



BOARD OF DIRECTORS ORIENTATION PACKET



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Dear New Board of Director Member:

On behalf of the current Illinois Swimming Board of Directors, and more importantly its membership - consisting of both athlete and non-athlete members, welcome and thank you for becoming an integral part of our organization. Your giving of your valuable time, talents and experience by serving on this Board is greatly appreciated.

Being a member of the Board of any business or non-profit organization can be an incredibly rewarding experience. However, being a member of any Board also comes with responsibilities. As a Board member you have a fiduciary duty to the organization that encompasses the duty of care, the duty of loyalty, and the duty of obedience. As a Board member you will also help forge the strategy, oversight, governance and policy matters of Illinois Swimming. However, it is very important to note that the authority and responsibility of the Board of Directors exists only as a body, and not for individual members. There may be times when you may be in disagreement in a particular decision made by the Board collectively - it is expected that you will move forward in support and recognition of the decision made by the Board and not segregate yourself from this action.

The Board is working as a team and the utmost priority is to fulfill and support the mission of Illinois Swimming for the benefit of its membership. Again, thank you for becoming a member of the Board - Welcome- I hope this turns out to be a very rewarding experience for you.

Respectfully,

Board of Directors - Illinois Swimming

ILLINOIS SWIMMING MISSION STATEMENT

Illinois Swimming's mission is to promote and achieve excellence in performance through education, innovation, service and committed leadership. Illinois Swimming is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all participants. To do so we have athlete protection policies and guidelines in place.

ILLINOIS SWIMMING VISION STATEMENT

To inspire excellence through innovation and leadership.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	NAME	TERM ENDS	VOICE	VOTE
General Chair	Todd Capen	2026 ¹	Y	Y
Admin Vice Chair	Jessica Bogie	2026 ¹	Y	Y
Senior Vice Chair	Kevin Zakrzewski	2026 ¹	Y	Y
Age Group Vice Chair	Michael Hamann	2025 ¹	Y	Y
Program Ops Vice Chair	Nick Parry	2025 ¹	Y	Y
Treasurer	Marc Tucci	2025*	Y	Y
Coaches Rep*	Chris Wolford	2026 ¹	Y	Y
	Mike Regan	2025 ¹		
Secretary	Amanda Schleede	2026 ¹	Y	Y
Operational Risk	Brennan Warren	2025 ¹	Y	Y
Safe Sport Committee Chair	Kate Chronic	2025 ¹	Y	Y
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Benjamin Pearthree	2026 ²	Y	Y
Senior Athlete Rep	Lindsay Forebaugh	2025	Y	Y
Senior Athlete Rep	Emma Overall	2025	Y	Y
Junior Athlete Rep	Brayden Capen	2026	Y	Y
Junior Athlete Rep	Karina Miller	2026	Y	Y
At Large Athlete Rep	Elyse Newlands	2025 ¹	Y	Y
At Large Athlete Rep	Aria Grossenbach	2026 ¹	Y	Y
COMMITTEE CHAIRS				
Officials Chair	Steve Fidanze	2025	Y	
Open Water Chair	Tom Rieman	2026 ²	Y	
Registration Membership	Pam Lowenthal		Y	
STAFF				
Program Director	Amie Adams		Y	
Administrative Director	Pam Lowenthal		Y	
Administrative Assistant	Debbie Duffy		Y	

Administrative Review Board – as of October, 2024

Jory Blauer (Chair)¹, Kim Mozdierz-Frank¹, Kate Williams (Athlete)¹

Governance Committee – as of October, 2024

Brian Brown, Kate Chronic², Brian McGuire², Matt Harder¹, Isabella Ramos (Athlete), Johnathan Feiro (Athlete)

1 - Completing first elected term

2 - Completing second elected term

x - Appointed to position

* - No Term Limit

Responsibilities of Board Members/ Committee Chairs

As a Board member you have made a commitment to attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The priority is for each Board member to be at these meetings via zoom. Members who cannot attend should notify the Secretary and General Chair 24 hours in advance of the meeting date. Members are required to prepare reports of their various Illinois Swimming Board responsibilities for discussion and action implementation if needed, for each meeting. These reports are to be submitted to the Illinois Swimming Secretary no later than the close of business on the Friday preceding the meeting date.

