



ZONE DIRECTORS' COUNCIL

Zone Directors' Council Meeting

March 10th, 2025 - Minutes

12 PM ET/9 AM PT- Zoom

“Serving as a connecting link in the USA Swimming Community to build awareness and trust through shared communication and education.”

Present: Zach Toothman (Co-Chair), Jamie Platt (Co-Chair), Nicole Caruso, Mike Dilli, Bruno Darzi, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, Simran Jayasinghe, Bob Stabb, Jack Swanson, Thomas Ugast, Scott Shea, Lauren Hurt (AEC Vice Chair), Matt Lupton (graphic designer), Pete Raykovich (CAC member)

Staff: Jane Grosser, MJ Truex, Kathleen Hindle (briefly)

Mr. Toothman called the meeting to order at 12:02 PM ET

1. Additions to the Agenda
 - a. There were no additions to the agenda
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Mr. Ugast initiated a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Darzi seconded. The motion passed unanimously
3. Approval of [January 26th Minutes](#)
 - a. Mr. Ugast initiated a motion to approve the January 26th minutes as presented. Mr. Darzi seconded. The motion passed unanimously
4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
 - a. No conflicts of interest were declared
5. Announcements
 - a. Staff Updates

- i. Ms. Truex volunteered staff updates but said that there was nothing significant going on other than the CEO search.
- ii. Mr. Lupton introduced himself (he's a graphic designer and he's been redesigning LSC logos for a while now), and he showed the new Zone logos that would hopefully have a positive impact on branding and Zone identities. He talked about the themes and how the new logos connect to the larger brand identity that is USA Swimming (like using similar colors and fonts).

6. Ongoing Business

a. Junior Officials memberships

- i. Mr. Toothman spoke of a report that Mr. Walsh had put together, which had been shared with staff. Mr. Staab requested the numbers for those involved in the program, and it was arranged that they would be presented at the next meeting

7. ZDC Operating Policy Spring Updates

- a. Mr. Toothman explained how the ZDC operating policy proposal had been redrafted taking into account the criticism from previous meetings. He shared how it had been split up into three distinct categories for each of the different representative groups, each of which had their own responsibilities spelled out.
- b. Mr. Swanson raised his hand and said he was passionate about making sure the athletes have a voice but shared his concern. He thinks that this operating policy is "putting us in a position where we're not doing what we should be as a council." He worries that this will take away the autonomy of the zones and thus made a motion to amend the policy and replace the different categories and responsibilities with the simple sentence: "The eight (8) Senior Athlete Directors and Junior Athlete Representatives from each Zone may assist and communicate regarding the

business of the Zones as a Zone Athlete Representative Committee.” He expressed that he did not think that the Zone policy manual was the best place for a list of detailed responsibilities and instead stated that he felt it was better to reserve it for the Zone operating policy manuals.

- c. Mr. Ugast agreed with Mr. Swanson that this proposal does not belong in the policy manual and instead belonged in a different place.
- d. Mr. Darzi and Mr. Staab also agreed with the aforementioned sentiment, with Mr. Staab expressing his surprise that this was once again part of the meeting agenda even though he felt that the discussion had been put to rest, though Mr. Toothman pointed out that there had never actually been a formal vote on it.
- e. Mr. Ugast tried to move to call the question, but Mr. Toothman reminded him that the athletes hadn’t shared their piece yet.
- f. Ms. Caruso jumped in to share her opinion that the unedited version of the proposed legislation does not limit the responsibilities of the ZDC and instead clarifies it in a way that offers consistency and longevity for the council.
- g. Ms. Hurt, vice chair of the AEC also shared that she felt the unedited version of the proposed legislation would be beneficial, citing the letter of support that the AEC sent out in favor of the amendment. She thinks it is important for there to be job descriptions laid out in the policy manual to maintain consistency with other policy manuals within other USA swimming governance structures (like within LSCs). This would ensure that there is a clear understanding of roles within the scale of the ZDC. She also explained that this is not something that preferences or centralizes athletes and is beneficial for all the constituencies that are a part of the ZDC.
- h. Mr. Ugast insisted that the group call the question, which received a second by Mr. Darzi.

