



## ZONE DIRECTORS' COUNCIL

### Zone Directors' Council Meeting

July 8th, 2025 - Minutes

8:00 PM ET/5:00 PM PT- Zoom

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

Present: Jamie Platt (Co-Chair), Nicole Caruso, Mike Dilli, Bruno Darzi, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, Simran Jayasinghe, Lara Robertson, Bob Staab, Jack Swanson, Thomas Ugast, TJ Walsh, Hadley Wartner, Nicole Zhang

Staff: Kristin Alfano, Joel Shinofield

Guests: Pete Raykovich (Coach Advisory Council Liaison, Casey Bretz (Athletes' Executive Committee Member), Pam Lowenthal

Absent: Zach Toothman (Co-Chair), Brianna Elliott, Scott Shea

Mr. Platt called the meeting to order at 8:02 PM ET.

1. Additions to Agenda
  - a. There were no additions to the agenda.
2. Approval of Agenda
  - a. Mr. Darzi motioned for approval and Mr. Staab seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Approval of [June 11th Minutes](#)
  - a. Mr. Staab motioned for approval and Ms. Wartner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
  - a. No conflicts of interest were declared.
5. Announcements
  - a. Zone & Staff Updates

- i. Ms. Alfano reported no updates but remains available for questions. Mr. Walsh shared that the Eastern Zone recently held a successful Athlete Summit with strong turnout and positive feedback. From the Southern Zone, Ms. Hellervik-Bing noted a corrected logo issue and Universal Orlando's support of their meet, while Mr. Darzi had no further updates. Ms. Caruso added that Southern Zone athletes are planning a joint virtual summit with the Western Zone, with content in development. Dr. Swanson reported the Central Zone's Athlete Summit in Cleveland was well received and that preparations are underway for Zone Championships, with improved host and LSC communication. Ms. Wartner confirmed the summit's success and strong athlete participation. From the Western Zone, Mr. Dilli reported preparations for sectional and zone meets as well as the Open Water Championship in Idaho this August. Mr. Jayasinghe added that Western Zone athletes are finalizing agenda and registration details for their joint virtual summit with the Southern Zone.
- b. Zone Appointed Delegates for HOD due 7/15
  - i. Mr. Platt reminded members that zone-appointed delegates for HOD are due by July 15, with three zones still pending.

## 6. Ongoing Business

- a. Junior Officials Membership Update- Feedback Task Force Creation end of July (Zach/Jack/Bruno/Joel)
  - i. Mr. Darzi and Dr. Swanson reported no progress; their next step is to connect with Mr. Toothman.
- b. CEO Search Task Force Update- Jamie
  - i. Mr. Platt reported that the CEO Search Task Force is moving to in-person interviews over the next 2-3 weeks. He noted that while new candidates remain under consideration, the new search firm has brought in stronger applicants and improved the process compared to the previous firm.

- ii. Ms. Hellervik-Bing suggested providing LSCs, particularly in the Southern Zone, with an update on the progress to ease concerns about the vacancy's duration.
    - iii. Mr. Platt agreed, emphasizing the need for ongoing communication and feedback.
  - c. CAC Liaison Update- Tom
    - i. Mr. Platt asked for a CAC Liaison Update and confirmed that Mr. Ugast was not present. He invited Mr. Raykovich to share an update. Mr. Raykovich noted that the CAC is scheduled to meet tomorrow. He added that the CAC is advocating for three coaches to be added to the Board, which will be discussed again tomorrow, though he did not yet have further details.
  - d. Club Dues Increase Collaboration Update
    - i. Mr. Platt shared that regarding club dues and fees, as Joel noted previously, funds will come in starting in 2026. The focus now is simply making sure all the pieces are in place and ready to roll.

## 7. New Business

- a. 2026 Joint Zone Athlete Summits- Hadley/Athletes/Pam (video then discussion)
  - i. Ms. Wartner shared a presentation on the 2026 Joint Zone Athlete Summits, beginning with a video recap of the 2025 Central Zone Athlete Summit. She explained that the video highlighted programming, leadership development, and successes from the event. Mr. Platt confirmed the video length and later suggested that, due to audio issues, the material should be presented by slides instead of watching the full video. Dr. Swanson asked whether participants could view the video independently and receive a summary during the meeting. Mr. Staab also noted the audio issues and agreed with Mr. Platt's recommendation to distribute the video by email and proceed with a live presentation. Mr. Walsh attempted to share the video successfully, and the group viewed highlights emphasizing athlete

engagement, leadership training, and future summit plans. Following the video, Ms. Wartner and athlete representatives outlined the vision for the 2026 Joint Summits. She reported that since 2021, Central Zone summits have shown consistent growth, with athlete committees expanding from 7 to 13 active LSCs. She detailed successful projects and explained the long-term quad plan leading to a national Athlete Summit in 2028. Mr. Ugast asked for clarity on the total budget, noting that each zone was being asked for \$12,000. He emphasized the need for detailed financial planning before committing. Mr. Walsh responded that the Eastern Zone covered costs this year through \$12,000 in zone support combined with a \$200 per athlete surcharge. He acknowledged that a final invoice was still pending but noted that the model worked effectively. Ms. Hellervik-Bing stated that the Southern Zone would not support a blanket \$12,000 commitment without programming, cost details, and clear outcomes. She emphasized the need for clarity on chaperone expectations, per-athlete costs, and projected impact. Dr. Swanson commended the Central Zone athletes for their work but cautioned that zones have varying budgets and levels of support. He recommended that each zone independently evaluate feasibility and build buy-in before committing to a joint quad plan. Mr. Platt clarified that the athletes were seeking director buy-in before presenting the proposal at the September summit. He asked if directors were expected to make decisions unilaterally. Ms. Wartner confirmed that the athletes hoped for swift support given the short planning timeline. Mr. Dilli echoed Ms. Hellervik-Bing's concerns and stated that his zone would need membership approval at its HOD meeting before committing funds. He requested more detail on attendance, programming, and cost distribution. Mr. Walsh offered to provide additional details and reiterated that Central and Eastern Zones had successful models already in place. Mr. Ugast reiterated that zone

directors could not commit funds without broader approval and emphasized the need for a complete plan. Dr. Swanson added that while supportive of the concept, he recommended an organic, zone-by-zone approach rather than mandating a quad plan for all zones simultaneously. Mr. Staab concluded that, despite strong enthusiasm, directors could not provide a final commitment at this meeting. He advised the athletes to continue refining details and preparing presentations for fall HOD meetings.

b. ZDC Meet the Candidates & Legislation Review

- i. Members agreed that questions should be developed jointly, with the CAC contributing one to three for the list. Mr. Shinofield and Mr. Platt noted that scheduling will depend on the legislative packet and the timing of USA Swimming's forum. Mr. Walsh suggested following last year's timeline (late August for the legislative review and early September for the meet-the-candidates) and continuing the use of an online submission form for questions, which the group supported. An action item was established to finalize candidate questions at the August ZDC meeting.

8. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Staab motioned for adjournment and Ms. Caruso seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Platt adjourned the meeting at 9:08 PM ET.