



**Special Olympics Iowa  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, November 5, 2015, 5:30 p.m., Grimes, Iowa**

**Board Members present:** Steve Palmer (Chair), Brian Wessels (Treasurer), Jill VanDerPol (Secretary), Chick Herbert (Past-chair), Neil Berns, Lana Voga, Ted Oberlander, Jill Southworth, Joseph Ramirez, Dr. Thomas Hill, Jon Richardson, Debby Eldred, Charity Hodson, Dr. Mary Stevens

**Board Members present via conference call:** Kathy Lively, Keith Saunders, Gary Steinke, JoAnne Whitmore

**Board Members not present:** Mike Lightbody, Elaine Hieber, Lynn Clayton, Stu Sorrell

**Meeting Recap**

**1. Welcome**

Steve Palmer welcomed everyone to the board meeting and stated that since he's not going to have three-hour board meetings and we have a lot of business to discuss tonight; we're not going to do committee reports. He did note that they're posted online if you'd like to review.

**2. Athlete Update**

Charity Hodson gave an update informing the board that bowling districts were held a couple of weeks ago.

She also provided feedback on the Tailgate for Teammates event that was held October 17 and said the athletes who attended really liked it, especially because they each had trading cards that they could sign and hand out. The athletes felt special because everyone wanted their autograph.

Charity also mentioned that she's currently doing project work with Hy-Vee and graduates from that on Nov. 19.

**3. Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes\***

Steve asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes from the last board meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Lana Voga, seconded by Chick Herbert, and approved by unanimous consent.

**4. CEO Update**

Gary Harms provided the highlights of what he and the SOIA staff have been working on:

- Erin Birkenholtz was hired as a regional director. She has hit the ground running, working with the Area Directors. Erin comes to us from the University of Iowa and has an extensive background with SOIA.

- Rachel Bosworth, formerly with Coe College, was hired as the LETR Marketing Event coordinator and will start at SOIA next week Wednesday. Rachel is a former collegiate athlete and has most recently been working with the Alzheimer's Association.
- This week Saturday is the Des Moines Polar Plunge. SOIA has lined up some great partners for this event – the Aveda Institute, Lincoln Bank, and Chick-fil-A. We've also been getting great media coverage. As of today we have 26 teams and 200 plungers signed up.
- The Tailgate for Teammates event was a very successful event for us. Unfortunately it came up against the ISU kickoff, but we still had a good crowd and met our budget. Kudos to Stuart Steffy, Jamie Alt, Cindy Schaffer, Jill VanDerPol, and Jill Southworth.
- In December Laurie Pyatt will be championing “12 days of Athletes”. These will be feature stories of athletes distributed on the website and via social media.
- Giving Tuesday is a new fundraising opportunity that has been announced by SONA. For every monetary gift donated through the SONA website on Tuesdays throughout December, that gift will be matched three-fold. The dollars are directed to SONA, and of those we get back a percentage of the initial gift only (not the three-fold amount). Another organization on that site has also agreed to do a 1-1 match.
- Watch for a year-end recap that will be coming at the beginning of the new year – the recap will match up what has been done in 2015 to the goals that were set up when Gary started in February 2015.

Gary also provided an update on a couple of questions that came up at the September board meeting:

- At the last meeting there was discussion regarding answering the phones at SOIA. Gary's team looked into an automated system but it was cost prohibitive so Gary has purchased a head set for Laura. This way she can be mobile and still be able to answer the phone in person.
- There was also a question at the last meeting regarding endowments. Gary confirmed that Des Moines and Dubuque are not restricted at this point. What this means is that after we hit the threshold of \$10k, those funds can be directed as desired.

## **5. Departmental Updates**

### Development Report\*

Jamie Alt provided some highlights from the development report:

- SOIA received the grant for the \$15k Make My Non-profit Run Better campaign. We received over 63,000 online votes. SOIA is now going through the process on how to allocate the money.
- We received the check from Casey's for the Casey's Cup campaign. We received a little over a 4% increase from last year. SOIA will meet with them again in January to discuss plans for 2016.
- We've submitted a proposal to Fairway food stores and plan to meet with them in November. Our hope is to receive \$10-\$25k.
- Lincoln Savings Bank is the presenting sponsor for our first Jordan Creek Town Center plunge. We have a strong relationship with them right now and hope to increase their sponsorship contribution next year.
- SOIA has been working on fundraising for the 2016 Winter Games. As of today we have \$7k secured.

