



Rowing Canada Aviron
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
May 8 - 10, 2020

ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY MAY 8TH - 2:00 PM PDT / TO 4:00 PM PDT
SATURDAY MAY 9TH - 9:00 AM PDT / TO 11:00 AM PDT
SUNDAY MAY 10TH - 9:00 AM PDT / TO 11:00 AM PDT

MINUTES

Attendance:

Carol Purcer, President
Tom Hawker, Treasurer, Director
Carol Hermansen, Provincial Director
Heather Holden, Director
Peter McClelland, Director
Marisha Roman, Safe Sport Director
Douglas Vandor, Athlete Director
Jennifer Walinga, Director

Staff

Terry Dillon, CEO
Sid Murdoch, Secretary
Iain Brambell, HP Director (May 10th)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Purcer at 2:00 p.m. PDT.

2. President's Opening Remarks and Approval of Agenda

- Based on condensed time allotments each day, 2 hours, Director items are included within specific agenda items.
- Iain Brambell will attend the meeting on Sunday to provide a High Performance update.

[MOTION #1: Board Meeting Agenda](#)

Moved: Marisha Roman Seconded,

That the Board Meeting Agenda, May 8, 2020, be approved.

CARRIED

3. Review and Approval of Previous Minutes:

3.1 March 25, 2020

It was noted that *Native Shoes*, known for sustainable athletic shoes and *Tiny Activism*, were donated to RCA National Team Athletes.

The minutes are correct with respect to the nominating committee section but there will be an adjustment to section 8.1

In Camera sections in the minutes are highlighted.

MOTION #2: Board Meeting Minutes

Moved: Peter McClelland Seconded,

That the Board Meeting Minutes, March 25, 2020, be approved.

CARRIED

3.2 April 22, 2020

MOTION #2: Board Meeting Minutes

Moved: Marisha Roman Seconded,

That the Board Meeting Minutes, April 22, 2020, be approved.

CARRIED

As a matter of procedure, minutes will not be provided to a Director that is recused from a meeting.

4. COVID 19 UPDATE (CEO/CMO)

Dr. Mike Wilkinson is not able to attend the Board Meeting due to scheduling conflicts but it was noted that he has made an immense contribution to Canadian sport during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The number of virus cases across Canada was reviewed – important to understand the differences among provinces in order to understand RCA’s national response to the pandemic.

RCA’s Response:

There is currently a strong advisory to suspend rowing during the pandemic with high compliance from the rowing community.

Key principles for a return to rowing:

- Most important consideration is safety for all involved.
- Respect public health authority guidelines including local, regional and national.
- Provide the membership with a coherent national response to the pandemic including guidelines, a checklist and mandated requirements.
- Member clubs need to take responsibility for their return to rowing and may use the information RCA provides to enhance their own policies.
- All participants must be registered.
- Clubs should not feel pressure to open.
- RCA's national response includes considerable research - policies for a return to rowing in other countries have been reviewed for example.
- RCA's national response statement will reference guidelines on the conditions whereby member clubs may return to rowing. Also a statement on independent and private boat use, the risks that are involved. There is risk if participants use the club's dock without permission. City owned docks would have additional rules and requirements.
- Various stages of opening will be considered in particular if there is a vaccine for example or a partial opening with additional regulations.
- A checklist tool will be provided that includes criteria under the World Health Organization's guidelines for group gatherings.
- More than one stage of opening a return to rowing will be considered.
- RCA will only mandate a limited number of items - registration for participants and sign-in sheets.
- Member clubs will need to review a checklist covering a number of areas - questions to be reviewed and answered.
- Even though some provinces have permitted gatherings for 5 to 8 people, rowing quads would still not be permitted due to social distancing rules.

Timeline:

- RCA will hold a webinar for the membership on May 19th. The return to rowing toolkit will be released on that date along with a lifting of the strong advisory notice around rowing programs.

The CEO and staff were thanked for their diligence with respect to preparing the return to rowing toolkit Very important that we do this correctly and with the right protocols.

5. Provincial Director Report (w/ PAC) (Hermansen)

- With the assistance of RCA, weekly COVID-19 meetings have been held with the provinces.
- Provinces have been in communication with their clubs throughout the pandemic.
- Derek Covington is the new president in Quebec. A person has also been hired to assist with finances.
- New Brunswick still has issues around 2 of its clubs.
- A few New Brunswick participants are registering with Rowing PEI although they continue to row in New Brunswick. RCA will follow up with Rowing PEI as this is not permitted under our registration policy.

6. Treasurers Report, Finance Update and Budget

[MOTION #3: In Camera](#)

Moved: Carol Hermansen Seconded,

That the meeting be held In Camera to discuss financial reports.