Board Members/Committee Chairs are required to attend the House of Delegates meeting(s) held by Illinois Swimming each fall. In addition to required attendance, members are expected to provide reports 15 days prior for inclusion in the Delegate information packet as well as be prepared to give an oral report.

Additionally, attendance is required at the USA-Swimming Annual Business Meeting. This meeting is traditionally held from Thursday-Saturday in late September at a location TBD.

It is the expectation that every Board member makes meaningful contributions to the organization. It is also understood Board members are volunteers giving time and carving out of your busy personal and professional lives. Board members who find themselves either temporarily or permanently unable to attend to meet Board expectations are encouraged to resign or take a defined leave of absence from the Board for at any time during their two-year terms. This benefits both the organization and the departing Board member more than continuing to sit on the Board, once it becomes a hardship to do so.

Board Members are required to comply with the Illinois Swimming Conflict of Interest Policy. See attached document.

This document must be signed and submitted annually to the Illinois Swimming Secretary.

Illinois Swimming Board Meetings

Board meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month in the evening and are held via Zoom.

Quorum - a majority of the Board of Directors shall consist of a majority of those members present and voting for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

Special Meetings - Special meetings of the Board may be called by the General Chair as deemed appropriate.

Agenda - a sample Board of Directors meeting agenda is included within this packet. Meeting Rules of Engagement/

Covenants:

- No Surprises - Communicate Issues before the meeting
- Limit use of communication devices during meetings
- What is said in closed session, stays in closed session
- One Voice! - Disagree in private, be united in public
- Be Prepared- Read posted reports
- Attack issues/ problems, not people
- Provide feedback
- Spirited Discussion is welcome
- Always consider Safe Sport!
- Listen without interrupting
- Attend the Meetings
- Stay on the Agenda
- Be willing to learn
- Limit sidebars

Other

Linked in this packet is the most current Amended Bylaws of Illinois Swimming. This section will give you a very detailed breakdown of the organization. Articles 605, 606 and 607 pertain to Board of Directors, Officers and Divisions/Committees in specific.

BOD CALENDAR

([CLICK HERE FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR'S CALENDAR](#))



VISION: To inspire excellence through innovation and leadership.

MISSION: To offer our members programs which promote swimming and achieve excellence through education, innovation and committed leadership.



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON ETHICAL BEHAVIOR AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Those who choose to serve Illinois Swimming whether as volunteers or paid professionals are held to a high standard of conduct. As guardians of Olympic ideals, we assume an obligation to subordinate individual interests to the interests of the Olympic Movement, USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming. What may be considered acceptable conduct in some businesses may be inappropriate in service to Illinois Swimming.

Those who serve Illinois Swimming must do so without personal gain, avoid any institutional loss or embarrassment, and behave in such a way that the organization's trust and public confidence are enhanced. It is important to avoid any real conflict of interest.

While no set of guidelines can guarantee acceptable behavior the principles that guide behavior in this area are disclosure non-participation in the decision-making process where personal or family gain is a possibility, and a commitment to honor the confidentiality of organizational information. All conduct is founded on the individual's own sense of integrity. Any individual accepting the honor of serving Illinois Swimming must accept the burdens of public disclosure and scrutiny.

In our complex society the intermix of volunteer service, business interests, governmental activity, and family relationships may create the possibility of conflicting interests. These potential conflicts require disclosure of conflicting interests when they arise and strict nonparticipation in any evaluation process relating to the matter in question.

The following guidelines are not a precise road map to acceptable conduct. They are signposts. Each individual must find his or her own way and travel with a clear conscience.

- The business of Illinois Swimming is to be conducted in observance of both the spirit and letter of applicable federal and state laws.
- Illinois Swimming properties, services, opportunities, authority and influence are not to be used for private benefit.
- All individuals who participate with Illinois Swimming will disclose the nature and extent of an actual or potential conflict of interest when it occurs in the evaluation of an issue and will avoid evaluating or voting on the matter involved. This includes the award of contracts, the purchase of goods and services, the award of contracts for professional services, and the allocation of Illinois Swimming resources for individual use.