- ISU football fundraiser – this year we raised a little over \$4k (about \$1k less than last year)
- Tailgate for Teammates was a successful event. Although it was a small committee, they did a great job — Jill VanDerPol from the board was part of the committee. Stuart Steffy, who championed the event, also deserves a big kudos – he did an awesome job!
- Truck convoy – this year we made a record \$36k. Next year LETR has the goal of hitting \$100k. We can't do this event without DOT and although we've received some resistance from the DOT because it takes a lot of effort and have heard they aren't supportive of the event, many higher ups from the DOT were there and showed excitement for this event. The event was a class act and it's great for the athletes. Jamie encourages everyone on the board to go see it – it's pretty cool and exceeded his expectations. Charity Hodson added that it was fun and the driver she was with told her that we need more trucks.
- It's Plunge season! The Ft Dodge plunge was Nov 2, and the West Des Moines Jordan Creek plunge is this Saturday. In addition to the plunge there will be a donut eating contest, chair massages, and hair blowouts. The Aveda Institute and Lincoln Savings Bank have been great partner this year, in addition to On the Border who is providing chips, pizza, and salsa, and Chick-fil-A who is providing chicken sandwiches. The Super Plunge will be held separately this year on Nov 20 and 21 at SOIA Headquarters. It won't be quite the same as past Super Plunges (more of a dip your toe in the tank) but will raise at least \$500 per Super Plunger.

Jamie concluded by saying the entire development team has been doing a great job preparing for the Plunge taking in place in the next couple days.

Gary Harms took a moment to introduce Jeremiah Johnson. Jeremiah has been helping SOIA with the 2016 budget and will be part of the meeting tonight.

#### Program Report\*

John Arnold provided some highlights from the program report:

- State bowling competition is this Saturday, November 7 – feel free to head there after the plunge
- There have been three state events since the last board meeting, plus regional bowling, and equine, which is back this year:
  - o For equine we've gotten back to about half of the participants from what we have had previously (one delegation isn't participating, but John thinks we'll get them back in 2016).
  - o Flag football numbers are slightly up. John stated that they'll make sure they keep tracking (note NA in detailed report).
  - o State volleyball numbers are a little down this year but there doesn't seem to be a good reason for that. They have sent a survey for both state volleyball and flag football. Generally the feedback received is that everyone liked these events, but rule clarification is needed, and we need to make sure the refereeing is better. One other complaint for volleyball is that the venue was too small, but John stated that ISU provides a great facility for us. Otherwise the feedback is positive.
- Play days are coming up and Kathy Irving's numbers for these events are trending upward. John noted that the SOIA staff works really hard to get these set up. We often can't set up until 10 p.m. the night before because of other sporting events. Gary Harms noted that the trend in play days is important because that's a

demographic we want to hit — get to the youth prior to the competition phase. We want to capture and engage the athletes who are 7 going on 8, and those graduating from high school. He noted that SOIA would have loved to do another play day but didn't have the budget number in 2015; hoping we can in 2016.

- State events are down by 23 athletes, however if you take out summer games, we're doing really well.
- Bowling is underway – this is a big event for us and can have a big swing on numbers.
- John noted that the final numbers for all events will be communicated via the year-end report in Jan.
- Coaching training – we've had great interest and numbers for the training, and need to find better ways to get additional training out to them. Part of the strategy going forward is working with Regional Directors for more personal trainings.
- Project unify is an important program for us to supply the foundation for future growth. We have a student rep, Megan Rood, who is working with schools to get more activity for unified sports. In November she will be meeting with all Linn Mar schools.

Upcoming events / volunteer opps: bowling (talk to Jordan if interested), Winter Games, Mid-Winter Tournament in March and of course, the Summer Games. John noted that his team will reach out to us on an ongoing basis to get us plugged in.

Steve asked about the four participation packets that were sent out – where those went, where we think those relationships are going. John noted:

- Ames was an in-person meeting.
- It's also part of our strategy for growth. We have a lot of good events and participants at those. Our reach report currently states 79 events but those aren't at capacity – there is room to grow. Since we already have most of the event expenses incurred, (might take some more staff time and some add'l food or t-shirts), it's a great way to grow and further the mission of SOIA inexpensively – build on what we have.

## 6. Finance Report\*

Brian Wessels reviewed the financials through the end of September. As of September, total revenue is \$640,000 (off about \$151,000 from budget) but noted that we have a couple of items that came in after the end of the month and once we add those in, we're quite a bit closer to budget.

A couple other things to note:

- The report shows we're over in Programming by \$148,000. These include in-kind and payroll expenses. In addition, this month Jeremiah went into more detail about how expenses are classified and moved some expenses where appropriate which accounts for some of the overage in budget.
- Although we're showing a loss of \$175k, we have approximately \$120k in payments that were budgeted for September but came in after 9/30/15. As of October we're looking like we're in pretty good shape.

