

USA Climbing Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Sunday, March 1, 2026

8:34 a.m. (In Person/Hybrid, Katy, Texas)



ATTENDING

Voting Board Members

Kate Felsen Di Pietro, Chair
Meagan Martin, Vice Chair, Athlete
Trace Harris, Treasurer
Jesse Grupper, Athlete
Kyra Condie, Athlete
Sophia Curcio, AAC Rep

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

Non-Voting Ex Officio Board Members

Marc Norman, President & CEO
Nekaia Sanders, AAC Alternate

Observers

Danny Popowski, USAC AC Chair

USA Climbing Staff and Others in Attendance

Sharlee Strebel, Membership and Compliance Director (Secretary); Caitlin Curry, CFO, Stephanie Dooper, Development Director

A quorum was present and the meeting commenced on Saturday February 28th, at 8:34AM CST. Kate Felsen Di Pietro presided. Sharlee Strebel served as Secretary.

- I. Kate Felsen Di Pietro called the meeting to order.
 - a. Introduction on world news
 - b. The meeting agenda was reviewed for any conflicts of interest, with none declared.
 - c. *A motion and a second was made to approve the December 10th, 2025, Virtual Board Meeting minutes as presented. The minutes were unanimously approved.*
 - d. Details about the 2026 Board Meeting schedule were presented.

II. Committee Matters

1. DEI Committee

The Board reviewed a letter from the DEI Committee related to future communication processes, clarity of roles, and responsiveness to external inquiries. Discussion included the naming of the Competition Eligibility Policy and whether current terminology appropriately reflects intent as it relates to specific groups. Athlete feedback, including perspectives from transgender climbers, were considered. The Board provided its feedback for the Committee, and requested that, based on such feedback, the Committee provide a formal recommendation on policy naming, with final determination to be made by the CEO.

2. Nominating Committee

An update was provided on 2026 engagement efforts and ongoing work to meet USOPC athlete representation requirements across committees. Recent athlete appointments were noted, along with upcoming Board term expirations and renewal timelines.

3. Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee presented an overview of Conflict of Interest reporting and review processes. Conflicts are categorized into three types and reviewed quarterly. An example was discussed to illustrate evaluation and management practices. The Committee provides updates for transparency but does not require Board approval for determinations. Related discussion included financial reporting considerations and background screening processes.

III. CEO Update

CEO Marc Norman provided an update on the National Training Center (NTC), including project design, approvals, and timeline. Design is approximately 95% complete, and design changes incorporated input from athletes, routesetters, and Para Climbing stakeholders to ensure accessibility. The project has received approval from the Salt Lake City Planning Department. Key next steps include construction documents, permitting, and procurement of long-lead items, with a projected opening of March 1, 2028.

Funding strategy and project phasing were reviewed, including benchmarks tied to fundraising progress. The Board discussed and expressed support for a phased approach.

Marc Norman also presented a proposed Regional Training Site initiative, noting that feedback on such initiative has been mixed. The Board discussed such feedback and potential refinements to the proposal in light of same, including a tiered partnership model, and supported continued development of the proposal with consideration of stakeholder concerns.

The Board discussed organizational responses to community-based support requests received by USA Climbing and reached consensus that USA Climbing should not engage at an organizational level in such requests, but supported individuals providing personal support for any such requests. The need for a consistent policy framework was identified.

IV. Financial Updates

CFO Caitlin Curry presented an overview of bond financing considerations for the NTC. The CFO outlined various scenarios related to the amount, term and type of financing that could be needed to support the NTC, including front-loaded fundraising during construction and extended pledge structures. The Board discussed risk mitigation strategies under such scenarios, including maintaining sufficient financing to avoid construction delays.

The bond financing process was also reviewed, including coordination with the conduit issuer, bond counsel, and a trustee, as well as a required public hearing with the Salt Lake City Council. The process is expected to take three to six months, and early initiation was recommended. Additional discussion included donor fulfillment considerations, fiscal policy review, and the upcoming audit process.

Break

V. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee presented a draft Volunteer Code of Conduct to the Board. The Board supported staff collaboration to finalize the policy, including enforcement mechanisms and implementation strategy. Discussion included consolidating existing policies into a single, unified code.

The Board considered several options related to a Volunteer Code of Conduct, including standalone provisions related to advocacy or a general code of conduct. Several viewpoints related to the language of any advocacy policy were considered. The Board ultimately reached consensus to proceed with a general code of conduct covering such advocacy matters. Broader considerations, including alignment with organizational values, risk management, and operational feasibility, were also considered.

The Committee also presented Board leadership nomination timelines and an overview of Board and Committee structures. Discussion included potential adjustments to Board size, with consideration given to governance efficiency and required athlete representation. The Board expressed a preference for an electronic and anonymous voting process and requested additional clarity regarding Chair and Vice Chair roles. The Governance Committee will develop a formal election process for review at the April meeting.

VI. Foundation Update

Development Director Stephanie Dooper reported on fundraising progress for the NTC, including the procurement of a recent significant commitment to the NTC project. Ongoing solicitations and additional donor opportunities were discussed. Updates on Impact Circle participation and Trustee engagement were provided. Continued growth in both capital campaign and annual giving efforts was emphasized as critical to long-term sustainability.

Meeting adjourned and went into closed session at 3:08 CST

A quorum was present and the meeting commenced on Sunday March 1st, at 9:07 AM CST. Kate Felsen Di Pietro presided. Sharlee Strebel served as Secretary.

I. CEO Updates

CEO Marc Norman introduced new staff members and provided updates on organizational initiatives, including upcoming participation in the Climbing Wall Association Summit and USA Climbing's procurement of trademark protections for key wordmarks and logos.

The Board discussed a request received to support certain ongoing efforts of some Federations as it relates to the participation of Israeli athletes at international competitions. The Board concluded that USA Climbing's goal should be to support individual athlete participation in international competition, as such participation enhances the sport and the mission and vision of USA Climbing. The Board noted the importance of maintain a consistent position in this regard and supported the establishment of a working group to develop a formal policy to guide future decisions.

II. LA28 Updates

Updates were provided on planning efforts for the LA28 Olympic cycle, including potential World Cup events and development of the USA Climbing House concept. Preliminary planning was discussed for hospitality, corporate partnerships, and accommodations. The Board emphasized the importance of early planning, marketing strategy, and coordination to ensure successful execution.

III. Financial Updates

CFO Caitlin Curry presented updates on FY25 audit preparation, fiscal policy review, and current cash balances. Unaudited financials were reviewed, along with NTC operating and capital expenses. Favorable financial trends were noted, driven by expense management and strong Foundation performance.

IV. Sports Updates

CEO Marc Norman provided updates on youth competition formats, which have received positive feedback. Staffing challenges at recent events were discussed, with plans to evaluate and refine staffing models in light of same.

The Board discussed advancement of the coaching certification pathway, including re-engagement of a Coaches Committee and continued development of program content.

Additional discussion of competition format occurred, including broadcast expansion opportunities and quality, event visibility, overall media strategy, and athlete promotion. Updates on the LA28 Olympic qualification process, including quota allocations and competition structure, were also reviewed.

Meeting adjourned and went into closed session at 10:39 CST