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- Gifts, cash, travel, hotel accommodations, entertainment, or favors are neither to be given nor received, except those nominal value exchanged in the normal course of business. Gifts and favors of more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) value should not ordinarily be accepted.
- Expenses incurred in the furtherance of Illinois Swimming business are to be reasonable, necessary and (if twenty-five dollars or more) substantiated.
- All are expected to exhibit honesty, loyalty, candor and professional competence in their relationships with Illinois Swimming, USA Swimming and with each other.
- Each individual has the responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of the organization of both proprietary and sensitive information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING

I acknowledge receipt and understanding of Illinois Swimming's Statement of Principles on Ethical Behavior and Conflict of Interest and I pledge my full support of the spirit, and the letter of requirements contained therein.

USE [LINK](#) TO COMPLETE

Print Name

Signature

Date

☐ Chair (Board of Directors or Committee) _____
Position

☐ Athlete _____
Position

☐ Committee Member _____
Committee



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EXAMPLE CONSENT AGENDA

ILLINOIS SWIMMING, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday September xx, 20xx @ 7:30pm Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/97597150172?pwd=VXBxdGlpZEJnRG12Vzc4bjJIWUxQQQT09>

Meeting ID: 975 9715 0172

Passcode: 147295

Agenda

1. Roll Call and Quorum
2. Adoption of August 20xx Minutes
3. Current Business & Strategic Discussion
4. Consent Agenda

(This Consent Agenda groups the routine, informational and self-explanatory not- controversial items together for approval. All items on the Consent Agenda will be acted with one motion for an up or down vote after allowing anyone to request that a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention.)

- a. Reports of Officers
 - General Chair
 - Budget Committee
 - Personnel Committee
 - Administrative Vice Chair
 - Rules & Regulations Committee
 - Senior Vice Chair
 - Senior Committee
 - Age Group Vice Chair
 - Age Group Committee
 - Program Operations Vice Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Finance Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Coaches Representative
 - Coaches Committee
 - Athlete Representative



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- o Athletes Committee
- b. Reports of Non-Officers, Committee Chairs and Coordinators
 - Membership/Registration Coordinator
 - Officials Committee Chair
 - Safety Coordinator
 - Safe Sport Committee Chair
 - Diversity and Inclusion Chair
 - Open Water Chair
- c. Reports of Ex-Officio Members
- 5. Items from Consent Agenda Pulled for Discussion and/or Action Required
- 6. Old Business
- 7. New Business
 - a. Budget
- 8. Upcoming ISI Meeting Schedule
 - a. October xx, 20xx 7:30pm Zoom
- 9. Adjournment

PART SIX

**AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS OF
ILLINOIS SWIMMING, INC.**

(v.2025)

([CLICK HERE FOR THE MOST RECENT ILLINOIS SWIMMING BYLAWS](#))



Vision and Mission

What is a vision statement?

A vision statement reflects the impact of the organization in the years to come, ten to thirty years into the future.

Why have a vision statement?

The vision statement guides overall long-term thinking.

Does the vision statement need to be realistic or is it totally imaginary?

Although it describes a desired state, it should be a realistic reachable goal, however far in the future it lies. It is meant to be motivational and hopeful.

How and when is a vision statement created?

It is created through a group process and every board member must share the ideals and values. However, it is not necessary to revise it annually . . . the statement should be solid enough to weather short-term changes in the environment.

What do we do with our vision statement?

The vision statement should be on the website. It should also appear on key documents such as the board member handbook and the Policies and Procedures Manual.

What is a mission statement?

The Mission Statement describes the needs the organization was created to fill, explains why the organization exists, and what it hopes to achieve in the future.

Why have a mission statement?

The mission statement provides the basis for evaluating the success of the organization and its programs. Attention to mission helps leadership adhere to its primary purpose and helps during conflicts by serving as a touchstone for every decision. For example: does our programming and budget reflect our mission?

How to write a mission statement?

An effective mission statement is concise, to the point, realistic, forward- thinking, and positive. It describes success. 17 words or less is a general guideline. Creating or reviewing a mission statement is a group effort of the board and other stakeholders such as past officers, volunteers and members.

When should it be reviewed?

The mission statement should be reviewed annually. Final wording should be approved by the entire board. Potential new board members need to review the mission statement to verify understanding and compatibility with their own beliefs.

What do we do with our mission statement?

