

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING  
& LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
KANSAS CITY  
September 2 – 4, 2018**

**Note:** The Board of Directors and Department Directors met on the same weekend in the same location for the first time in many years, if not ever. While both groups had their own meeting room and agenda, there was plenty of conversation between the rooms as well as opportunities for face to face reports. This seemed to provide opportunities for more in depth and honest conversations and greater understanding.

**Board Members present:** Karen Cammer, President, John Chamberlain, Vice President, Thomas Breuckman, Secretary, Sue Skaggs, Jackie Stewart, Sheri Carter and Jason Lee

Karen opened the meeting at 6:09. She shared her excitement at having the USTA Department Leaders present this weekend as well. Karen reminded the board that last August, the board let go of many day to day responsibilities in order to be more visionary. Karen indicated she would like to revisit that this year and put in place some procedures and structures around the empowerment of our leaders.

In reviewing the weekend's agenda, Tom asked that we be sure to review the National Director of Operations (Mark Nash) report and Karen placed that on the agenda.

**Motion 1: Sue Skaggs moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Jason Lee.**

**Approved unanimously.**

**Motion 2: Jason Lee moved to waive the reading of the minutes from last April's meeting. Jackie Stewart seconded.**

**Approved unanimously.**

Karen reviewed the notes and brought up a few items – the board's statement last April about empowering department leaders and also to clarify info about the non-member \$5.00 fee. Keri Cooke reported that in the 2017-18 season, there were 402 members for a day. The organization received \$3,200 and local contest directors received a total of \$1,600. The board decided to issue a directive ([Directive A](#)) to Keri, as membership director, to clarify that \$3.00- of each non-member's fee goes to the USTA, and \$2.00 goes to the local contest director.

**Directive A: To Keri Cooke, Member Services. With the changes in non-members' participation at USTA contests, please allocate \$3.00 or each non-member's fee to the USTA and allocate \$2.00 of each non-member's fee to the local contest.**

Karen informed the group that our Ways & Means Committee members were Sue (chair), John, and Tom and that we would discuss budget on Sunday.

Karen invited us to brainstorm a bit about our visions: Sheri mentioned her dream of people recognizing baton as a sport without getting a surprised look on their face. Karen mentioned the need to rebuild from the CAS system, while John mentioned the great need for marketing and promotional activities. Another mentioned the lack of connection and support for coaches that needs to be rebuilt, and all members talked about the fundraising/donation goals we have as well as the expectations that often exist for non-profit boards. Ambassadorship was mentioned, grassroots support as well, as needs and important activities for boards.

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### **Nationals Report – Karen:**

Karen noted the improvement made by various national championships staff members. Karen was complimentary, especially given this was achieved without the guidance and support of an executive director. New staff members were in place (Keri, Pam) and both stepped up to the plate to help and make sure things went very well for athletes and parents. The board discussed the issues and actions that caused delays in this year's contest. While the board believes appropriate action was taken in all cases, board members are disappointed and tired of having these or similar problems happen seemingly on an annual basis. The board also discussed the fact that this year at Dayton, we will be using two gyms for the first time.

### **WBTF Summer Meeting Notes:**

Karen reported that a location in Limoges, France had been found for the 2019 International Cup. Next, she reported on the WBTF joining the GAISF group, a prerequisite step for the Olympics. The officials have noted the WBTF organizing structure and paperwork/documentation are strong. We must have 40 member countries. Karen noted that England, Ireland, The Netherlands and Italy have indicated that they intend to apply to host the next world championships in 2020, although The Netherlands indicated their application was contingent on the adding of an extra day to the World Championships, and there has been no action on that from the WBTF. Junior athletes will now perform a short program in place of compulsories beginning in 2020. Discussions about judges staying in separate hotels and other issues were tabled. Finally, Karen noted that the next Pan Pacific will be hosted in Red Deer, Canada, near Calgary.

### **World Championships review – Karen:**

Karen noted what a successful event took place – truly a great contest! Specifically, she noted that John assuming event liaison responsibilities and his hard work and long hours really paid huge dividends to the entire event. Sandi Rios as project lead, did a wonderful job! Given the high stakes of live streaming, the implementation of a new scoring display system and much more, Sandi did a great job!

