Committee Name:	Board of Directors	**Session #:**	1
Committee Chair:	Ed Coates		
Minutes recorded by:	Carrie Stolar	**Date/time of meeting:**	9/08/25 8:00 PM ET

Actions Taken:

1. Approved: The amended July board retreat meeting minutes.
2. Approved: The August 18, 2025 BOD meeting minutes.
3. Approved: The annual meetings committee policy as amended.
4. Approved: The appointment of David Benjamin as NBR chair effective Oct. 1.

Number of committee members present: 16 **Absent: 2** **Other Delegates and Guests: 33**

Committee members present/virtual (list all, including chair and vice chair): Ed Coates – President; Julie Dussliere - VP of Administration; Kenny Brisbin - VP of Community Services; Crystie McGrail - VP of Local Operations; Robin Smith - VP of Programs; Carrie Stolar - Secretary; Teddy Decker – Treasurer); Peter Guadagni (Immediate Past President); Dawson Hughes – CEO; At-Large Directors: Sam Kraft (Breadbasket); Guy Davis (Colonies); C.J. Rushman (Great Lakes); Rob Heath (Northwest); Phyllis Quinn (Oceana); Trey Taylor (Southeast); Jeff Commings (Southwest).

Not present: Nicole Christensen (South Central); Katie Kenyon (Legal Counsel).

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Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM ET.

1. Agenda review and declarations of conflict of interest (Ed): The modifications to the agenda included adding the link to the analysis for the strategy initiatives survey and a potential date for next year's virtual annual meeting. There were no conflicts of interest.

2. Board member introductions.

3. Approval of the minutes (Carrie):
   a. July board retreat minutes: **MSA for approval of the amended July board retreat meeting minutes**. Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**
   b. August board meeting minutes: **MSA for approval of Aug. 18, 2025 BOD meeting minutes**. Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Minutes of good news (Teddy):
   a. Albuquerque had its first GUS season, finishing with about 25 members.
   b. Teddy will be retiring by next June.
   c. This is Teddy's last BOD meeting as treasurer of USMS.

5. CEO Update (Dawson):
   a. General updates:
      i. Membership: Growth has slowed since June and is flat compared to last year. Dawson reminded the BOD that we are comparing the membership numbers to last year which included Trials and the Olympics. Legal issues have probably affected membership growth, too.
      ii. CCS: Club registration started in August and there are already 131 clubs registered.
      iii. GUS: 4300 swimmers are projected to be registered in 28 leagues, and GUS is on track with projections for membership and financials. On average, first year leagues have doubled in size compared to the past few years.
      iv. USMS financials: We are continuing to trend towards a break-even budget for this calendar year, however the legal expenses are still unknown.
   b. 2026 budget assumptions:

i At a high level, we are planning for slow growth next year, with the unknown impact of the legal issues on the budget. The 2026 budget will be finalized over the next 2 months, but overall, a break-even budget is projected.

ii We have met with our risk management partners on insurance.

1 Our coverage will stay the same and the cost increase will be minimal.

iii GUS: A break-even budget is projected.

iv Peter asked a question about a change in membership trends (percentages). Dawson will investigate.

v Scenario planning: Similar to 2021/pandemic, we will look at a range of membership numbers and the effects on the bottom line.

c Demo/wireframe of the committee procedure pages: Dawson walked the BOD through the footer navigation of the website, focusing on the sections with the most major changes, "About", "Governance", and "Volunteers". The other sections will only have minor changes.

i The "Volunteer" section will be split into "Volunteer" and "Governance."

ii The sections are collapsible, so they won't appear overwhelming.

iii The organization in the footer will be more logical.

iv The goal is to keep the header clean.

v Implementation will take place relatively soon.

6. Annual meeting (Ed)

a All delegates are now listed on the website.

b The ratio is about 50/50 of in-person to virtual attendees.

c Ed thanked the BOD members that attended the forums and shared the reasoning behind the BOD's proposals (sunsetting the History and Archives Committee and making committee meetings optional rather than required to be held in conjunction with the annual meeting).

d Jessica sent out the links for the HOD sessions. If you did not receive them, please contact her ASAP.

7. Legal update (Ed and Dawson):

a Texas: Legal counsel is trying to schedule an in-person meeting in Austin.

b New Jersey letter of demand for information related to a complaint about our interim policy: We are working on a response with our legal counsel.

c Florida: No response since our response was submitted in July.

d An NBR grievance was filed related to the policy in a California event.

8. Board policy on committee meetings: Related to the Board's proposal to make committee meetings in conjunction with the annual meeting optional and changes of the wording in the bylaws to say that committee meetings will be held in accordance with USMS policy, Ed drafted a policy that was posted in Community for review. Essentially the BOD will ensure that there is an opportunity to have optional meetings in conjunction with the annual meeting and that regular committee business should be held throughout the year as appropriate.

a Peter proposed an amendment to the proposal: Committees are encouraged to have their meetings open to members as observers and posted on the volunteer calendar.

b **MSA to approve the annual meetings committee policy as amended**. Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**

9. Strategy initiatives survey ranking update (Ed): The rankings were posted in Community.

a Top opportunity that has the most impact on advancing the mission of USMS: CCS, with GUS a close second.

b Top item to eliminate or restructure: Gold Clubs.

c Top threat to the organization: Legal risk.

d Top thing to change immediately: Change seasons for all courses to the calendar year.

e Teddy suggested that we tackle the low hanging fruit to get some momentum. Crystie mentioned that these are program-based priorities/strategies.

10. National Board of Review chair replacement. The current chair, Scott Fuller, has asked to step down due to family-related issues. Juliette Cox, the previous chair, has helped identify a replacement, David Benjamin. Ed shared David's credentials, and several BOD members spoke in favor of him. Peter commented on the growing number of issues coming in front of the NBR. Crystie commented that it is a large amount of work for a small number of people (NBR) and wondered how they can

be better supported. **MSA to appoint David Benjamin as NBR chair effective Oct. 1.** Discussion: none. **The motion passed unanimously.**

11. 2026 proposed annual meeting date: The 2026 virtual annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for Sept 18-19, 2026.

12. The BOD will have an orientation and training session on Oct. 6. The next BOD meeting will be held on Oct. 20. Relay will be held in Kansas City on Oct. 24-26.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM ET.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Stolar, Secretary