

President Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM on January 9. Present were Scott Rabalais, Sally Dillon, Doug Church, Lynn Hazlewood, Nancy Ridout, Patty Powis, and Tracy Grilli.

1. The next meeting will be a conference call on January 20, 2004 at 8:30 pm EST.
2. After minor revisions, it was *MSA to approve the minutes of the Dec. 29 conference call.*
3. CONTROLLER INTERVIEWS: Jim reported that the interviews of three candidates for the position of USMS Controller went very well Thursday afternoon. The interview committee (Jim, Doug, Lynn, Patty, and Tracy) made a recommendation and it was MSA that Margaret Bayless be appointed as the new USMS Controller. Margaret lives in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and has a BS in Accounting and Finance as well as a MBA She has been a member of USMS since 1981 and is currently the registrar for Lake Erie LMSC.
4. CONTROLLER TRANSITION: A meeting between Margaret and Cathy for the purpose of insuring a complete understanding of the functions and duties of the controller as well as seeing the operation first hand is critical to a smooth transition.
  - It was *MSA that we recommend to the finance committee approve an over budget item to fund an expense for the new controller to meet with the current controller for transitional purposes (if needed).*
5. WEB DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: The EC discussed the demand on the Webmaster's time that has made it difficult for him to fulfill all requests. Lynn and Jim Matysek provided a priority list and we agreed that it was unfortunate that some projects end up as a low priority when we know they are high priorities for the requestors. Everyone is satisfied that Jim is able to do the work but he is over-utilized and we need to consider providing more help. This has come to a "head" because the priorities of the organization are increasing and we're not able to meet them. It was suggested that we go before the BOD to receive approval to hire a web developer to work with Jim Matysek.
  - It was *MSA that we authorize the development of a proposal for the employment of an assistant to the webmaster including a job description for the assistant, a compensation proposal for the assistant, and that the proposal be returned to the EC at the earliest opportunity.*
  - It was *MSA to approve an over budget request of up to \$35,000 to engage a Webmaster assistant.*Doug will put together a proposal for the over budget request for the Finance Committee to consider as well as a proposal for the BOD to vote upon. The finance committee should see the request first. The job description and Webmaster's "to do list" will be provided to the Finance Committee and the BOD.
6. MARKETING STRATEGIC PLAN: The EC discussed the plan that was submitted by Rich Burns (Marketing). Rich noted that he did not expect immediate feedback knowing that we planned to do a SWOT analysis. He joined the meeting via conference call to answer questions. It was suggested that, as a pilot program, we focus marketing on a specific geographical area that is underdeveloped and see if a marketing plan can make it grow. Rich would like to have Aimee Fitzgerald involved with the project. It was agreed that the Zone Committee would help select a worthy LMSC for this project. Rich will provide a thorough outline to the EC for their January 20 meeting.
7. SETTING PRIORITIES: The EC spent some time discussing what we hoped to accomplish in the next two years. It was agreed that we would stay focused on our Mission, Goals and Objectives, and Core Objectives. In furtherance of that goal, the EC conducted a SWOT analysis of USMS. "A SWOT Analysis is a benchmarking process used in strategic ... planning. Internally it delineates strengths and weakness, and externally it identifies opportunities and threats. The SWOT Analysis is conducted to identify the attributes and virtues of the organization ... to understand the deterrents and obstacles to the organization's ... success. The SWOT process is a fundamental part of any business planning process." (*Framework for a Strategic Marketing Plan for USMS, Rich Burns, Marketing Chair, January 2004*).

8. SWOT ANALYSIS: Rich Burns (Marketing Chair) joined us by phone to share his ideas for our approach to a SWOT analysis. He suggested we would want to capitalize on the strengths and reduce the weaknesses. With his marketing hat on, he suggested we be conscious about the things going on outside the organization and to not be entirely focused internally. We will need to make an assessment of what our resources will allow us to tackle.

The EC conducted a SWOT analysis, looking at a broad spectrum of issues and we found the opportunity to do this “face-to-face” extremely valuable. The analysis was an exercise only. It attempted to focus the discussion back to fundamentals affecting the organization. It was not intended to be complete or absolute. It was, by its nature, a living document that may be very different based upon the group conducting the exercise. The value was in the process of conducting the analysis. The following is a list (in no particular order) of the results of the exercise.

