**2022 USATF Ozark Mid-Year Meeting Minutes**

The Mid-Year Meeting of the USATF Ozark Association was held virtually on March 8 on the ZOOM platform. Invitations were sent to all valid adult members. The meeting was chaired by Dave Searcy, President and Eileen Morris, Secretary was in attendance in addition to approximately 32 additional members.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M. and time was provided for members to review the 2021 Annual Meeting minutes which had been sent by attachment to email following the meeting invitation. A motion was made and approved to correct the formatting of the 2nd to last paragraph. The minutes were then approved as amended.

Bob Nichols, Treasurer, reported that our bank balance as of February 28 was $41013.92 which included General fund -$27791.70; Bid Fund - $500.00; Adult fund - $3988.44; Youth Fund - $3807.78; and Special Fund - $5958. A discussion followed over the use of the Special fund being primarily for promotion of Ozark members to participate in the Great Southwest and U-20 (formerly the Junior Outdoor Championships) meets. A discrepancy over the intention of the original donation and remaining portion of approximately $4700+ in the Special Fund. A recommendation was made to get something in writing. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Treasurer’s report as presented.

Eileen reported that the current membership total of 232 included 178 adults and 54 Youth. and Ginger Mulanax reported that there were 10 club memberships renewed and 8 pending. She also reported that 8 sanctions had been approved and that there was 1 pending. A motion to accept those reports was made, seconded and approved.

Bob Nichols, chair of the Race Walk Committee, reported that their Annual Meeting was held in January and a schedule for the year was made. It will include a “fun race” in April to be held in Chesterfield, 4 races in May, including an association championship, their Summer series in June and July of 6 races including a 1500m and 1600m race each serving as an association championship, 2 races during august at Tower Grove Park and the Fall series in October of 4 races one being the 5000m association championship.

Dave Searcy then presented Youth Committee information, reporting that the 3-step program will still be required for all coaches and adults having contact with youth. The Covid protocols have been altered to not require a negative test any longer nor would masks be required for athletes in competition and that there are frequent updates to the protocols. During the National Annual meeting a big push was on for increasing membership noting the Initiative for which we have not heard back regarding our grant proposal. He announced that the JO National Championship will be held the last week of July in Sacramento, the Youth Outdoor will not be in Jacksonville as first scheduled but at Icahn stadium in New York, and Region 9 will be held at Emporia State in Emporia, KS.

In the absence of the Masters chair, Carlos Ross reported Masters information from the USATF Annual meeting. He noted that the 2022 Indoor Championships were to be held in New York. Bids were taken for the 2023 Indoor and Louisville won the bid. The outdoor is being held in Lexington, KY. He noted that the World Masters Indoor was to be held in Finland and that the Travel Grant Program was available to assist athletes to participate. There is a possibility of a Masters regional meet in August of 2022 in St. Louis. Other Race Walk and Throwing events were mentioned and records made at those. 105 Masters records applications had been processed, 99 of which were approved, 1 rejected and 5 waiting for further action. It was recommended that he forward Masters event scheduling on to Connie Hayes, Masters chair.

Karen Searcy-Chism representing Ozark for Women’s T&F at the Annual Meeting reported the session focused on a review of the year. As there had been several championships cancelled and many Covid protocols required, difficulties were noted for the athletes. The Women’s Committee with Wallace Spearman and the AAC were focusing on putting the athlete first, noting that they must try to be athlete focused, coach driven and science based. The USATF team was considered to have handled the Covid protocols in Tokyo better than most. Journey to Gold was considered to have been a success. Future Journey to Gold events are: Eugene 2022, Paris 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028. International staff selections had been made for the teams for Indoor and Outdoor World championships, NACAC and World U-20’s. The transgender issue was discussed. The IOC put the decision back on NGB’s regarding participation. World athletics did not allow for certain events but did for others. The issue included discussion of the male puberty advantage and participation being looked at event by event.

Patricia Hanna reported on Men’s T&F primarily regarding “Development”. She explained that the “tier system” was in its 11th year but would be having some changes made, noting that the Development program has no standards but that the Talent Protection Program does. They would be looking at athletes in an ascending order and looking at an athlete’s age and standards, using scientific data available to determine if the athlete has time to improve. She reported that more money would be put toward coaching particularly elite coaches and bonuses awarded to elite coaches when their athletes win. She shared that Combined Events and all distance races would not be contested at the USATF outdoor this year but held separately at different places. This is due to the understanding that those athletes generally require 6 weeks for recovery before another big event and rescheduling these would allow them recovery time before the World Championships in Eugene. The Race Walk championship will be held in New York on April 24 but dates and facilities for the others had not been determined. She also informed us that Chula Vista has been sold, this was its stopgap year and in the future run by the City of Chula Vista. There would no longer be athlete residency provided.

