

USDF EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) FALL MEETING

Omaha, NE – November 29, 2023

This document is edited for posting on the USDF website and is not the official or complete version of the minutes of this meeting.

Members Present:

George Williams, President	Kevin Reinig, Vice President
Debra Reinhardt, Secretary	Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer
Bettina Longaker, Region 1 Director	Debby Savage, Region 2 Director
Charlotte Trentelman, Region 3 Director	Anne Sushko, Region 4 Director
Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director	Noah Rattner, Region 6 Director
Carol Tice, Region 7 Director	Helen van der Voort, Region 8 Director
Bess Bruton, Region 9 Director	Susan Mandas, Activities Council Director
Sue McKeown, Technical Council Director	Barbara Cadwell, Administrative Council Director

Members Absent: None

Staff Attending: Stephan Hienzsch, Connie Huy, Sarah Garn, Krystina Wright, Kathie Robertson, Melissa Schoedlbauer

Guest in attendance: None

The meeting commenced at 8:07 a.m. CST.

Determination of quorum, roll call and conflicts of interest

Approval of agenda

Added statistics of competitions and membership after the Treasurer's Report. Heather Petersen moved and Helen van der Voort seconded **to approve the agenda as amended**. Motion carried.

Recognition of approved EB minutes and e-mail votes

The approved e-mail votes and minutes were recognized.

President's remarks

First, we need to acknowledge and take a moment to remember those (Lowell Boomer) who fifty years ago had the vision of bringing dressage enthusiasts from all over the country together by creating a national organization dedicated purely to dressage with education, recognition and promotion as their mission statement.

This is definitely both an exciting and trying time for dressage. We're seeing some wonderful horse/rider partnerships at the top of our sport, but at the same time we're seeing and hearing about things that are forcing us to examine the issues of equine wellbeing, social license to operate, and our roles even more thoroughly as horse people, whether we're trainers, competitors, judges, owners, grooms, or on the governance side of the sport. It may have happened faster than we expected, but now that it is up close and personal, or shall we say in our face, we have to discuss what has always been a bit of an elephant in the room. Those discussions are welcomed. They are needed, and they have to be open, frank and honest, but

with an empathy for each other and most importantly for our horses. We are finally starting a new chapter and this time we all have to get it right.

Instructor Certification/ USEF Coaching Program:

The USDF is working with US Equestrian to add a coaching element to the Instructor/Trainer Development Program. Next week, five members of our Instructor/Trainer Development Program faculty will be participating in a newly created U.S. Equestrian coaching development program. The program is a combination of virtual and in-person sessions and is actually conducted by the US Center for Coaching Excellence. They conduct programs for the USOPC and describe themselves as “a national non-profit organization dedicated to elevating and enhancing the professions of sport coaching, coach education, and coach development.”

This is a big country. The best way to ensure all USDF members have access to quality dressage instruction wherever they live in the US is by having as many good, truly qualified instructors/trainers as possible so that every member, regardless of what state they live in, has viable options. That’s a big goal, but it underscores the importance of development programs like the coaching one for instructor/trainers and the new initiative for judges. With the current state of affairs, it is even more crucial that we have well trained professionals/individuals as instructors, trainers, and judges.

US Dressage Finals:

This year was the 10th anniversary of the US Dressage Finals. As many of have heard, the numbers were down this year, especially when compared with 2022 and 2021 (which due to Covid from an entry stand point combined the years of 2020 and 2021). It’s actually a good thing that numbers were down. The experience of the past two years has shown us that it actually can be too big. This year we returned to numbers that were more in line with the pre-Covid entry numbers. We upped the Wild Card score requirements knowing that it would affect the numbers. By how much is anybody’s guess, as there are many factors that play a role. And, we dropped the “Dressage in the Bluegrass”. However, the bottom line is there actually being an ideal number of entries. One that allows us scheduling flexibility, such as starting later in the morning. The number of arenas needed; for instance, not needing to use the Rolex arena. Stalls available in the heated barns. Ultimately, we have to remember that this is not about being the largest show possible, it is designed to be a national Finals; a head-to-head competition of the best coming from the regional championships.