- a. STRENGTHS: Strengths are internal attributes of the organization that make it different and special. They can include the structure, people, history, accomplishments, values, programs, size, geographic presence or anything else that empowers the organization to excel in its purpose and mission.
- volunteerism - dedicated
  - passion
  - capable and hard working National Office staff
  - diversity of leadership
  - demographics – input from a quality and diverse membership (age, education, wealth)
  - energy
  - healthy lifestyle – fitness oriented and health oriented
  - convention
  - coaching presence
  - responsive paid staff
  - communication tools (web site, magazine, handbooks)
  - grass roots structure
  - efficiently-run championships
  - competitive opportunities
  - role model for active and fit lifestyle
  - established mission and objectives
  - codified rules and processes
  - national leader in adult swimming
  - relationship with ASCA
  - relationships with other NGBs
  - strong committees (LD, Rules, Leg, etc.)
  - pool of capable leaders
  - size of organization gives us a lot of resources
  - financially healthy
  - leader among international masters groups
  - have fun!
  - camaraderie
  - concept of “team”
  - structured workouts
  - education through many sources
  - research funding
  - longevity / history
  - geographic diversity
  - second-chance opportunity to be an athlete
  - athletes for life
  - recognition opportunities
  - web site
  - membership fee - low
  - Year-round availability of training

- endowment fund
- database development

b. **WEAKNESSES:** Weaknesses are also internal and are self imposed limitations and problems that are negatively impacting the organization. These are typically the same categories as strengths but that are not in favor of the organization. The challenge once weaknesses are identified is to mitigate them. As a first time exercise for USMS many of the weaknesses will point to issues that will require programmatic or organizational changes.

- failure to use broad volunteer base (a lot of the same people)
- overextended volunteers
- lack of consolidated leadership staff
- leaders who do not utilize positive thinking
- scope and scale – limited by geographic distribution
- lack of unified vision
- lack of agreement of identity
- Committee chairs with the narrow focus of their area of interest regardless of the needs of the corporation
- communication – inconsistent both vertically and horizontally
- lack of resources – people and products to spread the word and help local level function
- lack of programs, facilities, and coaches in some areas
- leadership appointments based upon service, not leadership skills
- unwieldy and dysfunctional BOD – size, uninformed, incorrect focus, passive involvement
- benefits of membership – lack of identification
- lack of relationship between local and national organization
- lack of adequate numbers of qualified coaches
- inability to incorporate masses
- ineffective relationships with other organizations that would provide growth
- unwarranted fiscal tightness
- difficult to find and join
- lack of club mentoring
- inability to prioritize
- transitory leadership
- sporadic job execution
- lack of accountability (vertical and horizontal), job performance
- better use of existing facilities and lack of access to pools
- leadership and coaching development
- absence of developmental database, lack of data – membership needs
- lack of service to clubs
- opportunities are viewed as an expense rather than an investment
- over-dependence on key personnel
- failure to promote “swimming for life”
- sponsorship program with a narrow focus
- marketing approach
- lack of adult learn to swim program
- lack of real authority for the Executive Committee
- lack of Email usage to membership
- endowment fund – failure to promote and grow
- lack of financial resources

c. **OPPORTUNITIES:** Opportunities are situations or conditions that exist outside the organization. Opportunities can be global and omnipresent or they can be point in time. Opportunities for USMS could include size of market, facilities, alliances with other organizations, education etc. Opportunities must be aligned with strengths to determine how best to capitalize on them.

- all non-masters organizations
  - high schools
  - USA Triathlon
  - USA Swimming
  - YMCA
  - NCAA
  - Junior Colleges
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Colleges
  - medical professions
  - college students- recreation programs
  - Senior games
  - hospital aquatic programs (physical therapists)
  - AARP
- using membership for research database
- exposure through fitness/weight loss
- model facility – with exceptional equipment (similar to Colorado Springs)
- enhanced sponsorship program
- media resources
- capitalize on popularity of swimming
- retirement communities
- regional camps and clinics
- educational institutions looking for projects
- insurance companies
- public relations
- other endowment funds
- use of member's real-life expertise
- untapped pool of potential members
- utilizing existing pools
- government – all levels
- professional leadership training
- expertise in running non-profits (SCORE – organization that gives advice)
- using technology in all its forms
- strengthen relationships with international bodies