CARRIED

MOTION #4: Out of In Camera

Moved: Marisha Roman Seconded,

That the meeting be held Out of In Camera.

CARRIED

Saturday

There was no business arising from the May 8th meeting.

7. Presidents Report

- Attended a recent RCA Finance Committee meeting in March. RCA's preliminary budget was reviewed.
- Attended a number of PAC calls over the last 7 weeks. These have been very informative - provinces working together with consideration of the differences among them.
- Attended Rowing BC webinars with good participation from clubs in that province. Topics for coaches have included how to keep athletes motivated during this difficult period.
- Ontario has held go to meeting calls every 2 weeks with good attendance from clubs, including a positive collaboration between RCA and RowOntario.
- There have been a few virtual regattas in St. Catharines - the Early Bird virtual event was well attended. There will be virtual Mother's Day Regatta also.
- Attended the COC Joint and Summer Caucus meetings on April 24th and 25th. Major item was the announcement by Heritage Canada - 72 million in support of sport.
- Other topics included the management of 2 Olympic Games 6 months apart and support for NSOs for those events.
- The COC CEO provided an update on COC sponsorship, noting there was a 7 % drop in sponsorship support in the first quarter of 2020. Legal assistance will be provided to NSOs by Faskens. Guidance also provided to NSOs on federal funding programs. Translation services to be provided at no cost to NSOs.
- Athlete funding support is provided through the Gameplan program.

- Attended a recent Henley meeting, there will be an announcement on June 1st regarding the event.
- It was noted that the St. Johns Regatta has been cancelled.
- Rowing News included a positive article regarding RCA's recent coaching changes.

8. Governance Matters

8.1 Nominating Committee Update

The Board reviewed the appointment of the RCA Nominating Committee.

MOTION #5: Nominating Committee

Moved: Heather Holden Seconded,

That the RCA Nominating Committee be appointed for a 2-year term including the following members:

Andrew Lamont, Chair
Peter McClelland, RCA Director
Susan Wilkinson, PAC Representative
Tracy Brooks, Member at Large
Carol Purcer, RCA President, Ex-Officio Committee Member

CARRIED

The Nominating Committee will meet around May 20th, prior to the call for expressions of interest notice that will be sent to the membership on May 27th.

A separate call for expressions of interest for the Provincial Director position was sent out on May 5th. PAC's sub-committee including Peter Walsh, Sparrow McGowan, and Doreen Hamlyn will review the applications for the position later in May with the selected candidate forwarded to the Nominating Committee. RCA staff will provide some support around that process.

Secretary to provide the Board with additional information related to skillsets and competencies for directors - remaining discussion was tabled to Sunday morning.

8.2 New Members

The Board reviewed an application for membership from the London Western Rowing Club - an amalgamation of 2 RCA Clubs, Middlesex Western and London Rowing Club.

There were no incorporation documents provided. For insurance purposes it was recognized that the club needed to be an official entity; as a result, the Board approved the London Western Rowing Club's membership in principle, subject to receipt of the appropriate legal documentation - probationary period would then be waived and the merged club would be a full member.

In the meantime, rowing programs can be set up at either London Rowing Club or Western Rowing Club after we return to on water rowing.

RCA staff will follow up with the club on the next steps.

9. Safe Sport Policy (Roman)

The RCA Board reviewed the draft Safe Sport Manual.

The Safe Sport Director noted that progress has been made and RCA is very close to having a suite of Safe Sport policies - a requirement in order for RCA to fulfill its requirements as an NSO by March 31, 2021. SportLaw has consulted on the project.

The Safe Sport Model is a Pan Canadian approach - this will allow member clubs to operate in alignment with RCA including policies that clubs can adopt. Mandated requirements

differ among provinces. Ontario includes concussion protocols for example and the inclusion of such policies will assist all of our partner clubs and associations.

There are timelines associated with the Safe Sport project - critical pieces that need to be communicated to provincial associations, then more broadly to the membership. The suite of policies is aligned with the UCCMS (Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport). The Board will be required to consider and formally approve the policy suite to move the project forward now - it can be approved in principle before it is finalized over the next few months.

This is a good opportunity for RCA to collaborate on a national level, setting the standard for safe sport best practices in Canada.

It was noted that the requirements and mandates are constantly changing - maltreatment for example. The other area under consideration is having a national administrative body for safe sport similar to the national anti-doping structure.

The new framework will also include more direct involvement by RCA at the club level if there is a specific incident. Clubs may not have the capacity to manage such incidents.

