

# Underwater Society of America

## 2024 Board of Governors' Meeting Minutes

5 October 2024  
11:30am-12:30pm CST

*The Board of Governors' is composed of the voting representative from each active USOA Council or Club, Society Officers, the Elected Directors and Regional Vice Presidents. (USOA By-laws Section 3.2.1)*

1. Call to Order (5 minutes) 11:00 am CST
  - a. Attendees: Karen Thullner, Ray Tucker Keith Mille, Carol Rose, Shawn Joy, Andrew Creedon, Wendy Okafuji, Juan Sevillano, Bill Van Deman, Lelia Johnson, Anne Giesecke
  - b. Establish quorum: present or 308 proxy out of 731 members
2. Approval of Minutes from 2023 Meeting (5 minutes): MSA
3. Approval of Agenda: MSA
4. Reports (20 minutes): Most are listed on the USOA website under 2024 Annual Meeting
  - a. CMAS – Karen Thullner
    - i. Has been very active in their Social Media campaign, asking USOA to post reels. (e.g. current fin swimming meeting)
    - ii. USOA submitted a letter to CMAS in conjunction with the UWH Committee regarding the Worlds Zone splits for UWH.
    - iii. CMAS dues need to be submitted Q1 each year (~\$4k).
    - iv. CMAS has been getting more persistent about the anti-doping seminars.
  - b. Historian – Charlie Matthews - not present
  - c. Insurance - Wendy Okafuji
    - i. The insurance program continues to grow. We are currently providing insurance for 40+ clubs/venues across Fin, UWH & UWR. Spear insurance is provided through a separate event insurance on an as needed basis.
    - ii. USOA & UWH/UWR committees continue to provide first year insurance at no cost for new clubs starting up
  - d. Legislation – Anne Giesecke
    - i. Anne keeps track of legislation that is of interest to USOA to disseminate amongst the membership
    - ii. Anne sent in her report which is posted on the USOA site. If anyone is interested in assisting with this please reach out
    - iii. Previously Anne geared her report timeframe to be shared at BTS which coincided with the congressional schedule ending in December. The report in October causes immediate events to be left off the report.
    - iv. Anne will write up a summary to be disseminated to the USOA membership.
  - e. Membership - Close to 800 members, 39 clubs. The last 2 years have been the largest membership in recent years.
  - f. NOGI – Mike Gower - not present

- i. Per Carol, NOGI is holding the election for the next year honorees. Awards ceremony will be held at DEMA. A WDHOF member is being inducted this year.
  - g. Ocean Pals - Carol Rose
    - i. This is a BTS event. Do we still need a liaison?
    - ii. Will be based on a children's book based on a description of a marine creature found in a tidepool. The book's author (Glen Butler) is donating the books. Children can color and submit their entries online. It will not be a contest but an educational program to give kids a chance to learn about the marine environment.
    - iii. Bill Van Deman was also involved in the meeting - FL has been very active in the effort in the past. The FL women's dive club (Sea Bunnies) is interested in getting involved in the project as well.
  - h. Safety – Position Vacant
    - i. We have had some studies and reports that were done (New Zealand study & study prepared by Lucky Meisenheimer. These are posted on the USOA site along with letters written by USOA to pool venues regarding the safety of our sport.
  - i. Women's Divers Hall of Fame – Carol Rose
    - i. Back to the regular schedule for nominations and awards. All nominations are now online [WDHOF.org](http://WDHOF.org).
    - ii. Last year WDHOF gave away \$68k in grants and scholarships.
    - iii. New BOD is being elected.
    - iv. Monitor: A WDHOF member lead the expedition to resurrect the Monitor. She is doing a webinar regarding the Monitor (there is a link on the WDHOF site).
- 5. Officers' Reports:
  - a. Vice President - Bill Van Deman: We're tracking upward with membership and social media outreach.
  - b. Secretary - Mike Gower: not present
  - c. Treasurer - Wendy Okafuji:
    - i. \$50k in the USOA general account as of July 31. We are on track to meet budget.
    - ii. The accountant hired as of this year is working out very well. She will be doing the tax returns for 2024.
  - d. President - Karen Thullner:
    - i. Report is on the USOA website. Highlights: financials are sound, we were able to provide uniforms for all world teams, DEMA is coming up, USOPC meeting is also coming up in November. We have a complaint process in place. USOA is becoming more cohesive across all sports.
- 6. Old Business: (10 Minutes)
  - a. Sports Commission meeting held prior to this meeting
    - i. Reports were reviewed
    - ii. No rule changes took place this year

- iii. Discussed upcoming events
  - iv. Minutes are posted on the website. MSA to approve minutes as posted.
  - b. Fundraising
    - i. Most fundraising has been adhoc for a specific event.
      - 1. USOA needs a short document on terms for needed funds and how the money will be used.
        - a. Scholarships
        - b. Uniforms
      - 2. Andrew: Definitely have the need for more fundraising across all parts of the organization. Raise social media awareness
7. New Business: (10 Minutes)
  - a. Question about what support is provided by USOA.
  - b. Need to update the website with a summary/welcome letter outlining what USOA does and how they can help new clubs start up.

