

**US Chess  
Executive Board Meeting  
January 19-20, 2020  
Raleigh, North Carolina**

*This document is a summary of the proceedings of this meeting. It includes motions made, action items accepted, and subjects discussed. Details of discussions, etc., may be obtained from the audio files online.*

**OPEN SESSION 1  
Sunday, January 19**

Executive Board members present:

Allen Priest, President  
Chuck Unruh, VP of Finance  
Mike Hoffpauir, Member-at-Large  
Ryan Velez, Member-at-Large

Randy Bauer, Vice President  
Mike Nietman, Secretary  
Hal Sprechman, Member-at-Large  
Carol Meyer, Executive Director

Staff Guests:

Dan Lucas, Senior Director of Strategic Communication  
Boyd Reed, Director of Events  
Geoff Isaak, Director of Development  
Jennifer Shahade, Women's Programs Director

The Executive Board President called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. The Secretary called the roll. A quorum was established.

After thanking everyone for their hard work during a budget workshop the day before, the President turned the floor over to the Executive Director.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Development**

- The email component of the year-end giving campaign encountered technical problems that reduced the number of emails sent. The same problem should not arise in the future.
- The year-end physical mailing was successful in bringing in diverse contributions.

**Women's Program**

- The Women's Program has increased the number of opportunities for girls and women to play and to connect around chess.

**Using Chess as a Vehicle for International School Exchanges**

- Coordinating with FIDE Americas partners is still being developed.

- An opportunity to create an exchange with schools in Kenya has arisen.
- Another classroom match program is being explored with a UK-based charity.

### **Infrastructure Project**

- The Crossville office had a live demo of the work-to-date in mid-January.
- Phase 1 is expected to go live in mid-June.

## **SENIOR DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS' REPORT**

### **Partnering with USA Fencing**

- The possibility of exchanging demonstrations at one another's national events is being explored.
- Developing a combined competition, Chess-Fencing, similar to Chess-Boxing, is being discussed.

Board and staff members brought up concerns regarding space and safety that needed to be part of continuing consideration of any partnership with USA Fencing.

### **Tournament Documentary Series**

- A major streaming platform is interested in following a young person or people from home prep to playing in a national scholastic event.

### **Chess Life/Chess Review Digital Archive**

- The archive was released for free download in November.
- Thumb drives with the archives are now available for purchase through US Chess Sales.

### **The US Chess Website**

- Total users grew by 6% from 2018-2019.
- The majority of growth is from people reading CLO stories.

### **Capturing Organizational Stories**

- A company is being assessed as a partner in recording interviews with key members regarding their chess stories.

## **DIRECTOR OF EVENTS' REPORT**

### **K-12**

- Attendance was consistent with prior years.
- The site had made some improvements but there were also some issues.
- T-shirt revenue was down from previous years though the booth was well-placed.
- First event to transition individual awards from trophies to medals, which garnered both positive and negative feedback. The financial and practical reasons for the transition were reviewed. Issues that created confusion and problems with the rollout have been addressed.

### **Spring Nationals**

- Most leadership positions are filled.
- There will be a Chess in Education workshop at the Elementary.

### **Future National Events**

- Contracted and potential venues for a variety of future events were discussed, as well as financial and logistical reasons for not scheduling any additional future events at this time.

### **International Events**

- The Scholastic Invitational Requirements were published with the help of the Scholastic Council and with the approval of the Board.
- No new FIDE titles have been awarded since November.
- The Pan-am Intercollegiate will be held in Toronto this year in December.

### **DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S PROGRAMS' REPORT**

- Sources of funding are being expanded.
- It was emphasized that programming for adult and senior women is also being supported in addition to programs for girls.
- The Women's Program created a grant model in 2019 that can be used going forward for other granting programs at US Chess.
- Grants are being provided to top players to help with the expense of equipment, training, and coaching.
- The Women's Program is partnering with Chess.com to create Twitch matches for fundraising and publicity.