Brian noted that the finance committee is working on a more summarized version of the budget report going into 2016 that will be distributed to board members. This report will be a summary that is simpler to read at a glance and will include some narrative. He also

noted that they're just doing this to simplify the information for board members. Gary Harms added that they'll be looking at the report on a bi-monthly basis and it should be accurate within 30-60 days and then they'll detail it out so we know if there are any triggers – trying to push level of transparency. If anyone wants to get into detail, the full report is available to you. And if you ever have questions – you can feel free to call Gary Harms, Steve Palmer, or Brian Wessels.

Brian added that what we really want is to make sure we have enough cash coming in to cover our expenses. Jeremiah added that as of October we're expecting to be \$100k above. Neil Berns asked if there are capitalized items that offset larger expenditures. Gary noted that SOIA's biggest capitalized item is the building and we haven't spent much money on that. However, we will probably start seeing more money going to the building as it gets older. Chick Herbert asked about building maintenance and if there are any other expenses on the horizon? Gary answered that with the current allocation process, building expenses randomly show up places and that until this month we didn't have a utilities or insurance account, which should go in a Maintenance category. They've now created those and some others as well. He also noted that they did not go back to January 2015 to move around entries, but are going to do that going forward. He added that there will be some flux in 2016 that they're still working through but by the end of 2016, it should all be cleaned up. Brian Wessels added that these expenses always existed; they're just not sure where the money was put.

Gary Harms gave a heads up that they're looking at fixing the parking lot and we have a maintenance program through Baker Group (sometimes they donate and do it in-kind) for things like roof work. We're looking at records of when things were done, what maintenance is needed. Baker Group has not told us that we have any significant problems so we've been fortunate so far. However the parking lot has some chunks out – hoping it will be just a patch job. The building also needs to be resealed as preventative maintenance for the exterior and we're pricing that out right now. We haven't looked at the interior good yet but it appears to be in good shape and we can calendar any of those things.

Chick asked if the SOIA accreditation fee has gone up? Gary Harms said it does go up every year, but varies by program; for example IL pays about \$100k more than our fee. He added that we usually see that spread over 12 months, but we're working on paying bills as they're due.

Ted Oberlander added that this coming year Jeremiah will be working to be more accurate on expenses as they happen, spreading those out, and forecasting projected expenses.

A motion was made by Chick Herbert to approve the financials, Neil Berns seconded the motion, and it was approved by unanimous consent.

#### 2016 Proposed Budget\*

Steve Palmer asked staff to leave with the exception of John Arnold, Jamie Alt, and Jeremiah Johnson in order to review and approve the 2016 proposed budget.

Brian Wessels invited everyone to look at 2016 proposed budget handout. He noted the Finance Committee has been through this and felt ready to bring it to the full board. On the first page the numbers reflect revenue and expenses broken down by program,

development, and administrative departments (reference report for specific numbers). Note they're forecasting an increase of around \$57,903.88. The subsequent pages go into more detail and the summary tab shows a comparative budget for 2016 vs. where we're projected to come in for 2015.

Brian also noted that this year has been a stabilization year. You'll note for 2016 there is a little bit of increase in salary and wages because we have hired a lot of people in 2015, we're adding two part-time positions, and a couple of vehicles (operating leases, although hoping we could get some donated). Neil Berns asked about the vehicle expense and Jeremiah noted that we're budgeting \$34k for both. Gary Harms added that one would be assigned to the newest regional director, and we have a van in the fleet for general use with over 200k miles that needs to be replaced. Neil asked if the expense is too low to capitalize. Jeremiah stated that if we buy, it will be. If we lease, it won't. Brian Wessels added that he was feeling pretty confident about Steve Palmer's ability to persuade someone to donate. Steve added that they're getting ready to go out next week for Plane Pull sponsorships so he's planning to do an ask. Gary Harms added that we'll go to other dealerships as well, and if we could get three vehicles, that would be even better. They want to make sure our staff is safe because they're on the road a lot.

Brian stated that the committee asked if the money is there to meet the goals we've been talking about. Gary Harms feels confident that we are. It's a lean budget, creating accountabilities so we can keep a better handle on it and just because we're working on stabilization, that doesn't mean we can't grow. This budget is driving to program expansion – spending money we need to spend in order to drive more athlete opportunities; e.g. growing the gymnastics program and recruiting athletes to these. He would love to grow this program, adding that we don't need to be part of the trend of participation in this program going down. John Arnold added that this a good example of strategic growth.

