

Minutes of the 2017 General Meeting of the Georgia Division USA Fencing, May 6, 2017

Attendance: David Saylor, Kathy Vail, James (Chad) Morris, Earl A. Shapiro, Gene Gettler, Sarah Giarratana Shirey, Kathleen Ferrara, William Chase, and Charise Munlin

Call to Order: 5:15pm

Officer Reports

Chairperson: Kathleen Ferrara

Kathleen thanked Will for his help with the tournament. She also thanked everyone for their work on the board, and said she was sorry that she couldn't contribute much this year, due to her work schedule.

Vice Chairperson: William Chase

Will thanked everyone for their help with the tournament. He felt that J.O. Qualifiers was very successful and so was today's Division Qualifiers. Will expressed that he enjoyed being VC this season and looked forward to serving in the future.

Secretary: Charise Munlin

Charise reminded attendees about the importance of our referees being in compliance. She wants the referees to take ownership of their compliance. She also wants the Tournament Organizers to do their due diligence when hiring referees.

Treasurer: Audrey Barroso

Audrey was unable to attend, but did provide financial reports to Charise Munlin for the members to review. These reports were passed around at the meeting. She reported a current loss of \$181.01, however she indicated that the revenue/expenses from the Division Qualifier are not included in the report and that adding these funds would most likely make the Division break even.

Tournament Chair: Rudy Volkmann

Rudy reported that out of our 17 clubs, only 2 clubs were not fond of the restriction on the clubs to only have two sanctioned tournaments during the season. He still maintains that the practice will increase attendance across clubs if there are fewer "home club" tournaments to attend. He would like to continue this trend for the upcoming season. The Board agreed, and the practice will continue for the upcoming season.

Old Business:

We revisited the thought of moving the tournament committee meeting from August to either June or July. It was mentioned that the colleges were the main reason we had some hesitation about moving the meeting. Rudy suggested we have the meeting early and choose a date for the colleges based on the dates they have chosen in previous seasons. If the college subsequently gets approved for a date that another club has, then the club and the college would work out swapping dates. Kathy expressed some concerns over the club possibly losing any deposits that may have been put down for rental space for the initial tournament date and asked if they would be required to switch dates. After some discussion,

Rudy said they do not have to switch the date if it would cause a financial hardship on the club. The Board decided to have the meeting earlier, either June or July.

Kathy mentioned that the USFA has gotten rid of the High School individual membership and that now there will be a High School Team membership. She wanted the coaches to communicate to their fencers that they must have a full competitive USFA membership if they want to compete in any local tournaments, as the High School membership will not be considered valid for those competitions.

The suggestion was made to bring back the Georgia Divisional Individual Championship tournament, with the addition of a team event that could serve a few purposes. The first on the list being, it could be attached to a divisionally sponsored referee clinic to aide in the effort to produce higher-rated referees for the division. It was also suggested that the tournament be restricted to those with a rating of A, B or C, making it a "Div I" tournament, giving those fencers a tournament for the end of the season, perhaps in preparation for Summer Nationals. The team event would be limited to one team per club (per weapon?). The attendees thought this sounded like a good idea. The board agreed to begin to try to plan something, they are aiming to hold the tournament sometime in April.

There was a lot of discussion around referee development and things that we can do to assist with this. There was a discussion about needing more "highly" rated referees. The division board would like to grow the number of referees that are rated at least a 5. Currently we only have 1. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, it was decided link the next division sponsored referee clinic to the Division Championship tournament, which ideally would fall around April next season. It was agreed that details would need to be worked out.

Sarah, our webmaster, reported on the Division Facebook page and our increase in "Likes". She also suggested that we start an Instagram account for people to follow. She has asked for fencing action shots from the clubs, that were neutral (meaning not really showing off any club logos per se) that can be posted on the Facebook page as well as on Instagram. She requested to move our website platform to Squarespace. Her thought was it would be more user friendly, easier to update, and provide more flexibility for what we can actually do on the website. The Board and membership agreed it was a good idea. Sarah will begin working on our new website. There was also the suggestion to restart the Division Newsletter. Sarah said she was willing to take this on as well. There will be more talk about how to go about it.