### **DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**

- An IRA required minimum contribution postcard was sent out in fall of 2019.
- A Giving Tuesday fundraiser was sent out.
- A year-end appeal was sent out that was more targeted than the random sample of 2018.
- Contributions are coming in of all sizes.
- With the Case for Support and the Planned Giving booklet completed in 2019, more time will be spent on donor visits in 2020.

### ***OPEN SESSION 2***

The board came out of a closed session to hear the proposal of guest Walter High, VP of North Carolina Chess Association.

The Executive Director introduced Walter High as a regular participant in the US Open and as the organizer of the US Masters for nine years. He has come before the board to propose a companion event to the US Masters tournament.

Mr. High introduced the idea of holding an individual collegiate championship in conjunction with the US Masters since at present, there is only a collegiate team event. He noted that many collegiate players have participated in the US Masters and he presented the board with a handwritten letter in which the coaches of the teams that play in the Pan-Am Intercollegiate endorsed the idea of including an individual championship title as part of the US Masters. He appealed for the approval of the Board for such an event so that it could be given the title of a “National” championship.

The board raised the following questions:

- How general pairings in the US Masters could legitimately result in a title of collegiate champion since those pairings would not be limited by the classification of collegian?
- What standards determine a person’s status as a collegian and would that status apply to all rating levels, for example is enrollment in one summer online course as legitimate as someone enrolled full time?
- The pricing structure of the Masters was also brought up as an obstacle to US Chess endorsement, but it was determined that non-US players according to FIDE could be eliminated from eligibility for the title.
- The Director of Events brought up that if the event provided a “National” title, the event would have to adhere to event bidding guidelines and could be de-coupled from the US Masters as a result.

It was decided to send Mr. High’s proposal along with the Board’s thoughts to the College Chess Committee for consideration.

The Board thanked Mr. High for bringing the proposal before it and returned to closed session.

### ***OPEN SESSION 3***

No motions came out of closed session. The President turned the floor over to the Executive Director to report on the status of Referred Motions.

### **REFERRED MOTIONS**

The Executive Director reported that all five motions referred to the Executive Board have been dealt with in previous Board meetings; thus, there is no open business regarding Referred Motions.

The President noted that though the Board had deemed a Referred Motions that proposed a free affiliate membership as untenable as presented, that the Board has continued to consider the spirit of that motion how it might address some of the issues raised by it.

### **VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE’S REPORT**

- Embracing the 501(c)3 mission has resulted in a 600% increase in sponsorships and donations, as well as bolstering the bottom line.

- Membership revenue is up from December to December.
- December dividend income came in at a record high.
- The President noted that some adjustments to how year-to-year budget comparison numbers are generated is under review and will be changing to reflect the lumpy nature of the US Chess business cycle.
- The accounting data has been completely migrated from Sage to Quickbooks Online.
- Changes to the budget structure are underway to more accurately reflect US Chess's mission activities.

The meeting adjourned until the following morning.

***OPEN SESSION 1***  
***Monday, January 20***

The President opened by acknowledging the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday and then turned the floor over to Director Nietman to introduce the next item on the agenda.

**ULTIMATE DENKER TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS**

- Twenty-five past champions responded to an initial survey regarding their interest in a tournament composed of past Denker winners.
- Board members questioned why we would commit to this tournament and not others equally deserving of time and support. In response to this, it was pointed out that this is a one-time event.
- Of those who responded to the interest survey, board members questioned how many would actually participate.
- There was some opposition to US Chess contributing to the prize fund for the event; however, there was no objection to US Chess providing the space and administration for the event.

**MATCH RULES**

- The President pointed out that recent ethics cases have highlighted the need to adjust the Match Rules because current loopholes create openings for ratings manipulation.
- It was suggested that limiting the number of matches a player can participate in within a given period would help alleviate the problems that had been coming up.
- The problem of enforcement of any limit was discussed, as well as the expectation that automated flagging may become available with the new IT upgrade.
- The Board decided to refer the problem to the Rules and TDC Committees for consideration.

The Secretary then read the motion regarding the previously discussed Ultimate Denker Tournament of Champions into the record and the Board voted on it.

