

USA Climbing Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Sunday, April 27, 2025

9:00 a.m. (In Person/Hybrid, Salt Lake City, UT)



ATTENDING

Voting Board Members

Kate Felsen Di Pietro, Chair
Meagan Martin, Vice Chair, Athlete
Trace Harris, Treasurer
Maureen Beck, Athlete
Kyra Condie, Athlete

Bret Johnston
Deana Labriola
Connie Lightner
Joey Molko
Jason Pill
Steve Struthers
David Landman
Brian McAndrews

Non-Voting Ex Officio Board Members

Marc Norman, President & CEO
Nekaia Sanders, Team USA AC Alternate

Observers

Danny Popowski, USAC AC Chair
Avery Cook
Patti Rube

USA Climbing Staff and Others in Attendance

Lisa Valiant, Chief of Staff (Secretary); Caitlin Curry, CFO, John Muse, Chief of Sport; Stephanie Dooper, Development Director

The meeting commenced on Saturday April 26th, at 9:00 AM MDT. Kate Felsen Di Pietro presided. Lisa Valiant served as Secretary.

- I. Kate Felsen Di Pietro called the meeting to order.
 - a. Brian McAndrews and David Landman were welcomed and introduced as new members of the Board.
 - b. Stephanie Dooper was welcomed and introduced as the new Development Director.
 - c. Lisa Valiant was thanked for her time with USA Climbing and wished well on her new endeavor.
 - d. The meeting agenda was reviewed for any conflicts of interest, with none declared.
 - e. *A motion and a second was made to approve the February 19th, 2025, Board Meeting minutes as presented, a motion was made to make a minor amendment to the minutes. The amended minutes were unanimously approved.*
 - f. *Acknowledgement of Interim Board Actions. On motions duly made and seconded, the Board previously appointed David Landman to the Board of Directors. On motions duly made and seconded, the board appointed Karla Knox to the Audit & Compensation Committee*
- II. **IFSC General Assembly Report**
 - a. IFSC awarded USA Climbing three separate awards - first place in Paraclimbing, second place in Speed and third place in Bouldering.

- b. Marcus Scholaris was re-elected as IFSC President
- c. Patti Rube was re-elected to the Ethics Commission and Deana Labriola was elected to the Judicial Commission. Continuing Commissions include, Kyra Condie- Athletes Commission, Marc Norman- Chair Events Commission, Matt Ornes- Rules Commission, Dr. Karen Halsell- Vice Chair Medical Commission, Josh Larson- Coaches Commission, Patti Rube- Governance Commission, Ziva Petrin- Paraclimbing Commission, Chris Danielson- Routesetting Commission.
- d. Marc was acknowledged for fostering positive relationships with the IFSC. Patti noted that, in previous years, USA Climbing had neither a strong relationship with the international federation nor a strong performance on the international stage.
- e. USA Climbing's National Events Manager, Trevor Clay, was announced as the IFSC Assistant Event Delegate.

III. **NTC Design Update**

- a. Designs of the NTC will go public when the permitting process begins.
- b. Jason Pill disclosed a potential conflict of interest, which the Board determined would not prevent Jason Pill from engaging in discussions related to the NTC design. The Board then engaged in discussions concerning the publication of the NTC design and timing of same.
- c. Discussion of the design of the new facility then occurred, and the importance of sustainability and reducing energy usage in the building was noted as priorities. There was discussion regarding the desire for a donor wall and the possibility of naming rights for certain areas of the facility.
- d. Further discussion occurred related to the current relationship between USA Climbing and gym owners, and the evolution in a positive direction since early 2024.
- e. The Board then discussed potential enhancements to the space, and whether it was known if tariffs would impact cost of materials for the project. Board agreed to the importance of involving a general contractor early in the design process to help navigate supplier connections and uncertainties. The Board then discussed the timing and need to select a general contractor.
- f. The Board also discussed the possibility of public financing options available in relation to the NTC and follow up with bond council to determine the appropriate ratio for funding a project like the NTC. This led to a discussion on the importance of fundraising and the need to identify top tiers and potential donors promptly. The Board discussed corporate sponsorships and activation of fundraising efforts in different regions for the NTC. It was noted that no corporate sponsorship opportunities should conflict with existing USA Climbing partnerships.