Karen summed up the day's meetings, the board's appreciation and thanks and her encouragement for the empowerment of department leaders.

The board broke for dinner at 8:00 pm.

## **Saturday, September 1, the Board and Leadership met jointly beginning at 8:38.**

### **President's message:**

Karen thanked the department leaders for attending and previewed the meetings to take place in each room today. She mentioned the standardization of policies, procedures and governance that takes place on an ongoing basis, which needs to continue and improve and, that it is important that we protect our brand – 60 years of volunteerism and membership in this organization. We need to stay true to our founders. We have a new Executive Director – Alison La Ferlita. Alison is not a twirling person, however she has worked for many organizations, including some sports related ones. She is an experienced, career Executive Director. Please welcome her warmly. The board has been talking about our organization and that we want to put energy back in to the health of our organization. Communication is an example – many of us want to communicate more often and more effectively, but struggle with aspects of it. Alison will be in contact with people on a regular basis. Karen mentioned that she would like to see improvement across the board in how we talk to and treat each other. It's so easy to be disrespectful to others, especially when not face to face with the other individual, it's easy for gossip to happen. Instead, we need to talk more to each other. Let's get it straight and correct misinformation, without emotion. We should be operating at the highest level of behavior and professionalism in our organization and we must remember that we are the role models for the sport in that regard.

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- Core values: We feel it important that we are welcoming to everyone. WE need to open the door, smile and realize that by being welcoming and inclusive, it will also create compromise opportunities for us. The new membership structure may help us welcome more new members from other organizations.
- Coaches: We sometimes forget they are our main customers. We need to concentrate on coaches.
- And we must remember fun as a core value – as an example - all catch celebrations at contests, welcoming everyone, recognizing and appreciating our coaches – it's our job to make sure that everyone who attends has a good time.

### **World Championships – Karen Cammer**

Karen mentioned briefly, the actions that took place at World involving an athlete from another country, twirling to a song supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, who made a gesture during her performance. During her next performance, some members of Team USA turned their backs on the athlete. WBTF President Sandi Wiemers spoke to all parties and encouraged a step back for many reasons, among them the realization that many of the athletes are under 21 and therefore, all should be more careful with actions taken.

### **Member Services review (at Nationals 2018)**

Karen shared membership data from Keri for 2017-18. While things started slowly for Keri, they heated up in the winter and from May through the World Championships she was extremely busy (including national contest setup). Karen has worked this year to stay in touch with Keri and to anticipate upcoming activities with her. She believes that as Keri matures into the job, it will be less necessary for her to do that as much next year. Customer service is a real plus for Keri. The board veered at this time to many different matters, but did discuss the need to identify compensation for the national contest setup this year and in the future.

### **Bookkeeper Review-Interview at Nationals – Salary –Karen Cammer**

Karen met with Pam at Nationals to review her first year. There has been a big learning curve for Pam as well. Karen noted that Pam has learned well and that she is comfortable speaking up to address others' questions and comments. Pam told Karen that given the # of hours worked, she actually earned \$10 per hour this year. Pam attended world on her own and has excelled at customer service. While discussing bookkeeper and other financial matters, the board issued

[Directive B: Sue Skaggs, please look into and set up an Amazon Smile account for USTA.](#)

### **Director of Operations report – Mark Nash**

Athlete coach judge issue was an issue that came up with Judges in the practice arena at times.

The benefactor coordinator position is important and needs to attend Nationals.

Strut lane issue

Judging issues

The board discussed accountability and helping each other stay true to rules, policies and procedures. The Board has the responsibility of developing and clarifying policy, while our department leaders are charged with implementing them. When there are issues, we need to hold them accountable. Jackie described the inconsistency around various conflicts of interest and perceptions around the international twirling community.

Having the technical advisor and judges' liaison as part of the decision making team in these discussions was and is important. They are the real experts/authorities in these situations and should be relied upon during national contests – rather than other staff members being involved.

Some conclusions:

- Perception is not reality – sometimes we have to deal with perception
- Speak up and stop something if you need to

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- Communication is huge and an issue we need to constantly address it

Judges could not achieve separation (due to traffic flow – entrances and exits) from athletes and practice arena which put them in difficult situations

Karen addressed the negativity that is contagious in our organization and that we need to confront it when it's misinformation and not put up with it silently. When confronted with such negativity, we need to counter it with correct information, speak directly to each other and help each other when there are potential perception issues.

