

**Middle Atlantic Swimming Strategic Planning**

**Talamore Country Club, Ardmore, PA**

**October 16, 2019**

**Mission**

**Middle Atlantic Swimming advocates the growth and development of a diverse swimming community through education, innovation and a commitment to excellence**

**Vision**

**Strong leaders. Innovative coaches. Fast swimming**

**Core Values**

**Summary:**  The Board of Directors and other leaders of Middle Atlantic Swimming met on Wednesday, October 16, 2019, at the Talamore Country Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania for a strategic planning session. This session updated a strategic plan that was implemented in 2014. The entire BOD of Middle Atlantic Swimming (9 members) was invited to participate; five Board members were in attendance. No athletes were present. The program presented by the LSC Governance consultant (Cherita Gentilucci) included a review of basic board strengths followed by the strategic planning session (approximately 9:30 am -2:30 pm)

Within the framework of the strategic planning session, attendees developed a list of common thoughts centered around identifying where the BOD should be focusing their efforts in the immediate future. Strengths and challenges plus opportunities and threats for the LSC were compiled and discussed through a strategy café exercise. Small group work focused on each of three areas that, not surprisingly, related directly to the identified areas of focus. The group has been through strategic planning exercises many times before and spent a bit of time developing broad ranging concepts that encompassed all three of their key areas. Each of the three groups were careful to tie their strategic concepts directly to the MA mission.

The group delved deeper into an area of perceived weakness – athlete engagement. Their focus was on developing a culture in which athletes are involved and engaged in leadership aspects of the LSC; this culture, if handled properly, will be self-sustaining. The group agreed that finding an adult to mentor and assist the athlete group was key.

The attendees took the face-to-face opportunity to discuss the administrative future of the organization. Longtime Administrative Director, Cherita Gentilucci, has announced that she will be retiring on December 1, 2020. The Board has this information and is proposing an outside consultant (Jessica Cooper) to facilitate the process of identifying the needs of the organization and finding candidates to fill those roles. This was shared with the attendees who were not aware of the Board’s direction.

Middle Atlantic is a group of very dedicated volunteers that has a strong sense of pride and loyalty to Middle Atlantic Swimming; they have the opportunity to be cutting edge in several key administrative and governance areas (staff, marketing/branding, a strong Governance Committee and athlete engagement). I challenged them to build on the things they learned during the planning today and start to implement items, particularly strategic discussion at the Board level. MA has been using a consent agenda for many years and they have the time in their monthly board meetings to focus on strategy. Their basic governance procedures and documents conform to leading practices; however, they understand they need to change the way they allocate their time during their BOD meetings, so that they can truly fulfill the strategic (versus managerial) role.

The two different hats I wore during this presentation (consultant and MA staff) were not a problem – transitions were seamless and understood by the group. I participated in the strategic discussion (mostly information, as appropriate from a staff member) and moderated the discussions as a consultant would normally do. There were no land mines; the discussions were pleasant (not acrimonious) and resulted in a good outcome for the organization. It will be interesting to watch the unfolding of the plan.

LIST OF ATENDEES

Jamie Platt Larry Schwarz l

Fred Killian Brian Elko

Matt Sprang Carlton Taylor

Casey Coble Doug Cornish

Kate Scheuer Patric Mills

John Carroll Peter Holcroft

Mike Gobrecht Amy Steeves (staff)

Amanda Pope Mike Seip (staff)

Crystal Keelan

Geoff Scheuer