

# USATOWA National Board Meeting

November 5, 2016

Oregon, WI

Meeting Minutes

## **Call to Order**

President Shelby Richardson called the meeting to order at 12:15pm. Present: Shelby Richardson, President; Joe Hunter, Vice President; Ginny Nyhus, Treasurer, Lisa Heindel, Secretary; Larry Heindel, International Representative; Harold Heindel, Chief Judge; Herb Warren, WI State Representative; Dave Kruse, IA State Representative; Bill Gallagher, MN State Representative; Joel Larson, USATOWA Member; Rick Peterson, USATOWA Member.

Absent: Rachel Biagioni, IL State Representative; Dick Richardson, International Delegate.

## **President's Report**

President Shelby Richardson was pleased with the amount of good publicity this past year (ESPN twice as well as other outlets). There are several prospects for new teams to be developed.

## **Secretary's Report**

Motion by Joel Larson to forgo the reading of the 2015 meeting minutes. Seconded by Bill Gallagher. Passed with no opposition.

## **Vice President's Report**

Vice President Joe Hunter has composed team and event summaries for 2014 thru 2016.

We have received one bid for Nationals from Colony Brands (pretty much the same as last year)

Discussed the need for more local advertisement of the event, the fair board does not do much.

Motion was made to accept by Larry Heindel, seconded by Lisa Heindel. Passed with no opposition.

Tentative 2017 schedule:

4 Indoor events in Peosta, IA

1/11/17

2/04/17

2/25/17

3/25/16

A change in location to Monroe was discussed but it was decided that for the events Peosta is the best choice.

We do have teams (Muddy River and Black Fabrication) who are interested in training. It was discussed that a gantry could be set up and mats made available in Monroe at one of the Colony warehouses after the Christmas rush is done. However, Peosta would be closer for the MN and IA teams, so there will be a gantry in both locations and we will be looking into more indoor mats so that there are sufficient mats at both locations.

#### 2017 Outdoor Events:

- 5/20/17 Elko, MN
- 5/28/17 Alma, MI Celtic Highland Games(non-sanctioned)
- 6/17/17 Greeley, IA
- 06/24/17 Oregon, WI
- 7/01/17 Embro, Canada – Canada Day Highland Games(non-sanctioned)
- 7/04/17 Stockton, IL(non-sanctioned)
- 7/22/17 Monroe, WI – Nationals
- 8/12/17 Kasson, MN
- 8/12/17 Tug Fest – IL & IA(non-sanctioned)
- 8/19/17 Irish Fest
- 8/20/17 Irish Fest
- 8/26/17 Stockton, IL
- 9/04/17 Brooklyn, WI(non-sanctioned)
- 9/16/17 Davenport, IA – Celtic Highland Games(non-sanctioned)

Conflict with the dates for Kasson, MN and Tug Fest in IL/IA. Since Kasson is a sanctioned event that should be a priority for the Association. Tug Fest is well established with the local teams and it is not our typical type of pulling since it is across the river best of (??) pulls. Would possibly be better to work with Muddy River to schedule a sanctioned event in the area and work on recruitment.

It was noted that where National's falls in the schedule of events sometimes affects the rest of the season after. Interest seems to wane after Nationals is over even with Irish Fest falling afterwards.

An Idea was introduced to consider fielding 6 person teams with weights adjusted accordingly. This would help increase competition and make the classes larger. Larger clubs (Black Fab, Muddy River) could field more teams and improve competitions (longer pulls).

Teams need to work on improving fitness and training to help improve their results when they go elsewhere for competitions, such as Worlds.

Weight classes for events were discussed and it was put forth by Bill Gallagher that it would be better to set and publish the weight classes to be pulled for upcoming events so that the teams know what is going to be pulled and there is no last minute scrambling on the day of the pull when the weight classes get changed.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Ginny Nyhus reported a checking balance of \$39,369.58, with outstanding checks totaling \$540.00 to Black Fab, they don't have a team account yet.

There were some income discrepancies: entry fees were much lower than expected and T-shirt sales were lower than what was expected. \$3,000.00 was moved from savings to cover.

Katie Campbell (Keenan's wife) works in marketing and has volunteered to work with Kathy on our products.

Judges Fund – not much spent this year, just the \$400.00 for Herb to go to Worlds. Balance this year should be around \$2,100.00.

Some teams have yet to pay into the Scholarship fund.

## **International Representative's Report**

Congress will be in S. Africa March 23 to 25, 2017.

Tech committee is working on new boot changes, possibly having workstations available if teams need to work on their boots. This was an issue at Worlds.

Judges age change: can no longer start being an international judge after the age of 55.

Proposals:

Weigh-ins by lottery – start at 7am, teams would know the night before what time to be at the scales.

\*New weight classes will start in 2018\*

Add a day to Worlds due to additional weight classes, would enable pulling to get done by 5:30 – 6:00pm. Possibly have classes available, meetings, training sessions for those pullers not on the rope during the day.