Peggy Rowold reported for Men’s, Women’s, and Masters LDR. She announced that of local interest was that Emily Sisson, a graduate of Parkway Central won the 15 K USATF Championship. The Allen Steinfeld Award was presented to Ben Rosario and Matt Helbig (both of St. Louis) and Josh Cox for their significant contribution to enhance Men’s LDR. They created the 2020 Marathon Project which brought the top 50 men and women to compete on a flat and fast course in Chandler, AZ.

There was no Cross-Country report. However, a discussion of the appointment of a chair for the committee and that responsibility being with the Executive Committee. Brian Sheble expressed his interest in serving and verified he is three-stepped as well as described his previous involvement and reasons for his interest when asked by Ginger.

Shalini Kovach then informed us of events for the Mountain Ultra Trail athletes. She noted that since last year 2 new events were added, including a “Backyard Style Ultra” held recently at Queeny. This is the only “Backyard Ultra“ in the region but there are many nationally and even more internationally. The winner this year completed 109 miles and was last year’s winner as well. Last year they had coverage by Channel 5 and this year some segments on Channel 9 (PBS). There will be a 3-day, one of a kind “staged” event in late October where stage 1 is 20 miles, stage 2 a marathon, and stage 3 a 25 K. She reported that the Women’s Summit had been cancelled 2 years plans are to schedule it for early October this year. She is currently working with St. Louis County Parks to stage a 5K on New Year’s.

There was no report for Para Athletics. However, a discussion followed regarding the upcoming Gateway Games held by Disabled Athletes Sports Association (DASA) which will be held May 14 & 15. Eileen will send the information to all officials.

Dave called for a motion to accept all sports committee reports. A motion was made, seconded and approved.

Ed Rowold, Officials Committee chair first announced that we have a list of meets already looking for certified officials and we will be attempting to set up an officials’ meeting. Elections need to be held and we are searching for candidates for offices. Currently we have 27 fully certified officials with others pending. We need new recruits and need to increase the overall number of officials for Ozark. To assist associations, newer programs put together by National which are being promoted: the Young Officials program for 18- to 40-year-olds and for which there is also a Training Grant Program to assist those qualified to attend higher level meets for the experience and the newer Junior Officials Program aimed at those 14 through 17. The YOP program will require a number of mentors from our current fully certified officials. Eileen also pointed out that a Chair of that program would be needed. Tom Winkelmann expressed some interest in taking part in this. Ed suggested we could increase Ozark’s club number by one by resurrecting the Officials Club. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Officials’ report.

Under “New Business” Dave Searcy elaborated on the Membership Initiative “Grow to Impact” grant program recently announced by National. He confirmed that our grant proposal was submitted, and he received confirmation that it was received and being reviewed. A brief description of the $5000 annual grant was made by Ginger. She noted that our plan may need to be altered to comply with certain restrictions particularly regarding any membership discounts.

A discussion followed about the use of the $500 Marketing Kit provided by National and getting Executive Committee approval to go over the amount using general funds. We need to determine the items including whether our older tents are usable and other items needed to set up “information tent” at various meets and events. The order deadline is April 1. Bob will be checking into the order process and method of payment. Ginger made a motion that we use the $500 for items determined and for additional funds be approved if we go over. It was seconded and approved.

It was pointed out that our Bylaws need to be amended and National is mandating inclusion of wording regarding meetings and elections being held virtually as well as specific diversity clauses. Bob Nichols spoke of the proposals he has already made regarding treasury and Treasurer’s duties and of other changes he was aware needed to be made. Bob agreed to serve a committee as did Brian Sheble, Karen Searcy-Chism and Eileen Morris. A motion to approve the committee was made seconded and approved.

Dave then announced that the Ozark JO Championships will be held at McKendree on currently scheduled on June 18 & 19 but also have a schedule for a one-day meet. He was told that their athletes would be recruited to assist at the meet. He felt it would be best to attempt to put the Open and Masters’ events totally separate, perhaps on the second day when only finals are being done on the track and more time available for Open and Masters. It may be necessary to hold Open and Masters on a separate weekend because we don’t know the numbers. Dave asked that we try to assist McKendree with their collegiate meet on April 9 inconsideration for what they are doing to help Ozark. Dave then reminded us of our JO meet and that additional USATF sanctioned meets may be added on the developmental side.

The 2022 Ozark Annual Meeting was discussed whether in-person or virtual or even hybrid and the return to a Sunday afternoon. A concern of how to hold the elections. It was noted that the Secretary would be responsible for identifying eligible voters. The use of a camera in the event of a hybrid was also discussed. A member shared his experience at another organization’s meeting. The possible purchase of an “Owl” but its cost was considered expensive. A recommendation to contact local universities with online courses for some recommendations.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made seconded and was approved by all. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen D. Morris