Governance:

There has been discussion about the need for greater transparency within the governance of USDF. No doubt this is something we can do better. However, it can be a tricky or complicated issue. Obviously, there are times where confidentiality is a must.

Executive Director’s remarks

The fall EB book includes the To-Do-List, which shows what has happened and completed tasks since the spring meeting.

As a reminder, special award honors will be presented as follows: Lifetime Achievement Award - Sally Davenport (Region 8); Member of Distinction - Brook Irving Martz (Region 6); Member of Distinction - Beth Jenkins (Region 8); Youth Volunteer of the Year - Alice Burley (Region 3); Volunteer of the Year - Eleanor Brimmer (Region 3)

This year's EB elections are for at-large directors (ALD). The nominees are as follows: Activities Council ALD – Sue Mandas (incumbent) is running unopposed; Technical Council ALD – Sue McKeown (incumbent) and Janet Foy; Administrative Council ALD – Barbara Cadwell (incumbent); Cindi Wylie, and Anne Snipes Moss. ALD nominations come from the committees within their respective councils. Nominations from the floor of the BOG are not permitted.

Sarah sent the regional directors (RDs) and candidates a candidate rotation speaking schedule for the regional meetings. The candidates have been instructed that they each have five minutes. It will be up to the RDs to reasonably manage to that. Please direct questions to Sarah.

In 2024, elections will be held for president, treasurer and RDs in the even-numbered regions.

Convention 2024 will be held in Houston, TX at the JW Marriott Houston, December 4-7, with a room rate of \$164.

Convention 2025 will return to Lexington, KY at the Hyatt Regency Lexington, December 3-6, with a room rate of \$155.

As you know the EB is asking the BOG to approve a dues Increase proposal. In case you need it, Sarah passed out a hard copy chart of both the dues being proposed and the fees already approved by the EB. Also, attached is a hard copy of the president's letter to the BOG. It is suggested to stay consistent with those key talking points, being:

- USDF members will have had seven years of static dues while inflation has eaten into the operating budget of USDF activities and member services.
- Dues are approved by the BOG and if approved at this meeting would go into effect for the 2025 membership year.
- Key fee increases have been approved by the EB, which on the average last increased seven years ago. The increase in the regional championships qualified ride fee will increase prize money for regional championships and the US Dressage Finals. It may also allow for a travel grants fund increase for the Finals in the future.
- By applying increases to all dues and numerous key fees it spreads the burden. Delaying the proposed initiatives will result in more painful measures needed later.
- The budget numbers are forecasts based on the actual financial information available at the time. There is a long lead time from when those projections are made versus implemented and actualized. The dues increase proposed and the fees approved are included in the preliminary FY 2024-25 budget proposal

You were e-mailed a GMO and GM benefits outline and a hard copy is provided today for your reference. While USDF is criticized by GMOs with the perception that USDF offers nothing to GMOs or its members, This is often based on a lack of awareness of what is available to GMOs and their members, and a lack of GMOs taking initiative to take advantage of what is available.

The 2024 trainers conference is scheduled January 15-16 with Sven Rothenberger and Sabine Schut-Kery at High Meadow Farm, in Loxahatchee, FL (Mary Anne's Farm).Sven and Sabine will be addressing the movements within the FEI levels and the more complicated basics that must be achieved for those movements as it applies to each horse.

Sven Rothenberger is a German who represented the Netherlands in the 1996 Olympic Games held in Atlanta, earning a team silver medal and an individual bronze medal, and again in Athens

in 2004. Sven is currently a Level 2 FEI Judge. His son, Sonke Rothenberger, was part of the gold medal team representing Germany at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Please encourage attendance for the GMO Safe Sport Forum Friday at 9:30 am. The purpose is to create awareness of a GMOs Safe Sport obligations, risks and risk management as a sports organization, and to provide an understanding of the roles USDF, USEF, and the Center for Safe Sport play and do not play as it relates to GMOs as an independent sports organization. There will be a panel with Aaron Lundberg President & CEO of Praesidium, Steve Smith, Managing Partner at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner Law, and Sonja Keating, USEF in-house legal counsel and Safe Sport expert. The aim is to raise awareness about risks to the GMO related to Safe Sport while recognizing the challenges they face versus large organizations with greater resources to implement various abuse prevention strategies.

