



**ACA Board Meeting**  
**[Video Conference]**

**Wednesday, December 11, 2024**  
**[Draft]**

David Lumian began the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The agenda formed the general format for the minutes.

**Attendance.** Attendance was taken from the video logins. **BOD Present:** Hunter Branstetter, Suzanne Britt, Beverly Cosslett, Zach (Bud) Lokken, Kenny Kasperbauer, Robert Kauffman, Anna Levesque, Dave Lumian, Risa Shimoda, Andrea White.

**BOD Not Present:** Thom Crockett, Jack Wallace

**Staff Present:** Beth Spilman

**Other Attendees:**

**WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Beverly opened the meeting a 7:00 p.m. on December 11, 2024. Dave joined shortly thereafter from a previous commitment.

A motion was made and seconded to approve as amended the November 19, 2024 minutes. It was seconded, and the motion passed. The amendments included a guest in attendance and an added statement regarding the vote on budget. (Secretary's Note: *The changes were made, and the minutes were submitted.*)

**2025 BOD MEETINGS**

There was a discussion regarding the January 14<sup>th</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and whether the February meeting should be in person. Locations for the February meeting included Fredericksburg, Charlotte, or a location near an airport. The location will be TBD.

**ED 2025 PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

Anna presented the subcommittee's seven recommended performance objectives for 2025. There was some discussion, modification of several objectives, and two new objectives were added. Although there was no formal decision made, there was a discussion regarding the inclusion of

the summary of comments compiled by Robert in Beth's personnel file (see Appendix A). A motion was made to approve the performance objectives as modified. It was seconded and the motion passed.

**MOTION: Moved to approve the executive director's performance objectives as modified.** [Disposition: motion passed unanimously]

### **Performance Objectives for ACA ED 2025**

1. Fully implement Sport 80 including seamless integration with CMS and QuickBooks by April 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Document and gain BOD agreement of staff vs. council roles and responsibilities by January 2025. This document will specify point staff or each council.
3. Support SEIC's plan to implement the Creature Learning Leader Pathways project by June 2025.
4. Continue strong fiscal management with financial quarterly reports to the BOD.
5. Month over month 5% membership revenue growth by the end of the calendar year of 2025.
6. Hire a Chief Operating Officer (begin January 15<sup>th</sup>, end April 30, 2025)
7. Complete a survey of the membership to measure satisfaction and perceived benefits of membership by March 1<sup>st</sup>.
8. Enhance and define staff support of all three National Councils, including ED attendance at at least two (2) meetings per year per council.
9. Maintain membership numbers through Sport 80 implementation and grow current membership numbers in the last six months of the year by 5% (reach goal).

### **COO HIRING PROCESS**

Robert outlines the process previously developed for the COO position (see Appendix B). There were some questions regarding representation on the committee concerning those from the councils and potential new board members. The previously discussed hiring/search process was not formally accepted at this meeting. After a serpentine discussion, the following motion was made in order to move the process forward. It was seconded, and passed.

**MOTION: Motion to initiate the COO search process as documented and authorize Beth to post the position and begin accepting applications.** [Disposition: motion passed unanimously]

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert B. Kauffman  
Secretary

### **An Analysis of the BOD Feedback Provided On a Review of the Executive Director's Self-Statement**

by

Robert B. Kauffman, Secretary

The following is a qualitative analysis of the feedback provided by board members on the executive director's, Beth's, self-statement. On one level, the purpose of this analysis is to draw similarities in board members' feedback. It loosely follows Beth's categories. On the second level, the analysis seeks to determine underlying trends in the analysis. The following address the former purpose and the findings address the second purpose.

Procedurally, there were seven board member responses on the feedback item. This is a small sample. Some comments made elsewhere may be applicable but weren't analyzed. The points made here follow loosely Beth's self-statement.

**Overall.** There was general satisfaction with what Beth has done or with her self-statement. Typical overall positive comments included the following.

