



**U.S. Association of Blind Athletes  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - February 24, 2023  
St. Augustine, Florida**

**Present:**

*Mark Ackermann, Chair*  
*Gary Remensnyder, Treasurer*  
*Skye Arthur-Banning, Vice Chair*  
*Amy Wasson, Secretary*  
*Brian Eaton, Independent Director*  
*Jennifer Demby, Constituent Board Member*  
*Eve Wright Taylor, Board Member*  
*David Cohen, Board Member*  
*Matt Simpson, Athlete Board Member*  
*Eliana Mason, Athlete Board Member*  
*Zach Buhler, Athlete Board Member*  
*Tyler Merren, USOPC AAC Alternate Representative*  
*John Kusku, Chair of Ethics Committee*  
*Molly Quinn, CEO*  
*Breann Scott, Staff*  
*Amanda Duke Boulet, Staff*  
*Catherine Raney-Norman, Staff*

**Absent:**

*Calahan Young, Athlete Board Member*  
*Tracie Foster, Chair of Nominating & Governance Committee*

The meeting took place in person and via teleconference. The meeting was recorded.

**Call to Order / Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by vice-chair Skye-Arthur Banning at 2:30 pm EST.

**Conflict of Interest**

Skye asked if any board members had a conflict of interest that they needed to disclose relating to the topics listed on the meeting agenda provided to the group beforehand. No such conflicts were declared.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the August, September, and November 2022 board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and approved.

**Approval of Audit & Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2023 Audit & Finance Committee meeting. The motion was seconded and approved.



## **CEO & Staff Report**

Molly noted some organizational highlights including the Gordon and Llura Gund Foundation presenting a matching challenge grant to USABA for the next seven years to help build blind soccer. The grant is for \$550k and they have already matched the first half of the grant and want USABA to find foundations, donors and supporters to match the other half of the grant. We've already had several meetings with Anthem and The Gibney Family Foundation. There is also a U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Foundation donor who is interested in blind soccer.

The Goalball program will be part of an upcoming PBS documentary called "Journey Indiana" to be filmed at Turnstone. There is an additional documentary in the works around the blind soccer team. Amanda Duke Boulet is the organization's new Director of Sport Performance. USA Blind Soccer National Team Head Coach Katie Smith has also taken on the role of Blind Soccer Coordinator. Jen Armbruster has moved over to support our Veterans programs. As part of the approved 2023 budget, we have added a Marketing Manager position to fill as well as a Sport Coordinator position in Q3.

From the USOPC Congressional Congress, as an NGB we are required to submit a tremendous amount of audit and compliance paperwork, and the timeline is extremely aggressive.

USABA has contracted with a sponsorship agency based in New Jersey. A meeting with Oakley will be held soon. Anthem has come back to us with a 2-year commitment to USABA, with potentially a 15-20% increase in their funding commitment year over year. Toyota is reviewing our blind soccer partnership proposal. Papa John's is another new sponsor on the horizon. We received a call back from Johnson & Johnson with some leads on contacts within the company. Barclays declined on a recent diversity, equality & inclusion initiative proposal.

Year-over-year social media and public relations efforts have grown tremendously for the organization, with phenomenal stories on our athletes and programs.

Matt Simpson asked about VA funding. Molly stated we were awarded \$122k in a VA grant. Catherine Raney-Norman elaborated on the VA grant process and how we have improved our focus for the grant application. Molly added we have a strong partnership with the Lakeshore Foundation. Skye asked about staff bandwidth to handle grants and applications. Molly stated that the sport coordinator position would assist with those duties. Zach Buhler asked about how much goalball is being considered for the grants. Molly said it is based on both funders' interest and what our need is. We have received about 70 percent of the funding for a new goalball floor at Turnstone. The amount of money from the USOPC to our budget is around 33 percent for goalball and around 10 percent to support blind soccer, so we have to raise the rest of that money.