Treasurer's report

Lorraine Musselman reports the following: October 2023 Actuals versus Budget

Statement of Financial Position

Assets – Current assets are down slightly (8%) from this time last year. The difference is spread among several line items, much of which is due to timing. Cash is down, but accounts receivable, prepaid expenses and inventory are all up.

Investments are up slightly (3%). While stock and bond values are fluctuating, the Investment Working Group made some changes to the investments in the spring which have resulted in slightly less volatility and increased interest income. Interest income is over budget as a whole, allowing us to increase long term outlook by reinvesting at the lower values.

Fixed assets – slightly down due to depreciation.

Liabilities – accounts payable and accrued compensation are down slightly.

Deferred revenues – US Dressage Finals – the profit from the 2021 Finals that was placed in deferred revenues has been applied to the 2022 Finals.

Statement of Activities

We are at a current net profit of \$189,277 after we take out the gain/loss on investments and depreciation versus a budgeted loss for the period of \$5,529. The administrative staff expenses under each department statement are generally under budget. This is due mostly to position vacancies at various times of the year and staff allocation between departments.

Lorraine gave a summary of the individual departments.

Convention:

Revenues are over budget as of October due to timing. Registrations are similar to last year; banquet is down from last year. Most expenses, other than staff, will not show up until December when the bills are received.

Championship Programs:

Revenue in total is pretty much on target. Sponsorships are over by 13%, and qualified ride fees are under budget.

Expenses of postage and prizes are higher than budgeted due to inflation, prize money is over the total annual budget. This is a combination of increased costs plus timing of prize money distribution. Prize money has been paid out earlier this year.

Regional championship grant expenses are low due to timing; 2nd checks haven't been mailed out yet.

Competition Services:

Revenues are up based on higher than budgeted competitors and events. Sponsorship are also up due to timing.

Expenses – Administrative expenses slightly under budget due to staff vacancies for part of the year and allocations. Year-end awards are under budget due to timing.

Education Services:

Sponsorship – negative \$40,000 is an error; actual balance is zero, sponsorship is due to timing (trainers conference).

Revenues are under budget in several areas due to either timing or not having programs as follows:

- CI Testing Fees - no exams in 2023 due to restructuring of program. Working on events for 2024.
- Instructor fees (annual renewal fees for CI's) is low due to timing – generally comes in between November and March
- Instructor Faculty Education – under budget due to restructuring of program. Working on events for 2024.

Expenses generally followed revenues. Programs not held had no expenses, others that had reduced numbers or held virtually had lower expenses. General expenses were lower due to less events.

Administrative:

Revenues – below budget, mostly in Circle of Friends.

Expenses – Several line items are over budget due to inflation.

Employment ads are due to staff vacancies.

Computer systems administration is significantly over due to under budgeting for the increase for cyber security requirements and program licenses.

HVAC maintenance is over budget due to some necessary repairs.

Audit expense is due to timing. The audit was just completed and will be billed and paid in November/December.

Dues and subscriptions is high due to items not budgeted and for DocuSign, a new subscription to allow electronic signatures on documents.

Professional services is high due to national fundraising licenses.

Merchant fees – credit card fees – significantly over budget due to credit card volume (credit card fees for US Dressage Finals are also included here)

Event processing – C-Vent has not been paid yet for conference registration.

EB travel is over budget due to spring in-person meeting at World Cup in Omaha.

Investments:

Unrealized loss is offset partially by the interest income. Those earnings are significantly above budget and are allowing us to reinvest at the lower prices. The Investment Working Group made some adjustments to the portfolio to allow us to offset the market fluctuations. The market is rebounding some at this point in time.