Adjournment: 12:00 pm CST

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## 2023 Board of Governors' Meeting Minutes

7 October 2023  
11:30am-12:30pm CST

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8. Call to Order (5 minutes) 11:30am CST
  - a. Attendees: Karen Thullner, Bill Van Deman, Ray Tucker, Carol Rose, Anne Giesecke, Jenny Mohn, Phil Hickey, Katrina Finley, Megann Largent, Doug Beach, Anatoliy Pak, Diego Rodriguez, Evan Frost, Mike Gower, Scott Turgeon, Cristian Parra, Evan Brown
  - b. Establish quorum: 258 present or proxy out of \_\_\_ members
9. Approval of Minutes from 2022 Meeting (5 minutes): Approved.
10. Approval of Agenda: Approved.
11. Reports (20 minutes)
  - a. Artificial Reefs – Position Vacant
    - i. Do we want to continue this?
    - ii. Bill Van Deman has a meeting with a reef monitoring group.
      1. Volunteer and/or financial support.
  - b. North American Catch Records – Phil Lamm
    - i. No new records?
    - ii. Scuba and fresh records
    - iii. This will be moved to Spearfishing and see if this would be a better fit there.
    - iv. Bill Van Deman will follow up with some of the records.
  - c. CMAS – Karen Thullner
    - i. CMAS would USOA to host world championships
      1. Spearfishing
        - a. PanAmericans 2026?
        - b. World Competition 2027?
      2. UWH
        - a. Age Group 2025?
        - b. Zone Qualifiers 2026?
  - d. Historian – Charlie Matthews
  - e. IBSRC – Terry Maas
    - i. World wide organization - Blue water hunters.
    - ii. Terry is not with the organization anymore
    - iii. USOA had been a partner, but less so in the last few years.
  - f. Insurance - Wendy Okafuji
    - i. Wendy and Tom Hauber (LA UWH) have secured a \$2million policy with SAM
    - ii. Insurance renews in July.

- g. Legislation – Anne Giesecke
    - i. The United Nations statement is on a 10 year plan.
    - ii. Congress hasn't been doing much.
    - iii. A California Sanctuary is still in process. It will be the first tribal sponsored sanctuary.
  - h. Membership - Close to 800 members
  - i. NOGI – Mike Gower.
    - i. Nominees will be announced at DEMA.
  - j. Ocean Pals - Carol Rose
    - i. There will be nothing for 2024.
  - k. Safety – Position Vacant
    - i. New documents on website.
  - l. Scuba - Tom Leard
    - i. SCUBA is handled by CMAS USA
  - m. Technical / Shipwrecks – Ray Tucker
    - i. Nothing new
  - n. Women's Divers Hall of Fame – Carol Rose
    - i. WDHOFF gives grants and scholarships (2023 \$68,000)
    - ii. Member supported
    - iii. Nominees are under consideration, usually 6 per year.
12. Officers' Reports:
- a. Vice President:
    - i. Started to take post competition surveys, currently spearfishing worlds
  - b. Secretary:
    - i. Official documents have been uploaded
  - c. Treasurer:
    - i. Financials are posted online.
  - d. President:
    - i. Busy year with teams going to worlds.
      - 1. MM UWH Gold
      - 2. Womens Spearfishing Bronze
13. Old Business: (10 Minutes)
- a. Updated SCR
  - b. Uniforms
14. New Business: (10 Minutes)
- a. Sports Commission meeting held prior to this meeting
  - b. Fundraising
    - i. Sustainable giving
    - ii. Continuous giving - Patreon
    - iii. Most fundraising has been adhoc for a specific event.
      - 1. USOA needs a short document on terms for needed funds and how the money will be used.
        - a. Scholarships
        - b. Uniforms

c. Social Media

15. Visual

- a. New sport
- b. Visual competition
  - i. Still photography
  - ii. Entry fee is a USOA membership is good for one submission
  - iii. Panel of judges
  - iv. Hopefully sponsors for winner
  - v. CMAS rules will apply

Adjournment: 12:28pm CST