- i. The motion to call the question passes five to three
 - j. Next, the group voted on the amendment, per the motion proposed by Mr. Swanson and seconded by Mr. Ugast. The amendment passed, though it did not pass unanimously.
 - k. Ms. Hellervik-Bing then said that she hoped the athlete voice was heard and that the responsibilities of the Zone athletes could find a place to live, and Ms. Hurt explained that it had recently been taken out of AEC policies. The AEC had felt that the proposed amendment had more relevance in the ZDC policies and procedures manual, especially considering Zone athletes are voting members of the ZDC and not voting members of the AEC.
 - l. Mr. Stabb moved to call the question and end discussion, which Mr. Ugast seconded.
The motion passes
 - m. Next, the group voted on the amendment itself (and not the edits that had been added to it). The amendment passed, six to one.
8. CEO Search Updates
- a. Ms. Hindle joined the meeting briefly to discuss the CEO search updates. The task force was brought back together with only slight changes in the composition of the group. Ms. Hindle said that they are also moving forward with the national team hiring process.
9. LSC Leaders Survey
- a. Mr. Platt and Ms. Truex described the process of sending out the LSC leaders survey and explained that they were trying to get more variety in responses. The goal of the survey is to get feedback that will help identify the things that USA Swimming needs to provide to help out LSCs. Ms. Truex anticipates that the results of the survey will arrive sometime in June.

10. Block Party Task Force Update:

- a. Mr. Staab shared that he is unsure about when the next meeting would be and he said that he would get in touch with Mr. Schoenfeld to figure it out.

11. New Business

- a. Zone programming for fall business meeting:
 - i. Mr. Swanson requested that the Zone meetings are longer, requesting two hours
 - ii. Mr. Platt requests 90 minutes for the Eastern Zone
 - iii. Mr. Staab also said that time frames were contingent upon how many days the workshop will be
 - iv. The group hoped to keep the pre-meeting beforehand
 - v. Ms. Hellervik-Bing also imagines that 90 minutes would be sufficient, and if there are two days then there should be two one hour sessions across different days. Mr. Dilli agreed with this format for the Western Zone
 - vi. Mr. Platt suggested that we have an in person meeting at the workshop
 - vii. Mr. Swanson brought up the fact that people might have other committee meetings going on at that same time
- b. 2025 Report #1 to Board of Directors
 - i. Mr. Dilli said that there is a need for more funding for zone meets and said he would talk to Mr. Schoenfeld about how to secure funding for these meets
 - ii. Mr. Ugast wanted to know why it is that there needs to be more funding for this, and Mr. Dilli said that zones are not getting the additional ten grand that other hosts get
 - iii. Mr. Platt made the deadline to have information for this to appeal for more funding due next meeting

c. Club Dues Increase Collaboration

- i. Mr. Platt explained that there was an upcoming meeting about this that had just been cancelled. The reason for this meeting was to make sure that each committee could come together and agree upon how they were going to implement club due increase and to make sure that they were going about it in a way that was within their purview. He suspects that he will have more to share about this by next meeting

d. The Three C's of the ZDC: Connections, Communication, and Collaboration

- i. Mr. Platt said that he and Mr. Toothman were going to flip-flop hosting meetings
- ii. The group discussed establishing a baseline of standardized expectations for participation and meeting attendance, as holding people accountable ensures that we collaborate in the capacity that we are supposed to
- iii. Pete Raykovich is a member of the coaches advisory council and explained that he was sitting in on the meeting with the purpose of introducing himself and said that we should possibly collaborate more

12. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Staab initiated a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Ugast. The vote passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 1:31 PM ET.