

May 13, 2025

**SUBJECT: Minutes of the US Chess Federation Executive Board Monthly Meeting,
Monday, May 12, 2025**

- 1) **Purpose.** This document captures the minutes of the Executive Board (EB) Meeting held on the subject date. This meeting was held in-person in Orlando on the day following SuperNationals VIII. All times listed are Eastern U.S.
- 2) **Call to Order and Roll Call.** President Kevin Pryor called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Secretary Mike Hoffpauir recorded the Open Sessions of the meeting and has provided a copy of each recording to the US Chess office.
 - a. President Pryor called the roll and the following board members responded:
 - a) Kevin Pryor (FL), President
 - b) John Fernandez (MO), Vice President (VP)
 - c) Chuck Unruh (OK), Vice President for Finance (VPF)
 - d) Mike Hoffpauir (VA), Secretary
 - e) Randy Bauer (IA), Member-at-Large
 - f) Leila D'Aquin (LA), Member-at-Large
 - g) David Hater (GA), Member-at-Large
 - h) Lakshmana (Vish) Viswanath (TX), Member-at-Large
 - i) Ranae Bartlett, Executive Director (ED)
 - b. President Pryor asked board members whether anyone has a new conflict of interest to disclose. There were none.
- 3) **Financial Update.** VPF Unruh opened his remarks by noting, “there were a lot of fireworks in April regarding the economy, but for US Chess it was a quiet month.” He noted that the bottom line shows that we are down \$53,000 for the month, with a lot of that attributed to unrealized capital gains and “you’re just going to have swings on the bottom line.” VPF Unruh’s view is that SuperNationals VIII (just completed on May 11) will play a big role in determining where we are at the end of the year. He noted that membership revenue and numbers are strong. Despite the economic uncertainties, membership revenues were up in April.

Our cost controls are still in effect, and we have a good handle on our general and administrative (G&A) costs. He reported that our actual losses to date are \$262,600, but this figure is better than the anticipated loss we presented to the Delegates in the budget last August. He noted that US Chess is \$479,000 in the green. VPF Unruh caveated his statement noting that SuperNationals VIII attendance was lower than expected, so we will have to see how that tournament impacts our overall bottom line. He concluded his report emphasizing, “for right now, this month, we are well ahead on our budget, but we have an actual loss.”

Member-at-large David Hater noted that he expects SuperNationals VIII to be a loss and that US Chess is likely to have a negative budget year overall. He also acknowledged we may end up ahead of the budget we briefed to the Delegates last August. ED Bartlett noted that the higher entry fees for SuperNationals VIII have helped mitigate losses. Further, she stated, “We hired Tournament Directors (TDs) in phases. So, when we saw that the registration numbers

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were not coming in like we expected we did not hire the third phase of TDs.” She also added that the Jan 1, 2025, increase in US Chess dues has helped. Her view is that the state of the economy had a negative impact on SuperNationals attendance.

ED Bartlett noted that our membership numbers were down slightly in April, down from about 116,000 to about 114,600 (-1.2%). She also shared that the number of US Chess Affiliates was down from 1,310 to 1,292 (-1.4%). This drop does not surprise her because memberships usually drop as we approach the start of summer.

Secretary Mike Hoffpauir and David Hater commented that US Chess needs to re-look the matter of not taking on-site entries, “because we are just turning away income. Organizers all around the country allow it.” David Hater emphasized that organizers across the country are seeing reduced tournament attendance.

Member-at-large Lakshmana (Vish) Viswanath mentioned an incident where a family paid their school administration to enter their two children in the tournament. The family then traveled to Orlando. However, the school failed to enter the two players before Registration closed. Vish felt that the players should have been allowed to play, and that blunt application of the entry deadline rule was not appropriate in a case like this.

ED Bartlett noted that US Chess is about to transition the tournament registration process to a new Registration Site. The new site will be used for the 2025 US Open. She said there were many complaints about Registration at the Scholastic Meeting during SuperNationals VIII. The new system, she felt, might facilitate late (onsite) registration.

- 4) The Executive Board went into Closed Session at 9:06 AM and reconvened in Open Session at 12:15 PM. There were two (2) motions emerging from the day’s Closed Session.
 - a) **Motion 25-047:** The Executive Board moves to permanently ban Tyrell Harriott (US Chess ID 12677159) from appearing at, attending, or participating in any events or activities organized, sanctioned, or to be rated by the US Chess Federation or any of its affiliates. **PASSED 8-0.**
 - b) **Motion 25-048:** The Executive Board moves to suspend the US Chess membership of Gregory Vaserstein (US Chess ID 12423653) for two (2) years and to suspend the tournament director certification of Mr. Vaserstein for ten (10) years, with both sanctions effective May 12, 2025. Mr. Vaserstein has thirty (30) days from receipt of this sanction to appeal to the US Chess Executive Board. **PASSED 7-0-1**, with EB Member Mike Hoffpauir abstaining.
- 5) With no further business to conduct, the Executive Board voted to adjourn at 12:20 PM.

Prepared by: Mike Hoffpauir, EB Secretary