There was a question about club culture and the Vicarious Liability as related to Safe Sport information RCA will provide to its membership:

In the past NSOs were advised not to overprescribe. That philosophy has changed - RCA is now required to provide appropriate guidance and mandates to its membership in order to mitigate risk, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Cultural changes are difficult to achieve and take time. The following items were noted at an operational level:

1. RCA will lead and articulate the requirements around Safe Sport. This will include a commitment from the community to the values of Safe Sport and the manner in which we operate.
2. There are transactional requirements around rules and practices - *Every Coach Certified* and *Rule of 2* for example.
3. There also needs to be a pervasive cultural shift through leadership and role modelling.

Incident reports within clubs were discussed including the lack of reported data. The importance of safe sport reporting procedures was recognized as a valuable tool for the overall program.

Commit to Kids, Respect in Sport and other programs will also benefit the Safe Sport program.

MOTION #6: Safe Sport Policy Suite

Moved: Doug Vandor Seconded,

That the Safe Sport Policy Suite be approved in principle by the RCA Board.

CARRIED

Important that the date of approval is included on all RCA policies and manuals.

There was a question regarding RCA's role with respect to university rowing.

It was noted that the safe sport manual applies to all members of RCA in order to be in good standing including our university members.

Terry, Marisha and Jennifer Fitzpatrick were thanked for their contribution to the Safe Sport Manual. This adds credibility to the role of Safe Sport Director.

10. National Training Centre and Facilities Update (In Camera)

MOTION #7: In Camera

Moved: Tom Hawker Seconded,

That the meeting be held In Camera to discuss NTC facilities.

CARRIED

MOTION #8: Out of In Camera

Moved: Tom Hawker Seconded,

That the meeting be held Out of In Camera.

CARRIED

Strategic Planning will be reviewed on Sunday. The Board were requested to review the survey from the National Conference and reflect on what they heard at that event, key priorities over the next few years and changes to the plan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sunday

Business Arising:

National Rowing Championships:

While the NRC may be cancelled, replacement events across the country could be considered depending on the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.1 Nominating Committee Continued:

The Board reviewed additional information including a skills and competencies matrix for directors. The following skillsets will be included on the Call for Expressions of Interest:

- Professional accountant
- Legal background
- Fundraising experience
- Media background

Next Steps:

The Board's recommendations will be provided to the Nominating Committee. The statements adjacent to each skillset on the Call for Expressions of Interest will be modified.

The President will follow up with the Chair, Andrew Lamont.

11. Athletes Director and High Performance Update

The Athlete Director stated that the HP management team have dealt with the current pandemic very professional with consideration to the well-being of our athletes - putting the athletes first.

The athletes have had questions but are doing a good job of reaching out to their coaches. In a moment of crisis such as this, goodwill between the athletes and HP team is important and we will build on that goodwill going forward.

The High Performance Director joined the meeting and provided the following report:

- Important that we build on the foundation of trust and respect among coaches, athletes and staff.
- The NTC closure plan was open and transparent. Moving in a better direction working with the athlete's council, their perspective allowed us to make good decisions. Rowing clubs have been helpful also - Calgary Rowing club for example.
- Athletes will be well supported training in their home environment during the transition period, a 6 to 8 week strategy.
- Coaches will return to the NTC first. Then the athletes. There will be a 2-week mandatory quarantine, unless the person is driving then 3 to 5 days self isolation. Dr. Wilkinson has assisted with the protocol around those timeframes.
- While athletes are training in the home environment, important that they social distance. It was noted that some athletes were riding bikes together which is not appropriate. These protocols will be even more rigorous after they return to the NTC. Athletes need to be role models to the public.
- A cycling coach has been assisting athletes with their training while the NTC is closed.

Return to the NTC:

- Working with Dr. Wilkinson on the date for return to the NTC while considering the quarantine period and specific protocols around living and training safely.
- Athletes will be tested for COVID-19. Testing will take approximately 45 minutes.
- Zoom video calls are being held weekly with the coaches.
- Team culture is a major topic along with COVID-19 updates from Dr. Wilkinson.
- FISA has not yet confirmed the 2021 calendar - a questionnaire has been submitted by RCA.
- There will only be one World Cup prior to the Olympic and Paralympic qualifiers. The World Championships will be held after the Paralympic Games. Planning has already started.
- Athlete Zoom meetings are being held with 60 - 70 participants including staff and coaches. Athletes have been supportive and engaged during the calls.
- Team Canada has also held meetings with our athletes.
- Questionnaire provided to the athletes revealed the importance of camps for all 10 crews.
- We have reviewed the budget and thoroughly considered HP fiscal strategies.

Comments from the Board:

- The Treasurer stated that this was a very difficult budget to put together given the circumstances under the current pandemic.