Membership:

Revenues are ahead of budget in the GM Category, but down for PM's. This is mostly due to timing – Renewals generally start in earnest in November. Horse registrations are above budget. Non-member rider fees are below budget.

Expenses are relatively normal with the exception of postage which is high due to increased postage rates.

Merchandise:

Revenues – merchandise sales are below budget, sales from Finals are not yet in these numbers. Expenses – postage/shipping is the only item significantly over budget. However, shipping revenues are above the expense so we are not losing money on that line item. Other items are pretty close to on target.

Statistics review

Krystina Wright made a correction to 836 for number of recognized shows for 2023.

Membership is about the same as pre-pandemic level, but PMs are up and GMs are down.

Horse registration is up from pre-pandemic numbers, reflecting the increase in activity right after pandemic. Now it seems to be leveling out.

Council reports – ALDs

Administrative Council – nothing more to report.

Technical Council – The Freestyle Committee is meeting today to celebrate their accomplishments and review the years. Lois Yukins is stepping down as chair of the L Program Committee and Joan Darnell stepping into the role is working well.

Activities Council – A survey was done by the Adult Programs Committee. Two things came out of the survey: 1) we should not rely on social media to get information out and 2) trouble with website navigation. Smaller GMOs feel disconnected from USDF. Anne Sushko moved and Sue Mandas seconded **to forward these recommendations from the 'survey' to the GMO Committee.** Motion carried.

Committee reports – updates and Q&A – Liaisons

The Regional Championships Committee has been talking about raising the qualifying scores. The country is so different. Larger regions want to raise scores and smaller regions do not. Kevin Reinig, Heather Petersen, and Debra Reinhardt had a meeting with Angela Goodwin-Volpert, chair of the Regional Championships Committee, to discuss some other possibilities to help both types of regions.

The Instructor/Trainer faculty going to the first USEF Coaching Education Program are Lendon Gray, Ann Guptill, Chris Hickey, and Sarah Martin. Anne Sushko moved and Heather Petersen seconded **to have Kathie Robertson attend the first session of the USEF Coaching Education Program.** Motion carried.

Working Group and Task Force Reports

- Licensed Officials Education Working Group – There has been great progress in tracking and monitoring the judges who are working on their promotion. The L graduates and judges waiting are at a very low level compared to a year ago.
- Rules Advisory Working Group (RAWG) review of proposed rule changes – Kevin Reinig moved and Noah Rattner seconded **to approve the recommendations of the RAWG of the proposed rule changes.** Motion carried.
- Non-Member Task Force – Sue McKeown
Most shows did not have any USEF Show Passes. People joined USEF. A survey is being made to ask about double shows in one weekend. Concern is the added expense, travel distance, etc.

Approval of P&P proposed edits – Sarah Garn

Heather Petersen moved and Noah Rattner seconded **to approve the P&P proposed edits.** Motion carried.

Management Committee report *(closed session)*

Adult Programs Committee: GMO survey report

See above under Activities Council report.

Appointments for the Regional Championships Site Selection Working Group (three board appointments, three appointments from the Regional Championships Committee)

Heather Petersen moved and Bess Bruton seconded **to appoint Lisa Gorretta, William McMullin, and Teresa Stewart to the Regional Championship Site Selection Working Group.** Motion carried.

FEI Youth Committee request to reconsider decision to remove FEI Young Rider (YR) and Junior (Jr) team tests from the regional championships

Heather Petersen moved and Carol Tice seconded **to make it mandatory to include Jr and YR classes as a NAYC/USEF Qualifier to replace the Jr team and YR team classes at regional championships.** Motion carried.

Heather Petersen moved and Noah Rattner seconded **to request from the USEF to waive the late fee for region championships to hold all applicable NAYC/USEF Qualifying classes.** Motion carried.

Bettina Longaker moved and Debra Reinhardt seconded **to recommend to the US Dressage Finals Organizing Committee to add PSG and I1 Jr/YR division to the 2024 US Dressage Finals.** Motion carried. Heather abstained.

