non-USMS participants violates the LMSC's "agreement" with USMS. Chris suggested they discuss legal questions with USMS Legal Counsel Katie Kenyon.

3) Topic #4: What is one thing related to event development that USMS should focus on this year?

- a) Train people to be meet directors, including budgeting, staffing, tools and resources, computer software, etc. Hold a "Make a Meet Director" conference.
- b) Compile a meet directors database.
- c) Create a LMSC meet coordinator volunteer role.
- d) Simplify and combine the sanctioning and results submission processes into one system.
- e) Provide template event management tools — e.g., meet announcement generator.
- f) Chris: Event directors who need help should contact USMS Event Services for support.

4) Miscellaneous Topics

- a) Chris: Make plans to attend Relay. Theme is Event Development focusing on building relationships with event directors, clubs, and aquatic facilities. LMSCs should send one veteran volunteer, one volunteer with event management experience, and one new volunteer.
- b) Anyone can schedule a club development consultation with Club & Coach Services.
- c) There are upcoming USMS education/certification courses in VA and NE. Discussed LMSC scholarships.
- d) Suggestion: Update USMS website so all course and clinic registration links are in one, easy to find place.

5) Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. EDT.