The mission statement should be referred to continuously. It should be present everywhere: on the website, all communications, and all official documents.



Individual Board Member Responsibilities

General Expectations	1. Know the LSC's mission, purposes, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths, and needs. 2. Suggest nominees for the leadership roles. 3. Serve in leadership positions or undertake special assignments. 4. Avoid prejudiced judgments. 5. Urge those with grievances to follow established policies and procedures through their supervisors. 6. Bring a sense of humor to the deliberations.
Meetings	1. Prepare for and participate in meetings, and other LSC activities. 2. Ask good questions while supporting the majority decision. 3. Maintain confidentiality of executive sessions. 4. Speak on behalf of the leadership when asked to do so 5. Suggest agenda items periodically for board and/or committee meetings to ensure that significant policy related matters are addressed.
Relationship with Staff	1. Counsel the CEO as appropriate and offer support. 2. Avoid asking for special favors of staff
Avoiding Conflict	1. Serve the LSC as a whole, rather than special interest groups. 2. Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest and disclose any possible conflicts in a timely fashion. 3. Maintain independence and objectivity. 4. Never accept or offer favors or gifts from or to anyone who does business with the LSC.
Fiduciary Responsibility	1. Exercise prudence in financial areas. 2. Faithfully read and understand the LSC's financial statements. 3. Help fulfill fiduciary responsibility.
Fundraising	1. Participate in organization fundraising efforts 2. Assist in implementing fund raising strategies through personal influence with others (corporations, foundations, individuals).

Taken from the "Club Leadership Development Notebook" a publication from *BoardSource*. For more information about *BoardSource* write to 1828 L Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036-5114. Telephone 877-892-6273. Email learningcenter@boardsource.org website: www.boardsource.org. Copyright 2000. Used with permission.



Board Annual Calendar

Develop an annual plan that assigns board tasks to the time of year when they need to happen. Spread other tasks throughout the year so they are not left until the last meeting.

Filing requirements: 990

The filing must take place by the fifteenth day of the fifth month after the fiscal year is over. For example, if the fiscal year ends on December 31, file the 990 by May 15. Make sure that every board member receives a copy of the form and is familiar with it.

USA Swimming reporting requirements

A copy of (1) the annual closing Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Expense and (2) the corresponding federal income tax return (Form 990) must be forwarded to USA Swimming headquarters within five (5) months after the close of the fiscal year for the LSC. The Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Expense must be audited or reviewed by an outside auditor or the LSC Finance Committee.

Employee payroll

A nonprofit must withhold employee income and Social Security taxes and pay them regularly according to a schedule set by the IRS. This schedule is different for different organizations. Board members and administrators must ensure that this happens. The IRS can impose heavy penalties for non-compliance.

Chief executive performance evaluation

Each year the board should evaluate the performance of the chief executive to make sure annual goals have been met and to set expectations for the coming year. Other paid staff should also be evaluated annually, usually by a personnel committee.

Annual audit

One of the best ways to ensure accountability and financial integrity is to have an annual independent audit. A practical time to arrange this is as soon as possible in the beginning of the calendar year if your fiscal year ends in December while allowing the staff to get the books ready and finish the accounting procedures. Set aside time for the board to study the report before its meeting and review it with the auditor.

Budget approval

Towards the end of the fiscal year review and approve the budget for the coming year.

Annual retreat

Most boards can benefit from an annual retreat to strengthen relationships and to focus on future challenges. Suitable topics include strategic planning, team building, or refreshing board members' understanding of their responsibilities. Board self-evaluation and a review of programs and services can also be included.



Board Annual Calendar

Contracts and licenses

The board should make sure that the staff checks the validity of all contracts, licenses, policies, and other legal agreements. New bids may have to be negotiated. Performance of fundraising, legal, or financial consultants must be assessed.

Investment policies

The board needs to review the organization's investment policies and determine whether they continue to follow the overall financial objectives and whether they are taking into account any major changes in the investment climate.

Bylaws and document review

Bylaws are a living document. Annually changes are made by the USA Swimming House of Delegates which must be reflected in LSC Bylaws. The board should also assess the status of other general policies and legal documents.

Reference to strategic plan

To verify that the board and staff are on the right track, it is useful to review the strategic plan on a regular basis.