Lunch Break 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm.

### **Department Director Reports:**

1:30 pm - Anna Dolan

- Anna thanked the board and reminded the board of the board photo the next morning.
- In her biggest message, Anna discussed live streaming and its importance to promoting our sport She also suggested we change the vendor program to a livestream vendor/sponsorship. This would be tied into Livestream support packages and would be useful for vendors whether they came to nationals or not.
- Anna recommended a website update. The current design is 8 or 9 years old. We need search engine optimization and more analytics, and most importantly need to optimize for mobile devices. She recommended a survey of membership regarding the website and asked for board go-ahead to seek details for a new contract. It remains to be seen whether this will be a refresh/restart with Epsilonium, or a more wide ranging seeking of new proposals.
- Anna discussed social media support, mentioning Tim Lyzen and his proposal to USTA regarding social media. Through discussion arrangements were made with Tim to create some videos that have already been shared and has submitted a new proposal to Anna for additional videos. Anna would like to approach this cautiously and to ensure costs are reasonable in all the productions. She will continue to monitor and preview videos before posting.
- Anna mentioned that an emphasis on vendors at World competitions may not make sense. One vendor left early, not happy with business or lack thereof. This may not apply to IC and Pan Pacific like events – as there are more and younger twirlers at these events. Again, she recommended to focus it all on live stream vendors.
- Anna noted that it was an exceptionally busy year with losses of key personnel
- Nationals set up was a big add on
- Entry forms and testing / readiness for web use is important
- When we lost our ED, there seemed to be a little of an information and procedural void. Many tasks were not identified with who was responsible and how it would get done. (need for job chart)
- Communicate changes far in advance of the actual change and give thought and time to identify tasks that need to get done in order to effect the change.
- Board leadership is needed in this area.
- We should develop a communications plan every time we make a change of any significance.
- Anna asked for input for areas of promotion and Karen mentioned the Kickstarter program and Amazon Smile.

### **Technology/Social Media – Monica Lee**

- ◇ Monica began her report with some metrics for online testing. Her first observation is that no one fails these tests; people do not finish them, but no one has failed. We should change the name of the judges' test to Judges Level 1 Course with 4 modules. We need to rebrand and set expectations.
- ◇ Coaches' level I test – great passing rate for this, but it is going to be revamped.
- ◇ Live Streaming/ Facebook: If your presentation has some sort of licensed music, Facebook will do what it can to disrupt the presentation. There was a vast difference between 2017 and 2018 live stream audiences for Nationals and Monica

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speculates that it is because of the Facebook disruption in 2018 as well as perhaps some of the delays in the contest this year.

- ◇ Bill Rahn has submitted a bid for 2019 – more expensive than World 2018, but more cameras, more lanes and 2 gyms. \$19,000 bid for 2019 Nationals.
- ◇ We should hire a Live Stream Ad Sales Representative
- ◇ Live stream options - \$75 per month or a \$200 per month for one month subscription
- ◇ Metrics for live stream at World.
- ◇ Monica estimates 40,000 viewed livestream. Concurrent views - up to 20,000 Monica estimates for World Finals – that's a conservative estimate.
- ◇ Moderator, Julia Boss did a stellar job monitoring and moderating the presentation
- ◇ Monica recommends some common platforms/programs for department directors and possibly board members to use. Options include Drop box/*Box for Business*/Google Apps, all with various options and storage solutions.
- ◇ Monica's priorities are to support department heads. She has asked for quarterly check-ins with department directors
- ◇ What are bigger ideas – Monica would love to get Knowledge Central up and running and relevant and make it the resource hub it was meant to be.
- ◇ She believes we should work with a design company for our website. Fingers first – mobile device –that's how people view websites these days. So the web site must be optimized for mobile devices.