Trainers conference attendance criteria – addition of para dressage coach program's approved coaches

Bess Bruton moved and Helen van der Voort seconded **to approve the addition of the approved para dressage coach to the attendance criteria.** Motion carried.

Member proposal for a mature riders division

Region 4 will try to promote this division. Managers are allowed to hold different divisions.

Bess Bruton moved and Carol Tice seconded **to have staff promote and inform show management, GMO leadership, and the membership that other divisions can be offered at**

USEF/USDF licensed/recognized shows through Competition Contact, eNews and *YourDressage*. Motion carried.

New business/miscellaneous

None

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm CST until 12:00 pm CST Saturday, December 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt
USDF Secretary

USDF EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) FALL MEETING

Omaha, NE – December 2, 2023

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Members Present:

George Williams, President	Kevin Reinig, Vice President
Debra Reinhardt, Secretary	Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer
Bettina Longaker, Region 1 Director	Debby Savage, Region 2 Director
Charlotte Trentelman, Region 3 Director	Anne Sushko, Region 4 Director
Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director	Noah Rattner, Region 6 Director
Carol Tice, Region 7 Director	Helen van der Voort, Region 8 Director
Bess Bruton, Region 9 Director	Susan Mandas, Activities Council Director
Sue McKeown, Technical Council Director	Barbara Cadwell, Administrative Council Director

Members Absent: None

Staff Attending: Stephan Hienzsch, Connie Huy, Sarah Garn, Krystina Wright, Kathie Robertson, Melissa Schoedlbauer

Guests in attendance: Anne Snipes Moss, incoming Administrative Council At-Large Director (ALD)

Call to order and agenda review (additions/corrections)

Carol Tice moved and Kevin Reinig seconded **to approve the agenda**. Motion carried.

2024 incoming Executive Board member welcome

Anne Snipes Moss, incoming Administrative Council ALD

Administrative overview for new EB member

Para Dressage Task Force appointments

Heather Petersen moved and Bess Bruton seconded **to appoint Tina Wentz, Ellie Brimmer, Kristi Wysocki, Mike Tomlinson, Stephan Hienzsch, Kevin Reinig, Noah Rattner, Sue McKeown, Chris Trentelman, Lehua Custer to the Para Dressage Task Force, with Ross Creech as staff liaison**. Motion carried. Noah Rattner, Sue McKeown, Kevin Reinig and Charlotte Trentelman abstained.

L faculty appointment

Staff member Sharon Vander Ziel came into the meeting to discuss the appointment of Judy Downer to the L faculty. Noah Rattner moved and Helen van der Voort seconded **to approve Judy Downer to the L faculty**. Motion carried. Charlotte Trentelman abstained. Sharon left the meeting.

Transparency policy proposed edits

Carol Tice moved and Debby Savage seconded **to approve the proposed edits to the transparency policy in the Policies and Procedures document, to be effective 1/1/2024**.

Motion carried. Management Committee members Kevin Reinig, Lorriane Musselman, Debra Reinhardt, and Bettina Longaker abstained.

New business/miscellaneous

Helen van der Voort brought up two things that came out of her regional meeting. First, a webinar on what a delegate is and their job and second, the website needs to be easier to navigate for better communication. Stephan Hienzsch will come back with a proposal and budget from staff to help the website.

Noah Rattner stated Equestrian Entries is ending their services. Fox Village is trying to bring on their own online. Black Horse has its own online system that rolled out a year ago. Horse Show Office has had their online system now for many years. A USEF entry system is being developed within two years.

Anne Sushko felt there needed to be a Sargent of Arms at the Board of Governors meeting to be in charge at the meeting and stop the talking during presentations.

2024 spring meeting plan and dates reminder

The 2024 spring meeting is scheduled to be held Tuesday, 4/23 (all day) and Wednesday, 4/24 (A.M.) at USDF headquarters in Lexington, KY.

Executive session *(closed)*

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt
USDF Secretary