Chick Herbert thanked the committee for the high-level summary. He added that we've always done a great job on the expense management side so he's never worried about that. Where we've gotten into trouble is when we overstate revenue and development. He asked if we were conservative in these areas? Brian stated that we're pretty conservative but there is a stretch in some of these.

Ted Oberlander added that in the finance meeting they discussed wanting to gain more corporate sponsorships and not to lose any. Gary agreed. He also stated that we've maintained our IDP agreement that we've been a part of for years, but we've backed out of the direct marketing campaign. He thinks we need to reengage in this and make sure we get the ROI on that. We'll want to keep our eye on that and it will probably be a couple of years before we know for sure and make sure it's a good spend for us.

Jill Southworth asked if we have errors and omissions insurance for the board? Gary said we have Directors and Officers insurance and Brian confirmed that we do have the appropriate insurance. Gary added that his team has been reviewing numbers as a management group and that they bumped up our umbrella insurance so we now have increased our coverage and decreased premiums.

The Finance committee will also be looking at our investment policy, as well as basic operational things that we need to do that have been neglected (part of internal stabilization). Jill Southworth commented that she appreciates the transparency. Gary

added that once the high-level financial summary template is done, he's proposing a Financial 101 on the reports so everyone understands them and it's transparent to everyone. They're also considering this for HR. He noted that they're also looking to add someone to the Finance committee (HR attorney) who specializes in this. Chick Herbert commented that he has an inquiry out for this.

Steve Palmer gave kudos to the finance committee and thanked them all for hard work.

Lana Voga motioned to approve the proposed 2016 budget, John Richardson seconded it, and the board unanimously approved.

## **7. Nominations/Elections of the Board**

Lana Voga passed out the ballots to the board. Steve Palmer asked if the vote can be taken with those board members present via conference call. Lana confirmed yes so Steve asked the board members who are on the phone to listen in, and send Jamie Alt their vote via text. Steve Palmer then ran through the names listed on the printed ballot and asked if there were any additions from the floor. Brian Wessels nominated Jill VanDerPol for Vice Chair. Ted Oberlander motioned to approve all nominations, Chick seconded and the board unanimously approved. Lana then reviewed the names of the board members up for re-election. The board then voted and turned in their ballots.

Jamie Alt, Lana Voga, and Jeremiah Johnson stepped out and tallied the votes. Lana then announced the results: Steve Palmer is elected Chair of the board; Jill Southworth, Vice-Chair; Brian Wessels, Treasurer; and Jon Richardson, Secretary. All other board members up for re-election – Debby Eldred, Steve Palmer, Joe Ramirez, Dr. Mary Stevens, and Brian Wessels were all re-elected to another three-year term. Charity Hodson was also re-elected as athlete board member for another term.

## **8. New Business**

Steve Palmer noted that we need attendance at all our board meetings to make quorum. The past couple of board meetings have been a struggle to make quorum (although he realizes that we changed a lot of the meeting dates towards the end of the year) so he asked if we need to change when we meet. He then opened it up for discussion.

Jeremiah Johnson suggested that if we keep it out of the first week of the month, we'll be able to get better financials. Lana Voga asked if we're choosing between a Tuesday or Wednesday. Steve noted that the day and time is up for discussion. Mary Stevens suggested Mondays and to make it a consistent week each month we have a meeting. Joanne stated that this is typically what boards do. Steve suggested the fourth Monday each month of the quarter. Joanne added Mondays are good. Steve asked if Mondays were okay with everyone else and requested a motion. Mary Stevens made a motion to approve moving our 2016 board meetings to Mondays, Chick seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved. Steve stated that this change will be reflected in the 2016 calendar dates and that the start time will remain the same.

## **9. Holiday Party**

Steve Palmer reminded the board that the SOIA holiday party will be Monday, December 7, from 5:00-9:00 at the Prairie Meadows Skinner Ballroom. He added that if you don't like the casino, that's fine – the ballroom is quite a ways away. There will be athletes in attendance and a program, food, Coke products, and a cash bar. Gary Harms added that they're putting together an invitation and those will be sent out soon.

Gary Harms added that on Thursday, Nov. 19 Granite City is hosting another fundraiser for SOIA where a percentage of sales goes to SOIA if you give the SOIA flyer to the server.

#### **10. Closed Session**

Neil Berns motioned to go into closed session and Mary Stevens seconded. The board went into closed session.

Lana Voga motioned to go out of closed session, Neil Berns seconded, the board unanimously approved.

Brian Wessels motioned to adjourn the November board meeting, Joe Ramirez seconded and the board approved by unanimous consent.

*\*Reference full reports located on the board website for topics marked with an asterisk.*