### Judges – Kathy and Dale.

- ❖ Concern re: judges in practice arena. Kathy reported her actions taken to inform and guide judges in their actions given the fact that the practice gym was an area in which judges almost had to walk through given that the tabulation area blocked passage the other way. She indicated to judges that they should not linger in the practice area and that she received no complaints during the competition
- ❖ The judges' level I manual is completed and published. Examples will be updated this year by Alyse Gilman and Dawn Riley Shepatuk.
- ❖ There are 5 new judges as a result of the Level III workshop. Recertification online continues.
- ❖ There were 3 incident reports this year. 2 are resolved, one pending.
- ❖ This year, some assignments will be based on judges' skills.
- ❖ In regards to the issue at nationals in which conflicts of interest appeared to exist for judges assigned to the judging panel for that event, she recommends that there are more eyes on the nationals set up before it gets published. She described her process for assignments and conflicts and takes responsibility for what happened this year.
- ❖ Dale described a need to support all levels of judges and continue to grow them and educate them.
- ❖ Judges who judge at trials need to commit to the time at Nationals to judge the world athletes slotting process.
- ❖ Kathy and Dale intend to send monthly newsletters to professionals. They desire to build competency in our judges through communications, analysis of their performance, recruitment and retention.
- ❖ Jackie asked their opinion about combining coaches and judges in one department. Kathy replied that there was a loss of synergy between coaches and judges. There was an extensive discussion about judges' issues over the past few years. Accountability and responsibility were a major part of our discussion.

### Coaches: Kathy Forsythe:

- We discussed I Twirl and the huge responsibility it is.
- Kathy indicated that her passion has always been to make coaches better. She believes that the work of her department has been somewhat compromised and therefore, the committee is behind in tasks they have chosen to do.
- Kathy plans to have modules for coaches level I certification completed by December and to 'test' them in New York and California in January.
- She recommends a workshop at I Twirl to enable people to get certification.
- She also recommends that at next year's nationals, we offer workshops on 2 baton, 3 baton and artistic twirl. She mentioned that we need to make certification enticing to people.

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- Kellie Donovan Perelman is working on a module for Kathy and others are working on different modules. As Kathy is not returning in January to her position, she has not made decisions too far in the future.
- The goal is to revise Modules 1 -5 by December 31.
- Jackie asked about combining coaches and judges again under the same umbrella?
- Kathy replied that in the past when combined with judges, the heaviest discussions etc. took place for judges.

### **Sandi Rios – Technical Department**

- ∞ Sandi mentioned that there were good discussions going on in the other room. The challenge they face is that typically all departments work independently, not collaboratively. The opportunity to collaborate here is positive. The state of manuals and other documents is in pretty sad shape. It does not look good to the public.
- ∞ It is an ongoing challenge to communicate and identify issues with each other and to communicate with the greater public as well.
- ∞ Sandi is considering things like a news flash – as an example, to better inform people of important news and changes. For example, junior athletes will now perform short programs rather than compulsories. We typically wait till everything is decided before communicating with membership – In Sandi's opinion, we need to tell them sooner – even when the information is not complete.
- ∞ There is an ongoing need to recruit new talent. As one example, Sandi mentioned the idea of senior athletes coordinating and running the Athletes' party - Savannah and Addy, for example. We talked about reaching out to our young talent, using Anna to survey or seek talent.
- ∞ Sandi discussed the ongoing challenge of elite athletes competing in the A level in some events. Sandi and the committee look at entrants, examine their record and if appropriate, they then contact the coach to discuss possibly moving them into a different level than the A level. Coaches are often very cooperative and agree to make the switch, however, sometimes the coach simply refuses. Other issues include that we sometimes don't know the athlete very well – when they are from another organization, for example.
- ∞ She also mentioned that the risk management policy has not been looked at for a long time, and in our discussion, we included discussion about strut boundaries, events that start at the semi-finals round, and the collegiate event
- ∞ Additionally, The Technical Department proposes that:
  - ∞ **Change # of Novice Wins to move forward to 3 rather than 1.**
- ∞ There is discussion about the scoring system and whether it needs to be changed -- With live streaming, scores become an issue – 1.5's don't look good to anybody or feel good to anybody.
- ∞ Sandi presented a Team Proposal. **The technical department proposal references Twirl Teams being reorganized at the same levels as our Compulsory levels – Novice, A, AA, AAA, Elite. There would be content restrictions at each level, except elite.**

**(At this point, Karen stops and asks the board what the board's action would be in regard to these proposals. The group reiterated that these recommendations are presented to us and if we have strong objections, we can raise them. However, barring any objections, the director and department can move forward with taking action on their proposal.)**

Sandi continued:

- ∞ In regard to the tour, we are currently considering a model of one person with responsibility for food – banquet, etc., with another in charge of hotel, etc. Each individual would get a cut per head. We are limited in what we can do until France gets the hotels set up. There are 120 intent to compete forms completed. That might change as details emerge. There will be 3 groups will be going to France which may increase numbers. We'll need to jump on hotels quickly, once the information is posted.