**EB20-044 – Board** – The Executive Board endorses the idea of an Ultimate Denker Tournament of Champions event at the 2020 US Open. US Chess' contribution to the event will be to provide the infrastructure to host the event and to provide a 50% discount for the entry fee to the US

Open's four- or six-day schedule. (Note that grandmasters still have a complimentary US Open entry fee.) **PASSED 7-0**

The meeting was then recessed for the Board to attend a demonstration of the progress of the IT infrastructure project, followed by a closed session.

## ***OPEN SESSION 2***

The President opened the meeting by noting that during closed session the Board considered changes to the Endowment Fund document recommended by US Chess attorney. During the IT demonstration both staff and the company providing the new system indicated that some items previously slotted as phase II of the project are better moved into phase I.

The Secretary read the motions for voting.

**EB20-045 – Board** – We have a recommendation to move certain items from phase II of the IT project to phase I. The reason is for the overall efficiency of the project. To pay for the additional work in phase I we approve an increase in the phase I contract limit to include an additional 900 consulting hours. **PASSED 7-0**

**EB20-046 – Board** – The Executive Board moves to appoint Robert Messenger (NH, 12418118) as Co-Chair of the States & Affiliates Committee. **PASSED 7-0**

**EB20-047 – Board** – The Executive Board moves to de-certify the eNotate electronic notation device (END). **PASSED 7-0**

The two problems that led to the de-certification of the eNotate device are that it can be started in a non-native mode and the passing of the inventor of the device has resulted in no further technical support for it.

**EB20-048 – Board** – The Executive Board moves to adopt the US Chess Endowment Fund Trust Declaration. **PASSED 7-0**

The above declaration creates a smaller group of people to ensure that the funds are managed responsibly and only for the purposes intended. The following motion abides by the document's requirement of six trustees, each to serve six-year terms and appointed by the Executive Board. To provide for future stability amidst change, the first set of trustees will have three trustees appointed for the full six-year terms ending in August 2026 and three appointed for three year terms ending in August 2023.

**EB20-049 – Board** – The Executive Board moves to name Allen Priest, Chuck D. Unruh and Mike Hoffpaur as 6 year trustees and Carol Meyer, Mike Nietman and Peter Dyson as 3 year trustees to the US Chess Endowment Fund Trust. **PASSED 7-0**

The Board went into closed session to consider appeals cases.

### ***OPEN SESSION 3***

Due to travel arrangements, Vice President Randy Bauer was not able to attend this session. The following motions regarding appeals considered during closed session were read by the Secretary.

**EB20-050 – Board** – Based on the appeal of Mr. Potula in the complaint Reed, Hater and Rogers v. Meruga, Potula, and Piper, et al, the Executive Board reduces the sanction of Mr. Potula to a censure.

In addition, the Executive Board modifies the Ethics Committee's decision to

- Treat Mr. Alan Piper's first match as a request to reduce his floor by 100 points;
- Rerate subsequent events using the reduced floor
- If in the course of the rerate, Mr. Piper reaches the new floor, his floor will be reduced another 100 points
- If as a result of the rerate, the affected players do not achieve ratings commensurate with titles or ratings list placement, they will be dropped from those recognitions.

**PASSED 4-0** with Randy Bauer, Ryan Velez and Chuck Unruh not voting

**EB20-051 – Board** – The Executive Board considered the appeal by Salim Fredericksen of the Rules Committee decision letter dated November 21, 2019. As stated in the decision letter, the TD Tip at the beginning of rule 10 is quite clear in the warning to tournament directors that, in the absence of an independent witness of the violation, the director should strongly consider rejecting the claim. Accordingly since Mr. Fredericksen stated in his own complaint that there were no independent witnesses to the alleged violation, the Executive Board upholds the decision of the Rules Committee. **PASSED 6-0** with Randy Bauer absent and not voting

The next Executive Board meeting will be in Dallas, Texas, from Saturday May 16 to Sunday May 17, 2020.

Meeting adjourned.