- It was noted by Director Walinga that this current crisis has put a strong focus on our core values. Going forward we should recognize that we have an important connection with our partner clubs as mentioned by the HP Director. We have all learned a lot about the budget and the connection to the sport system in Canada. Our challenge will be preserving all of this insight in a non-crisis environment going forward. The webinars held by provinces and RCA have been great in galvanizing our partner clubs and associations – need to recognize the power of these communications

There was a question about HP meetings with the Athletes Council and the sharing of that information among athletes.

It would be best if athletes council members disseminate the information themselves and share it with the athletes in their own context rather than directly from the HP management team. More work is needed to ensure the information is shared properly.

There was a question regarding the support that is being provided to athletes with respect to their mental health during the pandemic.

A survey questionnaire was provided to NT athletes and based on individual results, any team member that scored below 5 on the survey chart received direct follow up from our sport psychologist along with additional support from one of the NT coaches.

Plans for 2020 and 2021:

- With the adjustment to the Olympic cycle, HP management is planning for a year one and a year 5.
- Primary focus is on the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Secondary focus is having a pool of athletes for 2024 including athlete support and carding. Important there is training in place for these athletes.
- Selection documents are being revised by staff and coaches for 2020 and 2021.
- The EQ profile program through the CAC has been beneficial to our coaches and management team.
- Meetings have been held regarding the return to training at the facility. Develop a better structure around coaching with one head coach as a point of contact. This also coincides with the development of a one-year plan for Tokyo and the quadrennial plan that follows. Also develop a more prolific role for a lead sport scientist considering physiology as part of the program with a more innovative and performance driven approach. For example, Tokyo will be a hot climate that will require heat strategies.
- HP rowing venues will continue to include Elk Lake and Shawnigan with more focus and room to grow at Quamichan going forward.
- Need to focus on equipment maintenance, in particular the coach boats.
- NextGen program meets twice a week with a focus on technique leading up to 2021 and 2024.

The HP Director was requested to update the Board on Safe Sport.

- Coaches are trained to provide a safe environment but more education is needed.
- There is always risk but HP management has introduced the right practices and behaviors around Safe Sport – old practices are no longer acceptable and we do not tolerate anything less than a safe environment. Important that the athletes are not put at risk.
- We must uphold our values and hold ourselves accountable.

- Positive behavioral shifts in the HP environment began with the dismissal of a Lead Coach and the counsel of our team's psychiatrist. Interactions between other coaches have also improved.

The HP Director was thanked for his report.

12. Strategic Planning Reset

The Board reviewed the Strategic Plan.

12.1 Review output from Conference Sessions What were people saying:

- The importance of cross-country communication.
- Make use of resources.
- Either visit the provinces or hold zoom meetings as a follow up process.
- Initial negativity about RCA finances and in particular the misconception around high performance funding. Providing the membership with information about RCA operations and future direction at the conference session led to a better understanding and positive feedback.
- Important that we recruit rowers and promote the sport. Lack of funds was also recognized as an issue. Start more erg and rowing programs within schools.
- Biggest opportunity is to boldly state and limit our priorities – sometimes we do too much.
- Engagement from the members was amazing in particular the ideas that were brought forward.
- Important that we recognize and encourage diversity.
- Need clarity around our purpose resulting in an improved culture within our sport. RCA's role is to inspire rowing.
- Develop trust, do what we say we are going to do.
- Share the ideas and thoughts from the session with the membership.
- Environmental issues are a major concern. Some clubs are in a precarious position due to flooding or lack of water for example.
- Define responsibilities between RCA and the membership. Too many members expect RCA to take care of local issues.
- Inspire working together in a “we” environment - build rapport among clubs, provinces and RCA. At the strategic planning session all members that attended were heard.
- It was noted that HP and RCA's external influence were not included at the session but will be part of the process going forward.

12.2 Board Discussion on Vision and Values

The role of vision, values and purpose were discussed. Where are we and where do we need to be?

- The strength and culture of our organization is tied to these statements.
- The development of policies for example are crucial to the values of RCA.
- When there is an important question that needs an answer, considering the vision can provide clarity and center the issue.
- The importance of having a financially sustainable organization was noted. Need to measure where we need to be with respect to financial resources.

12.3 Next Steps

1. Continue the Strategic Plan consultation process and articulate what we have done. Include the Provincial Director in the provincial consultation process.
2. Create a living document while capturing the feedback and recognizing the different audiences.
3. Review Vision, Values and Purpose. For continuity, maintain a similar strategic framework.
4. Identify a few days for RCA Staff participation in the review process.
5. Provide the Board with a draft document for their review and feedback.
6. Go through an additional process to develop an updated iteration of the plan.
7. Another review by the Board before a final draft is prepared.

12. Next Meeting

- Zoom Conference - June 17, 2020

13. Adjournment

The President thanked the Board for their participation over the last 3 days - the meeting was adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m. PDT