Evaluation for Sweden:

Water and toilets on one end of the field only, after the first day the toilets were nasty. There was no security – items were stolen.

TWIF elections:

President – Anton Rabe

Sr, VP – Dan McCarthy

Treasurer – Peter Dyer

Upcoming:

Europeans - September 21 thru 24, 2017 near Blackpool in Southport.

Indoor 2018 – China – need a Visa, some flights out of Chicago O’Hare around \$600.00.

### **Chief Judge’s Report**

Weigh-ins –

Practice and procedures: Start at set time, not earlier and there needs to be enough judges there to get it done correctly.

Judges committee:

Discussed getting a stamp for each weight class and ink pads.

### **Equipment Report**

We have 4 ropes plus 3 or 4 in the trailer.

USATOWA patches: 250 patches \$2.85 per

500 patches \$2.50 per

1000 patches \$1.65 per

Motion by Dave Kruse and seconded by Herb Warren to purchase 1000 patches. Passed with no opposition.

Indoor mats - investigate where to get and how much for the January meeting (36” wide, ¾” to 1 1/8” plywood)

### **Discussion of Exec/Disciplinary Committee**

A portion of the Exec/Disciplinary committee minutes were read regarding the Kasson issue:

What happened:

Judge Herb Warren noticed that certain pullers/teams were not shaking hands after the pulls as they exited the rope. Judge Warren approached the involved teams about the issue and was met with hostility and disrespect. The issue was brought to Harold Heindel, Chief Judge, who advised all judges to keep an eye out to see if it continued throughout the competition. Two teams threatened to leave the pulling competition that day (which would have ended things for everyone) but things were able to be smoothed out by the coaches and pulling continued. The offending puller (who cursed at Judge Warren) did apologize before the end of the day, but it was not a good situation to have happen. Some of the hostility was a left over from Nationals and the issue revolving around weigh ins.

Discussion:

The pullers should acknowledge each other at the end of the pulls. It doesn’t necessarily have to be a handshake, which is understandable because of pucky use. Fist bumps, high fives, elbow bumps, whatever as long as the teams are being good sports to each other and not sulking because of a loss.

Do we really want to put it in writing that a handshake is mandatory? Not really, that is not practical and should not be necessary.

Do we need to look into adding an Athlete's Code of Conduct to our books and bylaws? Herb will look into what is out there (IOC, World Games, Canadian Association) and bring the information back to the committee.

Unanimous agreement, ALL officials should be respected!

What should consequences be for the individual puller and/or team involved in something like this again?

Options discussed:

- 1) Expel the entire team for the rest of the day's competition
- 2) Expel just the offending puller for the rest of the day's competition
- 3) Expel the entire team for a determined number of future competitions
- 4) Expel just the offending puller for a determined number of future competitions

No decisions made, needs more consideration. Will be revisited at a later date.

President Shelby Richardson read what Herb Warren had put together as far as a code of conduct for the athletes.

Do we want to put the code of conduct in the rule book and add it to the membership form along with other rule changes? Everyone would have to sign and submit a new form then.

Motion by Ginny Nyhus and seconded by Joe Hunter - holding on a code of conduct document until everyone can review and/or submit changes or questions. Revisit at the January meeting. Passed with no opposition.

Social media use/abuse touched on – there are some members who post on social media things that are inappropriate and represent the Association in a bad light.

Motion by Ginny Nyhus and seconded by Herb Warren – in conjunction to on the field conduct, include off the field conduct in the code of conduct being considered. Passed with 2 opposed (Bill Gallagher and Dave Kruse).

TWIF/Mt Vernon 700 team at Worlds

Minutes read by President Shelby Richardson:

Discussion:

What occurred at the International Competition in Sweden: Mt. Vernon 700 k team pulled out of closed competition. This occurred after the draw had been done and messed up the pull for the group that they would have been pulling in as the draw at this time is not allowed to be redone if teams drop out. This is not the first time that Mt. Vernon has

done this, although, on the other occasion they were able to scrape together a replacement team to pull. They were not able to do so this time.

There should be consequences from the Association level as well as from TWIF for this occurrence. The issue was discussed in abstract with an outside source who recommended a fine for the team with the money being but towards the scholarship fund as a possible option. This was discussed by the committee and determined to be a fair idea. Motion was made by Harold Heindel and seconded by Lisa Heindel for a letter of reprimand and a fine of \$500.00 be given to the Mt. Vernon team. The money from the fine will be placed in the scholarship fund for future use.

Other ideas brought up to help prevent something like this again included:

- Allowing teams to only represent in one weight class

- Teams must provide a roster

- If there is an issue, closed classes be pulled over open classes.

During discussion it was determined that the board felt that there needed to be more than just a fine and the letter of reprimand. It was decided that Mt Vernon will have to submit a letter of apology for their actions in Sweden.

Other options discussed were limiting representation in future competitions. If a team drops one weight class, they would not be allowed to pull any weight classes.

### **Motion to adjourn**

Motion to adjourn made at 4:15pm by Ginny Nyhus, seconded by Dave Kruse, passed no opposition.