Rudy asked if we could send an email blast to current and past year members via the USFA. His rationale for this was that emails sent out early in the season only reach the few people who have already renewed their membership. If we had the past year as well, we could reach most of the Division with early season emails. Kathy said she thought this was possible and simply needed to be requested. This conversation also sparked a conversation about signing up for a Division mailing list via the Division website. Sarah said she would look into this, but said it may be easier to do once we switch website platforms.

Will brought up his Google doc for Division Referees. This "living" document was created as a resource for tournament organizers to use, so as to eliminate the referee compliance issue. Any referees, who are in compliance can be added, to the document. To be in compliance, the referee must have the required USFA membership (which is dependent on the type of USFA member you are), an unexpired background check, and unexpired safe sport certification. Referees and/or clubs who have referees they want to be

added to the list can reach out to secretary@gafencing.org . Again, only those in compliance will be added. The document can be found on the Division website.

Will also suggested creating a division survey, that the membership can respond to. He wants to use the survey to see how the Division is serving the membership, as well as get suggestions from the membership as to what they want to see in the Division. Sarah said she could help out with creating and posting the survey on the website and/or via the newsletter. Kathleen suggested a committee of at least four people be created to assist with the survey, Will, Sarah, and two others.

Elections 5:55pm

Chairperson:

William Chase expressed his interest in being Chair. Rudy nominated Will Chase for Chairman. Gene Gettler seconded. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

Vice Chairperson:

Laura Anderson expressed her interest in becoming Vice Chair to Kathleen Ferrara. This nomination was discussed briefly, to confirm Laura's understanding of the duties (she was unable to attend the meeting). Kathleen was asked if she wanted the position and she responded that she did not. Rudy Volkmann nominated Laura Anderson for Vice Chairman. Earl Shapiro seconded. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

Treasurer:

Audrey Barroso, was contacted via phone (she was unable to attend), and she confirmed her interest in remaining Treasurer. Gene Gettler nominated Audrey for Treasurer. Kathleen Ferrara seconded. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

Secretary:

Charise Munlin expressed her interest in continuing her function as Secretary. Rudy Volkmann nominated Charise Munlin for Secretary. Earl Shapiro seconded. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

Tournament Committee Chair:

Rudy Volkmann expressed his interest in continuing his function as Tournament Committee Chair. Gene Gettler nominated Rudy Volkmann for Tournament Committee Chair. Kathy Vail seconded. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

Additional Directors:

Kathy Vail and Gene Gettler expressed their interest in continuing in their function as Additional Directors. Matt Bernstein also expressed his interest by proxy. Kathy and Gene left the room so that voters didn't have to do a paper ballot. There was some discussion on the number of additional directors the division could have. It was confirmed through the By-Laws that the division could have two. Rudy Volkmann nominated Gene Gettler for Additional Director. Sarah Giarratana Shirey seconded.

Chad Morris nominated Kathy Vail for Additional Director. Earl Shapiro seconded. Kathleen Ferrara nominated Matt Bernstein. There was no second. With no other nominations, the vote passed.

The new Board for the 2017-2018 season will be as follows:

Chairperson: Will Chase

Vice Chairperson: Laura Anderson

Secretary: Charise Munlin

Treasurer: Audrey Barroso

Tournament Committee Chair: Rudy Volkmann

Director: Gene Gettler

Director: Kathy Vail

There was some discussion about holding a conference call for the new board to meet within the next couple of months (June or July). Kathleen suggested that the members of the outgoing board also attend so that there could be a transfer of knowledge. Options for the conference call were discussed. Charise suggested an informal in person meeting like a cookout or something at someone's home.

Gene thanked Kathleen for her years of service as a Division Board member. Kathleen said she would still be available for questions and tournament assistance if anybody needed her.

Earl Shapiro made a motion to adjourn. Chad seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Charise Munlin

GA Division Secretary