



ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue

503 Sophia St. Suite 100 | Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

Phone: (540) 907-4460 | [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)

## American Canoe Association Board of Directors

### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021

**Location:** Virtual

Board Members Present: Robin Pope, Scott Mann, John Traendly, C.C. Williams, Thom Crocket, Sarah Bahn, Adam Joseph, Rainey Hoffman, Bill Micks, Lili Colby

ACA Staff: Beth Spillman

#### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Pope called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM EDT.

Mr. Williams called roll and noted that a quorum was present.

#### 2. Board President Report: Robin Pope

Mr. Pope reported that the Centers for Disease Control has allocated \$2 million for drowning prevention. A letter in support for this funding was sent to Directors a few weeks ago. Unanimous approval was given by Directors for the ACA to sign on in support of this funding.

Scouts USA is currently working on developing a more robust water safety program. They are very interested in having ACA Instructors assist in rolling this program out and would like to encourage current Scouts USA leaders to become certified as ACA Instructors so they may assist with this program.

#### 3. Executive Director Report: Beth Spilman

Ms. Spilman provided a brief overview of the organization's current financial position. At present we have \$800,000 cash on hand. These funds are a combination of restricted and unrestricted funds. Mr. Pope expressed his sincere thanks to Ms. Spilman for her leadership and successful financial management. Mr. Pope also noted that our current financial position, with the amount of cash on hand reported, is vastly improved from the current financial state of the organization only a few years ago. Ms. Spilman noted that continued discussion is needed to decide the best course of action in determining appropriate amounts of designated reserve funding.



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A Communications staff position is being finalized. The person in this new position will be focused on website development/updates, community outreach, and marketing.

Ms. Spilman reported that the USOPC has approved two waivers requested by the ACA. The first waiver expands the definition of 10+ year athletes which significantly increases the number of athletes that would qualify as athlete representatives and significantly increases the number of athletes eligible to vote for those athlete representatives. The second waiver will remove the requirement of athlete representation on the SEIC and all discipline committees. Ms. Spilman also reported that the USOPC has reiterated their support, several times, for the ACA to remain the NGB for paddlesports.

In closing, Ms. Spilman provided an overview on the two recent member information sessions that were held to educate members on the upcoming NGB decision and hear their opinions on the issue. A total of 45 people attended the two sessions.

#### **4. Report on Director Opinions Regarding NGB Decision: Robin Pope**

Mr. Pope reported that the current Director poll on the NGB issue was 6 to remain NGB and 4 to relinquish NGB status. Directors discussed and agreed on the importance of taking and announcing a final vote on a recommendation on the NGB issue. *(Update 11/1/21 - In the days after this meeting the votes for this poll of Directors opinions was changed to 10 to remain NGB and 2 to relinquish NGB status. Changes to the Directors opinions were reported to be due to the approval of the requested waivers from the USOPC.)*

#### **5. Nominations Committee Report: Thom Crockett**

Mr. Crockett presented the slate of nominees for the Board of Directors from the Nominating Committee. The nominating committee included representatives from Paddle American Clubs, Athlete Representatives, State Directors, Instructors, and individuals from the ACA DEI Committee. Additionally, the committee members had geographic diversity in that they were from states in all the major regions of the country.

Mr. Crockett reported that the committee received a record 19 applications of highly qualified individuals interested in serving on the Board. Each candidate was asked to submit answers to a questionnaire and a current resume. These documents were reviewed and scored on the previously agreed upon rubric, independently by each member of the Nominating Committee. Those candidates with the highest scores were selected to be on the slate that was presented. Mr. Crockett then provided a brief synopsis of the background and qualifications of each candidate on the slate.

Mr. Pope requested a friendly amendment that Risa Shimoda be added to the slate as an At-Large Director. Mr. Crockett accepted this amendment.



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The motion to approve the slate from the Nominations Committee of ACA Directors, with a friendly amendment to add Risa Shimoda as nominee for Independent Director, was passed unanimously.

Ms. Spilman requested that the Board work to find ways to further involve those members that applied to Directors but were not selected to be on the slate from the Nominations Committee. She received strong support from all Directors.

### 6. Discussion on ACA Member Meeting: Robin Pope

Mr. Pope opened the discussion with a proposal for dates for the ACA BOD December meeting and 2021 member meeting. The group agreed that the ACA BOD meeting would be on Saturday, December 4th from noon until 6 PM ET. The group also agreed on a date for the ACA member meeting - December 5th from noon until 2 PM ET. Directors will have the open to reconvene for an additional meeting after the member meeting on December 5th.

There was a brief conversation about the voting mechanism and process for the new bylaws that would be voted on by the membership. Directors plan to follow the same process the ACA has used in years past to make bylaws changes and elect Directors. Members will be allowed to cast their vote virtually or in person. Any votes that are “cast” digitally will be formally cast by proxy by the Board Secretary at the ACA membership meeting in December. ACA members may vote either digitally or in-person at the meeting. Voter roles will be compared to ensure that no members voted via both options.

Several directors raised concerns with the SEIC website and email that went out to the instructor cadre about the decision to relinquish or retain NGB status. A heated exchange followed. The conversation included discussion about the role of all Directors in maintaining good governance for the entire ACA as opposed to advocating for decisions for the sole benefit of a single ACA constituency. The majority of Directors asked the following from Mr. Traendly:

- Refrain from discussing the NGB decision at the upcoming SEIC meeting and instead point all SEIC members to the recording of the NGB member information sessions from October 2021. If the NGB issue is going to be discussed at the SEIC meeting, Directors requested that at least one other Director be present to ensure that all viewpoints are represented.
- Update the SEIC NGB website to include a statement that the information presented in the website is not the “official position of the ACA.”
- Remove the logo on the SEIC NGB website as it looks very similar to the ACA logo.
- Refrain from emailing the instructor cadre about the NGB decision again without prior approval and discussion with the ACA Board of Directors.
- When acting in an official capacity as SEIC Chair and a Directors, present balanced information to all ACA members regarding the NGB decision that does not advocate for one position or the other. This information should reflect current information shared with and agreed upon by the Board of Directors.



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Mr. Traendly agreed to refrain from emailing the instructor cadre without prior discussion with the Board of Directors, but did not agree to the other requests.

Mr. Pope requested that all Directors review the three versions of the ACA bylaws that have been presented and provide comment before our next meeting. A special meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November, 3 at 8 PM ET.

**Mr. Mann moved, and Ms. Colby seconded the motion, to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM ET**

Respectfully submitted,

C.C. Williams  
Board Secretary