Legal Duties of Nonprofit Boards

According to nonprofit corporation law, a board member should meet certain standards of conduct and attention to his or her responsibilities to the organization. Fundamental legal principles and complex tax laws govern the work of nonprofit boards and board members. The duties of the nonprofit board can be summed up in the “three D’s”: the duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience.

Duty of Care

Board members must exercise due care in all dealings with the organization and its interest. Directors should be reasonably informed about the organization’s activities, participate in collective decisions, and do so in good faith and with the care of an ordinary prudent person in similar circumstances. The duty of care is carried out by preparing for and attending meetings, reviewing financial documents and helping the organization to comply with regulations and laws.

Duty of Loyalty

The duty of loyalty requires board members to exercise their power in the interest of the organization and not in their own interest or interest of another entity, particularly one in which they have a formal relationship. When acting on behalf of the organization, board members must put the interests of the organization before their personal and professional interests. The duty of loyalty is carried out by adhering to conflict-of-interest policies, respecting confidentiality requirements and recusing oneself in situations of conflict of interest.

Duty of Obedience

The duty of obedience requires board members to be faithful to the organization’s mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization. Obedience to the organization’s central purposes must guide all decisions. The board must also ensure that the organization functions within the law, both the “law of the land” and its own bylaws and other policies. The duty of obedience is carried out by upholding the bylaws and policies of the organization, supporting the mission statement of the organization and seeing that correct informational returns such as Form 990 are filed.

Board members need to answer the following questions:

- ☐ What kind of oversight am I expected to provide?
- ☐ What does it mean to be a board member?
- ☐ When and how could I be found personally liable?
- ☐ How can I avoid damage to the board and the organization?



Fiduciary Responsibility

Fiduciary duty requires board members to stay objective, unselfish, responsible, honest, trustworthy, and efficient. Board members, as stewards of public trust, must always act for the good of the organization, rather than for the benefit of themselves. They need to exercise reasonable care in all decision making, without placing the organization under unnecessary risk.

Understand financial basics

1. Be a financial inquisitor.
2. Understand basic terminology, be able to read financial statements and judge their soundness
3. Recognize warning signs that might indicate a change in the overall health of the organization.
4. Ask questions and be willing to find out answers.

Set up and monitor key financial indicators.

1. Agree on general guidelines and standards to measure effectiveness
2. Implement appropriate policies to guide management and board decision-making.

Checks and balances

Control mechanisms are intended to prevent fraud by:

1. Ensuring clarity in job descriptions and responsibilities
2. Defining financial and accounting procedures (signing checks, handling of cash, approving expenses)
3. Outlining parameters for credit card usage
4. Managing potential conflicts of interest with a clear policy
5. Requesting regular external audits

Oversight

1. Verify that all filing requirements and tax obligations are completed.
2. Fill out Form 990 completely and file it on time.
3. Regularly withhold and pay employment taxes.
4. Document and justify executive compensation and financial transactions.

Budget Approval

The budget creates the framework for program management and overall administrative decisions.

1. Secure necessary funding
2. Examine financial statements regularly, compare actual figures to the projected ones, verify that the general guidelines stay on track.
3. Question any major variances.



10 Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

Basic Responsibility	How It's Carried Out
1. Determine the organization's mission and purpose.	Write mission as a group; review annually, post prominently
2. Select the chief executive	Job description; careful search, pre- employment screening
3. Support the chief executive and review his or her performance	Annual written review; frequent informal feedback
4. Plan for the future.	Annual retreat/planning sessions, written strategic plan
5. Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.	Tie programming to mission, frequent review of programs, add new as needed, evaluate/eliminate underperforming programs
6. Ensure adequate resources.	Examine fees as related to budget, fundraising as needed
7. Protect assets and provide financial oversight.	Written policies and procedures, audit procedures, budget approval process, invested reserves
8. Build competent leadership	Recruit and orient new members; rotate, term limits
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.	Follow legal and USA Swimming requirements, file necessary paperwork, follow written policies
10. Enhance the organization's public standing.	Be a public advocate for the organization, communicate clearly through various methods

Taken from the "Club Leadership Development Notebook" a publication from *BoardSource*. For more information about *BoardSource* write to 1828 L Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036-5114. Telephone 877-892-6273. Email learningcenter@boardsource.org website: www.boardsource.org. Copyright 2000. Used with permission.



