

## 2022 Middle Atlantic Swimming Strategic Planning Executive Summary

The following are recommendations from Facilitator, Tom Avischious, based on the 1½ days of Strategic Planning held May 13-14, 2022, in Plymouth Meeting, PA.

**Recommendation:** Revisit the Mission and Vision statements.

- Need to spend at least one full board meeting discussing the mission and vision. There was much discussion on wording of the mission statement.
- In the survey, several clubs expressed that they thought the mission should include verbiage about Safe Sport and/or adding the word “Safe”.
- Can the LSC be performance oriented and provide a place for every swimmer?
- A number of participants also commented that most coaches talk about swimming building character but that word is absent from either the mission or vision.
- Once both are updated MASI needs to develop a communication plan for distribution. Some of the items suggested:
  - Branding
  - Read it-the announcer at meets
  - Social media
  - Marketing poster
  - Banner
  - A campaign with kids/swimmers maybe with video posts
  - Live it-“it needs to be the fabric of who we are”
  - What is our/your elevator speech about MASI?

Based on the voting exercise, four major items were identified as **strategic objectives** moving forward:

1. **Focus on Mental Health**
2. **Educational Resources**
3. **Lack of Pool Facilities**
4. **Small Club Lack of Involvement**

Some of the items discussed in the breakout groups are listed in the recommendations below.

### **Recommendations for Mental Health**

- Survey coaches to assess need for:
  - self-care support, and
  - assistance in dealing with athlete’s mental health
- Assuming a recognized need, establish programs to support the coaches
  - Seminars with sports-oriented mental health experts
  - Economic analysis of coaching compensation (within LSC and nationally) and finances
- Establish programs to support athlete mental health
  - Access to consultation with sports psychologist
  - Help coaches recognize athlete needs (listening skills)
- Tap into some of the resources from USA Swimming. This is currently a major emphasis for the organization.

### **Recommendations for Educational Resources**

This area grew out of the original discussion about developing coaches within the LSC to be much more encompassing to include resources for: athletes, officials/non-athletes, parents, clubs, and coaches.

- One of the board members is very good at analyzing and using data. Find out what type of specific information/topics the above listed groups would like to have available to create the

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resource. This could include an initial survey and also development of a “request system” if a team or coach has a particular topic they’d like to learn more about.

- Survey the LSC membership to develop a list of subject matter experts. For example, you may find that someone in the LSC is a tax expert, someone has connections to a mental health expert, someone works in local government and can give tips on dealing with municipalities. Might consider partnering on this with some adjoining LSCs. There is the adage of “you’re an expert if you live 100 miles away.”
- Schedule clinics online-have better visibility on what is going on
- Run clinics during meets-especially for parents.
  - “What is MASI?”
  - “Long-term development of your child”
  - “What are the different types of meets?”
  - “Why become an official?”

### Recommendations for Lack of Facilities

This is the age-old problem within MASI and frankly most of the Eastern Zone

- Have teams’ partner with their local county and/or visitors bureau to develop economic impact studies about the team and running of swim meets. Example was given that York county does this.
- MASI advocates to local towns/municipalities/counties to subsidize pools
- Search out experts within the field such as Counsilman-Hunsaker, Total Aquatic Programming, and/or local resources.
- Survey clubs within the LSC to determine baseline costs for facilities for both practices and running meets. This data can help develop a fair market value policy for advocacy efforts to keep rental costs reasonable.

### Recommendations for working with Small Clubs

This item is very similar to the Lack of Facilities in that it always seems to be an issue. It is obvious from the survey that smaller clubs do feel disconnected from MASI. And this is an issue that is pretty much true in virtually every LSC. The goal of MASI is that clubs of all sizes are important and that the LSC cannot ignore any of the clubs who want to be engaged.

- Develop an LSC Club Development Committee. The LSC has some good functioning committees, but not one that specifically focuses on clubs. Suggest having a broad mix on this committee: large clubs, small clubs, governance expert, and financial person. This committee will not only help small clubs but will help all clubs. Items for the committee to focus on include business operations, club governance, membership growth, communications, etc. One of the first items for the committee would be to categorize the different sizes of clubs in MASI.
- A concerted effort needs to be made to reach out to small clubs. Ask them “What do you need?” and “What would you like MASI to help you with?” I believe this would be best accomplished by having the MASI staff have a goal of each contacting two clubs per week (Amy, Mike and Jamie each make two calls/week). I would guess that some of the small clubs have no idea what they need so some thought needs to be put into developing a whole series of questions to ask them.
- Key point-some small clubs may not want to be bothered so MASI has to be okay with that.
- Have a quarterly or seasonal meeting with small clubs. If seasonal could be held before the House of Delegates. Could very well be one of the responsibilities of the new Club Development Committee.
  - Make it a Zoom meeting to make it easy to participate

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- Have a facilitator run the meeting-want to keep it positive and not turn into a gripe session.
- Have an agenda based on strategic plan and action items

### Additional Recommendations

- Evaluate board composition (i.e. YMCA representation, DEI, etc..) to see if it reflects the membership and needs of the LSC. Items to consider include governance experience, local LSC involvement, professional skill set and personal skill set.
- Committees and Committee chairs
  - With having a new MASI Executive Director determine whether the committee needs to exist. It may be time to sunset a committee(s) and move responsibilities to staff.
  - Develop written job descriptions that go beyond the basic descriptions listed in the bylaws for each committee and committee chair.
  - Once committee reviews have taken place, hold committees accountable to their task. If there is no set task a committee will look for something to do that is not usually within their area or turn into a gripe session.
  - When new committees are named have a formal education session of what the committee does, what they've been working on and who/whom they report to.
  - If not already done, have a staff liaison to key committees.
- Communication. This was mentioned many times as an area that needs improvement.
  - Some of the items above may help in this area. Just getting people together to spend some time working on the strategic plan was very helpful. People kept asking, "Why am I here?" or "Not sure why I was chosen?" But I feel as though by the end of the working session that there was good chemistry and bonding between everyone involved. Suggest scheduling a yearly planning session and/or workshop.
- Board-Staff Partnership:
  - The board needs to transition to a governance and oversight model whereby it is tackling big picture topics. The committees and staff do a lot of the "work" and report progress back to the board. The staff is to run the day-to-day operations of the LSC.
  - A better definition of roles and responsibilities needs to take place between the board and the executive director. This delineation needs to happen because currently it is a source of mild frustration as to who is doing what. A good place to start would be to list the current projects that the committees and board are undertaking and expectations of who is providing what information and timelines for completion. A next step would also include the executive director providing a list of current projects that the staff is working to the board and whether the projects are being led and implemented by staff or waiting on input from a committee and/or the board.
- Recognition Programs.
  - Safe Sport Recognized Club. Goal of 100% participation from every club.
  - Club Recognition Program. Many clubs, from the survey, are not aware of this program that is designed to be a pathway for better governed and higher performing clubs. Each of the four levels of the program is not easy to accomplish so it will take time for a club to reach the next level. Several LSCs have instituted monetary "awards" when a club reaches a new level.
  - LSC Recognition Programming.