**The Board and Leadership broke for dinner at 7:30 pm. Saturday evening**

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### Sunday September 2: Board of Directors' Meeting begins at: 8:30 am

**Battle for the Budget**

**USTA Kickstarter**

**Esteamed cup and esprit de corps**

**Starline recreation program**

**Bonus guidelines and forms**

**Battle for the Budget.** We've received no applications yet. It was announced at general assembly with a deadline of November 1. This might be a good time to push and promote these awards. Battle for the Budget forms go to Jason. USTA Kickstarter applications should be sent to John Chamberlain. We talked with Anna about promoting.

**Esteamed Cup and Esprit de Corps:** We will cover this with Kathy when we meet, however the board is in agreement that the Choreography award process was a great improvement this year. We remain concerned with the Esteamed Cup and the Esprit de Corps awards criteria. Jason developed 4 questions –

What are we trying to award?

What are the criteria?

Who applies the criteria?

What is the process?

However, the board also agreed that we should take this off the judges' plate and leave it to the board to determine the process. We brainstormed, 'could this be tied into the Group event?' Could we provide the Esteamed award to the new groups? Would the Esteamed award go to a team or group from the division with the most entries? [We need to seek input from department leaders.](#)

Starline Recreation Program: Should we assign it to the coaches' department? Karen believes she may have the old files created by Jack, Karla and Sandi W and she recommended naming it after Jack. [We will talk with department leaders this afternoon.](#)

**Bonus guidelines:** John distributed to the board, Karen forwarded to Kathy Butera.

**Council discussion:** Who should help and how should we recreate the structure and support and accountability that councils need and the mother organization needs for an effective structure. There was a discussion among the board about contacting councils in their region.

The board discussed whether the current structure of our organization is appropriate. Would judges and coaches education be better served by having an overall director of education? Would that additional layer be effective or detrimental?

Do we need to hire an Events Director to begin to staff the Events Department – which would oversee all national events? This person and department would be responsible to develop and administer all national events. Karen asked if we should leave the coaches' dept. vacancy and Events Dept. vacancy until Alison gets on board and is a little more familiar with the organization. She and Alison will meet in the near future and we will consult with her in regards to future structure and hires for the departments.

### **Membership Outreach to long distance entities**

- Alaska
- Puerto Rico
- Other (Illinois)

We discussed the need for outreach to areas in which baton or USTA is underrepresented to be promoted and whether this activity/project 'belonged' to the board or to the Executive Director. The Board agreed it would be beneficial for the board to be involved in this type of outreach as it crosses so many departments. The board decided it would take on outreach activities to areas in which there is not much of an USTA presence. [Directive C – to Sheri Carter to draft a document describing various elements of an outreach clinic/contest to areas needing support. Sheri will complete this by Tuesday, September 5.](#) We agreed we need to move on this quickly and would like to get to these areas this fall, if possible. We brainstormed that a board member would accompany one or

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two judges and a twirler to conduct a clinic and perhaps a local contest. Karen asked Tom if he would be the board member to coordinate and attend a clinic/contest outreach activity in Alaska this fall.

Karen mentioned Puerto Rico as a possible humanitarian and baton clinic outreach and asked John if he would be willing to coordinate this. Illinois is also interested in an outreach clinic and Karen asked Jason Lee if he would be willing to coordinate this outreach project.

### **iTwirl19**

The board agreed on the importance of having a clinic of this nature on an every other year basis. Jackie will look into some potential locations in Nashville and will report back.

