

USMS CONVENTION – Greensboro, NC - 2005

Committee Name: **Communications** Session # (if more than one meeting): 1

Cmte. report #: **21**

Minutes recorded by: Meg Smath

Date/time of this meeting: September 16, 11:30 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS - PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

1.

ACTION ITEMS - OTHER

1. MSA that we include all committees for solicitation of input in March before USMS Swimmer annual planning in July.
2. MSA that the Communications Committee request that the Executive Committee or Board of Directors survey the membership with regard to the national publication.

Committee Chair: Hugh Moore

Vice Chair(s): Michael Moore, Meg Smath

Number of committee members present: 16 Absent: 14 Number of other delegates at this meeting: 25

Committee members present (list all): Hugh Moore, Connie Barrett, Susan Ehringer, Raena Latina, Jane Masters, Anne LaBorwit, Ray Novitske, Kelly Crandell, Kathy Casey, Donna Schubkegel, Meg Smath, Michael Moore, Bill Volckening (ex-officio), Jim Matysek (ex-officio), Tracy Grilli (ex-officio), Lynn Hazlewood (Executive Committee liaison).

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at: 11:35 a.m.

1. **Introductions.** Members of the committee and audience introduced themselves.
2. **Calendar of Events.** At last year's convention we adopted a policy that any non-USMS event submitted for inclusion on the calendar of events on the USMS website must be approved by either the LMSC chair or zone representative for the area in which the event will be held. No procedure for implementing this policy was designed, and Carolyn Boak volunteered to implement one. During the past year, whenever an application for a nonsanctioned or nonrecognized event was received, it was emailed to Carolyn, who in turn emailed the appropriate LMSC chair and zone rep requesting permission to list event. She found she had to educate many zone reps and LMSC chairs about the new policy. She also emailed the persons requesting that the event be listed, telling them they could also contact the LMSC chair or zone representative. The LMSC chair/zone representative should consider whether it is helpful to their swimmers to list the event and if the proposed event will conflict with other events. Carolyn noted that many of the LMSC chairs and zone representatives were very glad to hear about the new policy. She recommended that the Communications Committee set up a procedure to ask each LMSC chair or zone representative to be the gatekeeper for submissions for the calendar of events in their respective areas. We will need a coordinator to work with the calendar editor. Susan Ehringer volunteered to be the coordinator. Hugh thanked Carolyn for her hard work.
3. **Editorial Board/National Publication Editor Report.** Hugh went over the background of the board. When we began *USMS Swimmer* last year, a transition team was appointed to work through the first issue of the magazine. It soon became evident that an ongoing effort was needed to coordinate all publications (rule book, web, manuals, etc.), resulting in the formation of the Editorial Board. The board accomplished its work largely through monthly conference calls lasting 1 ½ to 2 hours. The board has made many decisions this year, not all popular. The size of the board has been kept relatively small so that decisions could be made quickly. It is composed of knowledgeable representatives from different committees: Doug Garcia (Marketing), Hugh Moore (Communications), Meg Smath (Publications), Lynn Hazlewood (Executive Committee), Barbara Thomas (Finance), Jim Matysek (webmaster), and Bill Volckening (USMS editor), along with Virginia Sowers (Douglas Murphy) as a nonvoting member. Many in the audience expressed views regarding the composition of the Editorial Board.

Bill explained that he, Lynn Hazlewood and Jim Matysek met with Douglas Murphy personnel for annual planning to set the editorial calendar in July. Many in the audience felt that more and different people should be involved in that process.

Doug Garcia said he felt there was a misperception about what the Editorial Board does: the board is not reviewing every article and tries to avoid micromanaging. Tom Boak stated that his zone (South Central) has formally expressed dissatisfaction with current editorial policy. They're not happy with who's deciding content, and feel there is not enough emphasis on competition. Lynn reminded everyone that the magazine is still in the development process, and also that one of the more contentious issues (publication of the All-American roster) has been resolved. She also reminded everyone that magazine publication is on a tight timeline, making it difficult to receive widespread input from many people.

Hugh said it was difficult to determine what our members really want in the magazine. The 2001 survey indicates the majority of our members have little interest in competition. We probably need a new survey. Connie Barrett said the Marketing Committee also wants to do similar surveys, so maybe a new survey could be a joint project. Tom Boak asked what the process is for deciding which articles to print in an issue. Bill responded that the Editorial Board considers different aspects of how the publication is supposed to work for USMS. They bear in mind that the magazine is considered a member benefit. The Editorial Board has solicited input from the Sports Medicine and Coaches Committees, and added contributing editors as a result. The Editorial Board also gathered ideas from the transition team. Bill noted that many felt the 2001 survey was flawed, but it was used because it was all we had. We also looked at past issues of *SWIM*. The Editorial Board has tried for balance for the features and departments. The five departments are association news, member news, training and technique, nutrition and food and the healthy swimmer. Features can be divided between personality, technique and miscellaneous topics. Bill looked through his archive of old swimming magazines, and Douglas Murphy staff routinely research other magazines. With *USMS Swimmer*, we now have the art direction that allows us to package content in small bits for departments, an option we didn't have with the previous publisher. In addition, the Editorial Board has always solicited feedback. Tom Boak said it is clear to him that planning takes place far in advance of publication, so there needs to be an opportunity for input early in the process. Hugh noted that we have a restricted number of pages. Because we have sold more ads than anticipated, this leaves less space for editorial content. Ideally, as the number of ads increases, we would expand the size of the magazine, but our budget process doesn't allow this. If we get more ad revenue, how can we put it back into the magazine? Tom said that the Finance Committee is primarily concerned with the net cost of publishing the magazine, and if net cost goes down, it should be OK to add pages, and shouldn't be considered overbudget. Al Prescott noted that he hasn't heard any negative comments from the swimmers he's talked to about the magazine, and in fact they have gone out of their way to compliment it. Tom said he didn't think we should substantially change the composition of the Editorial Board, but we should solicit input on the balance of content much earlier. Raena Latina moved, Susan Ehringer seconded, that we include all committees for solicitation of input in March before USMS Swimmer annual planning in July. MSA unanimously.

Tom Boyd informed the committee that he is a survey professional, and would be willing to help with a survey. Ray noted that the intent of the survey would be to make sure our publications are meeting the requirements of the general membership, and that the survey would be in addition to the steps we've already taken today to improve the magazine. Doug reminded everyone that we need to remember our core objectives. Barbara Thomas moved, Susan Ehringer seconded, that the Communications Committee request that the Executive Committee or Board of Directors survey the membership with regard to the national publication. MSA, nine votes to four.

The meeting was recessed at 1:50 p.m.