- *"She is also filling her role as a CEO well,...."*
- *"I agree with a great deal of Beth's review."*
- *"The evaluation seems accurate."*
- *"It was a good introspective reflection that pointed out good things she has done and areas that she needs to work upon."*

**USOPC Related Items.** Most of the feedback agreed with Beth's assessment involving our relationship with the USOPC, compliance issues and meeting Safesport requirements. In this area she has done an exemplary job.

- *"Overall, her self-statement notes her accomplishments with the USOPC, which is a good thing."*
- *"Beth has obviously focused heavily on her financial responsibilities, meeting compliance requirements for both the USOPC and not-for-profit status, her relationship with USOPC and the ICF, and meeting safesport requirements."*
- *"The ED does a great job with fiscal management and USPOC/ICF relations."* It is interesting to note that there were a dearth of negative or deficiency responses regarding USOPC involvement.

**Financial Items.** As is obvious in the previous section, several of the comments merged Beth's financial competency with that of the USOPC. In feedback not involving USOPC financial related items, Beth generally received positive feedback. Complementing the previous positive financial comments, one additional comment noted that:

- *"As we have agreed, she has done a marvelous job tending to our finances. However,...."* The "however" goes on to list some specific areas that need improvement.

Amongst the generally positive comments, there was specific financially related issue. There seems to be an issue in communicating financial information with the board.

- *“However, she could do a lot better managing and focusing on providing the board treasurer, finance committee, and committees reports or responses to requests that have been difficult to secure.”*
- Another board member complained that *“...promising income statement to freestyle and never delivering (Emma and Beth), getting any financial information out of Emma ever.”*

**Ignoring the Three Councils.** An underlying theme in the feedback is that as much as Beth has performed well with USOPC related items, she has ignored the three councils. The following are several comments which support this theme.

- *“What is really missing are performance objectives for the Councils other than the one for SEIC.”*
- *“Where I think there is a disconnect is with the other portions of the organization, relationships with the councils, finding ways to incorporate feedback from the councils or members, clear communication to both the board and to members, the importance of developing relationships with other paddlesport groups and other advocacy groups.”*
- Whether real or perceived, the three councils feel left out or not important. *“The ED needs to be an ED for the entire organization, not just Olympic disciplines, ICF and USPOC. It is telling that one of the athlete reps has a very favorable view of her performance, and the other councils and BOD members see improvements needed.”*

**Staff Management.** There was significant feedback on staff management issues. There seems to be a need for greater feedback and accountability between the board and staff and between the executive director and her staff.

- In her suggested 2025 performance objectives, Beth notes that *“I believe that in 2025 we need to focus on many foundational issues such as better defining staff vs. volunteer authority and responsibility,...”*
- This view is noted by the board as well as the board vs. staff interaction. One board member indicated that *“Our view of this is Beth's opinion, and would be assisted by securing feedback from her staff. In my job as an organizational leader, the board leader interviews staff each year and provides feedback to me. I am usually not surprised, but the board and I are all alerted to (hopefully not urgent) issues I need to address.”*
- A second comment indicated that *“4. When it comes to staff management I'd like to see a more robust feedback and self-assessment/assessment loop led by the ED on a quarterly basis. This would be a very good thing to role model and improve office culture. The staff still drop balls and seem overwhelmed.”*
- In a contrary view, another board member noted that *“To be specific, I disagree slightly with staff management. I do believe the staff is very happy to work for her – I have gotten that feedback regularly when I have done my own check ins with the staff. But, I believe what is missing is holding the staff accountable for their actions. A great many members complain that they are ignored or not heard.”* This board member goes on to cite instances where there was a lack of accountability.