IV. **LRB Public Finance Advisors-Lewis/Robertson/Burningham (LRB)**

LRB was welcomed and presented to the Board generally on the public bond process. The Board further discussed this financing strategy and highlighted possible pre-financing action steps.

V. **Strategic Plan.**

Gratitude was expressed to the task force and Steve Struthers for their efforts to date in finalizing the strategic plan for the Board's review/consideration. The Board discussed the potential for adding the high-performance plan and the NTC visioning documents to the Strategic plan. The Board agreed that the Strategic Plan should include and highlight its four central pillars: growing the sport, succeeding internationally, building strategic partners, and delivering the National Training Center.

The Board then discussed the language and goals of the youth series and elite athlete development, emphasizing that clearer language was needed to build on recent improvements in each area. The team explored ways to incentivize gyms to support strong youth programs and providing athletes with mental, physical, and nutritional resources. The Board then emphasized the importance of community engagement and alignment of USAC standards with Olympic and Paralympic standards in governance, sustainability. Steve Struthers agreed to refine the document further to address the noted areas of the Board.

VI. Transgender Athlete Participation (TAP).

Marc provided an update was given on policy development efforts and shared his feedback that received from a NGB Council that had been formed by various NGB's to explore policy considerations and discuss developments in this area. Key challenges faced by NGBs were outlined, including concerns about potential violations of anti-discrimination laws in certain states and federal challenges to NGB nonprofit status over the issue of trans participation. The Board noted the need for clear guidance regarding trans participation for regional coordinators and volunteers and agreed to continue to review the policy to prioritize athlete safety.

VII. Governance Committee.

The Board reviewed and refined the draft social media policy, which is intended to guide appropriate use of social media by board and committee members.

The Board also discussed succession planning for board and committee leadership roles, with particular attention to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson positions. The group also discussed the appropriate role of the Nominating Committee in the selection process, and term limits for Board and committee members. No formal decision was made. The meeting concluded with agreement to continue refining both the social media policy and the succession planning framework.

VIII. *On motions duly made and seconded, the Board adjourned to closed session*

IX. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30 PM MDT.

X. The Board recessed until Sunday morning.

The meeting commenced on Saturday April 27th, at 9:00 AM MDT. Kate Felsen Di Pietro presided. Lisa Valiant served as Secretary

I. Kate Felsen Di Pietro called the meeting to order and welcome back.

II. **Youth Series Discussion**

Proposed updates were given by Marc Norman and John Muse, which included the addition of a U11 category, retention of the U20 category, and integration of recreational elements. The group then considered the opportunities and challenges regarding the extension of the qualifier season in the youth series to provide for scheduling flexibility and increased gym participation. It was noted that the Youth Series Task Force would continue to review these changes and recommendations would be forthcoming in advance of the 2025/26 season.

III. **CEO Update**

- a. Positive feedback from the recent CWA Summit was reported, highlighting USA Climbing's community engagement via a trade show booth and gym owner social. The Board thanked Deana for sponsoring the Women's Fireside Chat event at the Summit.
- b. Marc and John noted that they presented the potential youth series changes to an audience at the Summit.
- c. Upcoming board meetings were finalized for 2025: June 18 (virtual) and Oct 24–26 (in-person, Raleigh). Utilizing board members' local connections for future meetings and fundraising was proposed.

XI. **FY25 Financials.**

A financial update was given by Caitlin Curry, including the ongoing annual audit of USAC's financial, the receipt of an outdoor recreation grant, and an overview of expected cash balances throughout the year. The Board noted lower participation in youth categories for regional and divisional events, which contributed to lower than anticipated cash from entry fees for same, perhaps due to category changes. Board agreed to continue to monitor.

XII. **USOPC Compliance Audit Update.**

USA Climbing received positive audit results overall from its recent compliance audit by the USOPC. Marc Norman informed the Board of the minor improvements requested by the USOPC and the deficiency related to athlete representation, which USAC is working to correct, citing ongoing efforts to fill athlete roles. The audit committee was commended for its effectiveness, particularly in involving athletes.

XIII. **ITC.**

It was reported that renovations are progressing on schedule and within budget for the interim training center, with such move planned for June 2025.

XIV. **Miscellaneous**

The Board agreed to review and vote on the social media policy and strategic plan electronically.

Highlights were presented regarding the recent World Cup successes and encouraged attendance at upcoming events in Salt Lake City and Denver.

- XV. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:15 AM MDT followed by an optional tour of the NTC & Interim Training Center.