## **Sport Performance Update**

Amanda Duke Boulet gave an update on the 2022 Goalball World Championships results in December, with the women finishing 6<sup>th</sup> and the men finishing 9<sup>th</sup>. There are two more Paris 2024 qualifiers in 2023...the IBSA World Games in August and the Parapan American Game in November. Both teams will be hosting camps throughout the year. We are utilizing a new software package, "Hudl" to allow us to tag games for review. Two areas of focus for goalball in 2023 are being athlete-centric (allowing the athletes to have a voice), and transparency and professionalism.



We're moving toward an actual National Team structure as well as guiding principles which is shared outwardly. Each athlete will develop their own performance plan and sign an athlete agreement. Quarterly meetings will also be held.

On the blind soccer side, we are hosting four camps as well as an international friendly with Canada in Chula Vista in March. Bi-monthly meetings for the National Team are being held with players and coaches.

### **Board Chair Report**

Mark Ackermann noted that Mark and Anne Plassman will join us for the beginning of the strategic planning session. Ron Plassman's estate gift helped both goalball and blind soccer programs. Mark commended the staff for securing the challenge grant from the Gordon and Llura Gund Foundation. The Executive Advisory Group has been developed to work with the CEO and Board in an advisory capacity. A Business Development Group is also in the works to help with fundraising and sponsorships. Mark thanked David Patterson from the USOPC for spending time with the strategic planning session.

### **Committee Reports & Updates**

Gary Remensnyder presented the Audit & Finance Committee report and walked through the executive summary for 2022. The final detailed financial and narrative reports was sent to board prior to the meeting. Overall, 2022 delivered a record year of top-line revenue for USABA, helped by the \$500k gift from the Ronald W. Plassman estate to help both goalball and blind soccer programs. Revenue generated was over \$1.44M, over \$400k over our Q3 forecast, but \$82k shy of the original proposed budget. Individual contributions were below forecast by about \$22k for the year. Corporate sponsorships were \$57k below forecast. The endowment fund lost \$64k in the market in 2022, ending the year at \$381k. The endowment does not include any Plassman gift.

Expenses came in at just over \$1.47M, \$46k above the last forecast presented to the board, but \$75k below the original budget. Notable expense variances include contract labor expenses and travel & meeting expenses. Overall event program expenses were at \$111k, \$45k below forecast. For 2022, we had a net loss of \$33k compared to a forecast of \$358k...\$6k below original budget. Total assets at end of 2022 were \$1.35M, compared to \$525k in liabilities.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the Audit & Finance Committee report. Motion passed unanimously.

Eliana Mason provided the Athlete Advisory Committee report and noted they were working on the AAC charter to provide guidelines and clarification on eligibility process. Because not all BOD members had a chance to review the charter before the meeting, Mark Ackermann suggested tabling the topic to allow everyone to review and get back to Eliana with questions and re-address at the next meeting. Molly noted that with Amanda Duke Boulet coming on board, she will serve as the staff liaison with the AAC charter. Eliana suggested getting something approved sooner. Mark said if bylaws have a mechanism for voting between meetings, we could get it approved that way.



John Kusku provided the Ethics Committee report. Amanda Duke Boulet's conflict of interest form was reviewed and approved. The BOD will be up for annual review in November.

There was no report from the Nominating & Governance Committee.

Molly read the Judiciary Committee report submitted by Kathy Beaver. In 2022 calendar year, the committee responded to one complaint related to a code of ethics violation with a formal hearing on November 29. A decision regarding the complaint was reached on December 30 with an appropriate sanction issued. In the coming months the committee will be developing procedure guidelines to follow in the processing of complaints. These guidelines will be submitted to the full USABA Board for approval. Molly clarified that the committee addresses complaints only for USABA-sanctioned events. Amanda noted we will be supplying quarterly SafeSport information in our member newsletters to keep them informed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 pm EST and went into Executive Session.