Elements of a Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan

Mission & Purpose

Stats, Trends, Data

Needs of Current Programs

Need for New Programs

Athlete Development & Retention

Staffing

Board of Directors

Financial Projections

Fundraising Goals and Strategies

Public Education and PR



Productive Meetings

Efficiency and effectiveness are key objectives of a good board meeting. Listening to repetitive reports is not a constructive way of using limited meeting time.

Agenda

First, create an agenda that guides the meeting. It is the tool for the chair to help guide the discussion and a reminder for the members to stay focused.

- Make sure the agenda ties in with the strategic plan. Prioritize the agenda to focus on big issues.
- Indicate which items are for discussion versus simply informative.
- Identify action items and assignments.
- Start with the most important questions. Indicate time limits for agenda items.
- Make a habit of including time for board development: how to read financial statements, legal obligations. Frame a question for later communication or a themed meeting.
- Adopt a consent agenda to leave more time for constructive debate. (See handout.)

Before the meeting

- Without due preparation, your meetings may end up aimless get-togethers.
- Send the agenda and attachments to all board members at least two weeks before the meeting. Color code action items.
- Include all written reports describing past actions (last meeting minutes, committee reports).
- Assign maximum length to reports.
- Board members: Read the material sent to you. Come to the meeting prepared. Be ready to participate. Remember the duties of care, loyalty and obedience!

During the meeting

- Meetings need to be managed. Board members lose interest if they are not challenged. Make sure that the majority of time allotment is spent on future issues.
- Create a code of conduct for board meetings: No cacophony tolerated; no personal attacks.
- Change the layout of the room regularly to initiate interaction and contact between different board members. If you have a large board, take advantage of small group discussions.
- Use graphic displays, pictures, or slides as much as possible to keep participants engaged.



Productive Meetings

- Have several themed meetings during the year, focused on only one issue. Examples: liability issues, outreach, or volunteer recruitment.
- Bring in experts to add an outsider's view. Rely on staff for program information.
- Try to avoid overly structured and procedural meetings. Allow time for discussion and deliberation.
- Make sure more reserved members speak. Go around the table and ask each person for an opinion. Do not allow one person to dominate discussion.
- Integrate evaluation of the meeting. Use index cards for questions and comments, both before and after the meeting.

After the meeting

- Without diligent follow-up, meeting decisions easily fall into oblivion. Keep board members informed between the meetings.
- Consider a standard short executive session after each board meeting for review purposes and allowing the chair to make comments for the future.
- E-mail a list of assignments to each board member.
- Have the chair or another person call board members who did not attend the meeting.

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Productive Meetings

Consent Agendas

A consent agenda is a parliamentary tool that packages routine items together for board approval but not discussion. It enables the board to group routine items and resolutions under one umbrella. As the name implies, there is a general agreement on the procedure. Issues in this consent package do not need any discussion before a vote. Unless a board member requests a removal of an item ahead of time, the entire package is voted on at once without any additional explanations or comments. Because no questions or comments are allowed on the content, this procedure saves time.

What items should be included in a consent agenda?

- Routine, standard, non-controversial, and self-explanatory items are included.
Examples:
- Bylaw housekeeping revisions
- Financial reports
- Meeting dates
- Contracts under a specified amount
- Committee reports
- Previous board meeting minutes

How do we make a consent agenda function efficiently?

Information on the items to be included in a consent agenda is distributed to board members well ahead of the meeting. If a board member has a question, he or she can contact a referenced colleague to clarify a concern. If this is not helpful enough, during the meeting before a vote, any board member may request that an item from the consent agenda be removed and discussed separately. To keep the process intact and efficient, this is the only comment allowed concerning the contents of a consent agenda. To streamline the process even more, board members could be invited to contact the board chair prior to the meeting to request that an item be removed.

Approval of the consent agenda is the first item of business. Items approved as part of the consent agenda cannot be brought up for discussion later.

What precautions need attention?