- d. THREATS: Threats come from outside the organization. Threats, like opportunities, vary in their magnitude and longevity. Some can be mitigated, while others may be permanent. Threats could include competition from other programs (YMCA, health clubs etc.), transient membership, etc.
- lack of affordable insurance
  - competing adult swimming organizations
  - eliminating of physical education in schools
  - fast food restaurants
  - weather problems (drought)
  - competition from other popular activities
  - coach defection
  - pool closures for whatever reason
  - terrorism
  - economy
  - cancellation of college programs
  - loss of volunteerism in society – replacing our leaders
  - pool costs

9. ACTION ITEMS: The EC discussed the results of the SWOT analysis and, recognizing that there are many more issues that could be addressed, has chosen to move forward with the following:
- a) Communication – each EC liaison will teleconference with all of their committee chairs to discuss Core Objectives, financial responsibilities and budgets, mid-year and annual report responsibilities, committee communication responsibilities, committee use, purpose of vice chair (chair in training), and Block concept and participation.
  - b) The EC will recommend to the BOD the creation of an assistant for the Webmaster.
  - c) The Marketing Committee will do a target project that will involve the Coaches and Zone committees.
  - d) We will work to further strengthen the National Publication.
  - e) We will work to further strengthen international relations.
  - f) We will use email for National communication, require an email address for every club, and form a task force to create a system so we can use national E-mail for announcements. The Communication and Registration Committees and the National Office will comprise the task force with technical assistance from the Webmaster. Patty will chair the group.
  - g) We will establish professional leadership training at convention.
  - h) We will promote club mentoring (education and service) with a task force comprised of the Coaches, Zone, and Safety Committees and LMSC and club or team representatives. Scott will chair the group.
  - i) We will develop standards of accountability for all USMS leaders (building accountability and educate). Doug will draft a proposal for the EC to consider.
  - j) We will promote the idea of regional camps and clinics through another task force comprised of the Coaches, Sports Medicine, Fitness, and Zone (ex officio) committees. We will ask Mel Goldstein to chair this group.
10. INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT: Jim provided background information on international issues involving FINA, ASUA, and LatyCar. Jim will be traveling to Puerto Rico to meet with representatives from ASUA.
11. NATIONAL PUBLICATION GOALS/REQUIREMENTS: The current contract for our national publication runs out on December 31, 2004. Tracy reported that a number of interested parties have requested the RFP. The prospective bidders have asked for various pieces of information and Scott and Nancy offered to assist Tracy as needed. Scott will coordinate the efforts to be sure the word is out about the RFP and Jim will seek a technical advisor for the grading system and the bid process. A timeline for reviewing the bids was discussed. The EC will plan to meet at Short Course Nationals to discuss the bids and develop questions as needed. The EC will make a recommendation to the BOD prior to distribution of the convention packet. No decision will be final until the convention votes to approve the actual budget expense.
- *It was MSA to extend the deadline to February 29 for the bids for the National Publication.*
12. 2004 CONVENTION SCHEDULE: The EC will plan to meet with each other on a daily basis to touch bases but we agreed to be flexible and not set an exact schedule. We will be more involved with the blocks in the planning of their Wednesday meetings so that all blocks have some sort of an agenda to follow. We discussed the importance of the “stand alone” meetings and efforts will be made to better emphasize their purpose to the delegates. Every effort will be made to have a “U” table configuration for the committee heading each “stand alone” meeting.

The EC prepared the convention schedule, which will be distributed to the BOD as soon as it is finalized.

13. CONCLUDING REMARKS: Jim complimented the EC on their efforts this past year. He encouraged everyone to indicate to people who inquire, our honest opinions about holding office on the EC. It was agreed that holding our mid-year meeting in Ft. Lauderdale on the same weekend that the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame conducted its annual induction was a terrific idea. It appeared that our presence at the awards event was very well received by the inductees, their families, and the organizers.

As per her request, it was *MSA for Tracy to make a \$100 donation to ISHOF for the use of the meeting room.*

It was MSA to adjourn at 11:20 AM on Sunday, January 11.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Sally Ann Dillon  
USMS Secretary