**Growth Issue.** Several comments focused on the lack of fulfilling the growth issue. This is not unexpected.

- *“I am disappointed that ACA did not grow last year despite Beth's and the staff's best efforts..perhaps this is explained by the post pandemic retraction that some outdoors organizations have experienced..but I still believe that given ACA's tiny market penetration that there is much that can be realized here particularly when the Sport 80 system is in place.”*
- “Membership Growth - Needs Improvement (2) .... I believe this situation highlights a need for a sales program, paired with a marketing plan.

**Miscellaneous Items.**

- DEI and the firing of Lily were mentioned in two of the feedback comments.

**UNDERLYING THEMES.** The following are some underlying themes or findings.

- **What is Our Identity?** An underlying theme is captured in the following reflection of Beth’s self-statement. *“The ED needs to be an ED for the entire organization, not just Olympic disciplines, ICF and USOPC. It is telling that one of the athlete reps has a very favorable view of her performance, and the other councils and BOD members see improvements needed.”* It raises an underlying theme that goes past this review and that goes to the mission of the organization regarding the role of the three councils. Is the ACA the reincarnation of the USCKT or is it a paddling organization that provides educational, competition, grass root programs and of course, Olympic disciplines?
- **Communications.** An underlying theme is a lack of communications. This is an issue that goes beyond Beth and review of her self-statement. It involves the board president, board members, executive director, staff and volunteers. It is well stated in the following comment.

*“Where I think there is a disconnect is with the other portions of the organization, relationships with the councils, finding ways to incorporate feedback from the councils or members, clear communication to both the board and to members, the importance of developing relationships with other paddlesport groups and other advocacy groups. In addition, I think there should be improvement with communication, staff accountability, customer service levels, better website design, documentation of policies that affect governance as well as event/instructor/insurance revenue management. Last, better feedback of where tasks are and her activities with the board is essential.”*

- **Relationships.** The relationship between the board and executive director needs to heal. Beth notes this in her self-statement. Reading the feedback responses, this may not be evident, since the responses were generally positive. The generally positive response indicates that the healing process is possible.



## Appendix B

### **Search/Hiring Committee Procedures for the COO Position**

**Purpose.** The purpose of this document is to create a process for the search/hiring committee for the ACA's COO (Chief Operating Officer) position, and possibly the CFO (Chief Financial Officer) position.

**Hiring Principle.** The COO is a staff member who reports in the chain of command to the executive director. The final decision to hire the COO rests with the executive director. In consultation with the executive director, the search/hiring committee will make its recommendation to the executive director.

**Composition of the Committee.** The search/hiring committee will be comprised of no more than seven members. [Note: The councils and athletes have chosen their representatives to the committee. 12/27/24]

- A member and chair of the committee is the executive director. If the executive director desires, this role can be delegated to a member of the committee.
- In consultation with the chairs of the three councils, the executive director will select a representative for that council to serve on the search committee.
- The BOD will select one representative for the search/hiring committee.
- In consultation with the elite athlete or ACC, the executive director will select two members representing the elite athletes.

**Tasks of the Committee.** The following are the recommended tasks of the search/hiring committee. Since this is an ongoing process, the executive director and/or committee can modify and change these tasks as needed. Modifications and changes should reflect the intent of the tasks and should be designed to hire the best candidate.

- Using the existing job descriptions developed by the BODs, the committee will convert the COO and CFO positions into a COO job announcement or posting.
- Based on the applicant qualifications sought, the committee will develop an evaluation system to rate applicants. It may be tweaked after a preliminary review of the applications.
- The hiring/search committee will develop a plan to advertise the position to maximize qualified applicants. The plan should include reaching out to minority candidates.
- Using the evaluation system, the search/hiring committee will narrow the candidate pool to the finalists. If the committee chooses, it may delegate this role to the executive director or a subcommittee. The committee as a whole will interview the finalist candidates. For the finalist, a one-on-one interviews on Zoom should be arranged with constituent groups. Examples may include the President of the Board, selected members of the board, individual staff members, etc.
- The committee will make its recommendation to the executive director.
- The executive director will complete the hiring process needed to bring the new candidate onboard.