### **2019 Nationals – 2 Gym Format**

The schedule has already been posted in this year's National Championships and the two schedules parallel each other. Michelle will oversee both tabulation committees. Judges will be needed in both rooms. Karen believes we need 2 contest directors. Announcers need to be scheduled as well. John referenced the Talent Search that Anna is doing this fall to solicit members who have leadership potential and that we could develop a "leadership bench" from which we select individuals. Alison will be selecting Nationals staff as she assumes her new position. We anticipate that she will consult with the board on this matter.

### **USTAR**

The Board believes in this venture as important to develop and discussed different possibilities for formats that would include recreational twirlers and groups. We'll continue to research the planning that the initial group had covered with Mark as well as considering options for locations

### **Executive Director Status**

Karen shared that she has received the contract and shared a hard copy with the board. Alison would like to have contact with each board member and other department leaders as she transitions into this position. John asked about her consultant status – would she be committed to USTA, how much can actually be accomplished in 20 hr. work week. He noted that 20 hours per week would not be sufficient for an executive director to run this organization. Karen clarified that the 20 hours is an official figure to help identify the fact that she is a consultant not an employee and that Alison wants to succeed and is committed to helping USTA move forward successfully. Jason shared his concern regarding the contract and her consultancy and that he had requested a 90 day review period so we could sever the contract if needed. The contract does include a provision that either party can terminate the contract with a 30 day notice. Karen asked the board if there were any other concerns or issues. Jason mentioned we will need to write an article/announcement for membership. Anna will coordinate articles introducing Alison and other department leaders to membership.

### **Budget Presentation & Approval**

Karen asked Sue Skaggs to facilitate the board discussion regarding the 2018-19 budget. Sue facilitated the discussion over the next hour and a half.

**Motion 3: Jackie Stewart moved to adopt the 2018-19 budget, seconded by John Chamberlain.**

**Passed: in favor: Breuckman, Skaggs, Chamberlain and Stewart**

**Absent: Lee and Carter**

### **Election of Board Officers:**

Elected to serve for the next 2 years:

President: Karen Cammer

Vice President: John Chamberlain

Secretary: Tom Breuckman

**Next Board Meeting:** January 12- 13, 2019, Location to be determined

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### Unfinished business:

- Karen will ask Pam to send \$100 gift card and thank you to Janie Gazay
- Karen will talk with Kathy Butera to explain that we are going to reformat national appointments and stipends/payments.
- Clarification that the distribution of funds from the Non-Member's fee of \$5.00 is:
  - \$3.00 to USTA
  - \$2.00 to the local contest director

**Motion # 4: We move to award a stipend of \$1,500 to Keri Cooke, and a stipend of \$500 to Anna Dolan and \$500 to Linda Boss for setup work for the 2018 National Championship and Pre-Trials entries and contest set up.**

**Moved by Tom, seconded by Sue Skaggs**

**In favor – Jackie, Sue, Karen, John, Tom**

**Absent: Jason and Sheri**

**Motion 5: Jackie moved at 2:45 to adjourn the meeting. Sue Seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

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### Motions

Motion 1: Sue Skaggs moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Jason Lee. Approved unanimously.

Motion 2: Jason Lee moved to waive the reading of the minutes from last April's meeting. Jackie Stewart seconded. Approved unanimously.

Motion 3: Jackie Stewart moved to adopt the 2018-19 budget, seconded by John Chamberlain.

Passed: in favor: Breuckman, Skaggs, Chamberlain and Stewart

Absent: Lee and Carter

Motion # 4: We move to award a stipend of \$1,500 to Keri Cooke, and a stipend of \$500 to Anna Dolan and \$500 to Linda Boss for setup work for the 2018 National Championship and Pre-Trials entries and contest set up.

Moved by Tom, seconded by Sue Skaggs

In favor – Jackie, Sue, Karen, John, Tom

Absent: Jason and Sheri

Motion 5: Jackie moved at 2:45 to adjourn the meeting. Sue Seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

### Directives

Directives A: To Keri Cooke, Member Services. With the changes in non-members' participation at USTA contests, please allocate \$3.00 of each non-member's fee to the USTA and allocate \$2.00 of each non-member's fee to the local contest.

Directive B: Sue Skaggs, please look into and set up an Amazon Smile account for USTA.

Directive C – to Sheri Carter to draft a document describing various elements of an outreach clinic/contest to areas needing support. Sheri will complete this by Tuesday, September 5.