The consent agenda avoids creating a permanent "rubber stamp" board by allowing any board member to have an item removed from the consent agenda if he/she thinks it warrants discussion. Of course, this requires that board members receive supporting materials well in advance of the meeting. The use of consent agendas needs to be well explained to all board members to ensure that everyone understands both the rationale

and the steps involved. The objective of a consent agenda is to save valuable discussion time for meaningful issues. When putting the agenda together, the board chair and the chief executive need to pay special attention to include only items that are suitable for mechanical processing. Board members need to be vigilant so that debatable issues do not accidentally pass through without appropriate deliberation.

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Productive Meetings

Commitment

As members we commit to each other that we will act in an honest manner with one another and that we will make decisions that are in the best interest of the members XXX Swimming. We will act according to the following core values:

Respect

- We will treat everyone with dignity, by being open to one another and by valuing one another. We accomplish this through:
- Honoring each other's time by arriving on time, by being prepared and by remaining present throughout the entire meeting.
- Speaking only when we have something new to add to the discussion and by refraining from side bar conversations.
- Listening respectfully to other people's opinions, thoughts and feelings, even if we disagree, both verbally and non-verbally (i.e., refraining from eye rolling, sighs and sarcasm).
- If we don't like an idea, we will not criticize the person.

Integrity

- We will embrace and practice a high standard of personal ethics. We demonstrate this through:
- Maintaining confidentiality on all Board matters.
- Standing behind the decisions of the Board no matter our personal opinions.
- Honoring the ideals and principles of USA Swimming and the XXX Swimming members who have served before us.

Communication

- We will create an environment that allows for and encourages an open and honest exchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings. We accomplish this through:
- Listening actively, openly, and objectively.
- Voicing our opinion in the meeting rather than later.
- Having everyone participate and no one dominating the conversation.
- No cell phone, texting, personal computer use, etc. We will stay in the now!
- Reacting constructively to what might be perceived as a negative comment.

Accountability

- We will be accountable to our members and use the power and responsibility entrusted to us in a wise manner. We demonstrate this through:
- Making decisions that are supported by data and input from key stakeholders.
- Staying strategic in our discussions.
- Being fiscally responsible.

Courage

- We will accept necessary changes and act on them, even when change is uncomfortable or unpopular. We accomplish this through:
- Focusing on what is right, not on who is right.
- Learning from the past, but not being tied to it.
- Caring enough to confront issues and ideas (not people) early and directly.

Source: Ruby Newell-Legner, CSP Email Ruby@7StarService.com



Productive Meetings

Stimulate Discussion and Debate

1. **Silent Starts:** Take 2 minutes at the beginning of the meeting for members to write (anonymously) the most important questions the board should address. Read aloud and tally to identify the most crucial issues. Prioritize the agenda.
2. **One Minute Memos:** At the conclusion of each discussion item, board members take a minute to write down what they would have said had there been more time. Collect for review by the chair so there is no doubt what is on members' minds.
3. **Counterpoints:** Randomly designate 2 board members to make the most powerful counter-arguments to initial board recommendations.
4. **Role plays:** Ask subsets of the board to assume the perspective of different constituent groups likely to be affected by the issue at hand. How would they frame the issue, define success and describe a worst-case scenario?
5. **Surveys:** At the beginning of a new year distribute an anonymous survey to board members that includes questions like: what should top our agenda next year? What are we overlooking? What is the most valuable step we can take to be more effective? What is the most worrisome issue we face? Analysis of the responses (not the loudest voice) drives subsequent discussion.
6. **Ask provocative questions:**
 - What is the most likely reason someone would want to join our board; what is the most likely reason someone would leave it?
 - What is our image in the LSC? Why?
 - What would you change in our LSC?
 - What unwritten rules make it difficult to get things done quickly, efficiently, or profitably?
 - If our board worked in a big glass fishbowl, what might we all do differently?



What Can LSCs Evaluate?

What are some of the things an LSC can evaluate?

1. **A clearly stated mission:**

How does our mission say who we are and what we do?

2. **Athlete growth and retention rates:**

What do the membership statistics tell us?

3. **Board and staff (if applicable) development:**

How do we educate our board and staff? Do we govern to fulfill our mission?

4. **Adequate resources:**

Do we have the money and human resources to achieve our goals?

5. **Adequate resource allocation:**

How do we spend our money?

6. **Volunteerism:**

How can we grow and educate our volunteer base?

7. **Athlete development and improvement:**

How does our LSC foster progressive long-term development?

Are our athletes progressing?