



August 26, 2022

To: USMS House of Delegates

From: Peter Guadagni – President, Dawson Hughes - CEO

RE: 2023 – 2025 National Volunteer Meeting Plan Recommendation.

Historically, USMS held its annual meeting during the U.S. Aquatic Sports (“USAS”) Convention, which combined meetings of the aquatics governing bodies into a single five-day event. In 2019, some governing bodies communicated a preference for flexibility to host meetings independently. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 USAS Conventions were canceled, and USMS annual meetings were held virtually. In 2022, the board decided to conduct its first in-person [Volunteer Relay](#). The strategic focus of Relay 2022 was designed to offer educational and networking opportunities to volunteers, provide networking opportunities, and share information in an effort to enrich the local USMS experience.

After reflecting on the experiences and input from volunteers who attended recent national meetings as well as the ongoing assessment of the best way to serve USMS membership in a fiscally responsible manner, the Board of Directors has communicated openly its belief that an in-person annual meeting is not the best use of financial or volunteer resources. Items considered at the annual meeting are not core to the interests of most USMS members. The 2020 and 2021 meetings demonstrated that the required and important governance components of the annual meeting can be effectively conducted virtually. Moreover, the virtual format is much more efficient in volunteer and staff time and expense*. It is also more inclusive for those volunteers who might otherwise be prevented from attending due to personal, business, or family constraints.

However, the board has also heard from delegates who believe an in-person meeting is of utmost importance. Although the board feels that the Volunteer Relay provides the type of personal connections and information sharing desired by nationally dispersed and committed volunteers, it has decided that a compromise approach to the annual meeting may deliver a “best of both” approach. The board therefore recommends the following three-year plan for annual meetings to effectively balance resource allocation, fiscal responsibility, strategy implementation, and governance and volunteer engagement needs. It is important to note that funding necessary for this plan is inter-related to the [2023 membership fee recommendation](#). Please see the [background information for these board recommendations](#) for additional context.

Three-Year Plan:

2023 – hybrid annual meeting (physical and virtual option)

2024 – completely virtual annual meeting

2025 – hybrid annual meeting (physical and virtual option)

Important Notes:

- The annual meeting will continue to be held in mid-to-late September.
- The Volunteer Relay will continue to be held annually as a key component of strategic initiatives at a time to be determined.



- The 2023 and 2025 annual meetings with an in-person option align with elections of officers, including the USMS president.
- The board may consider holding Relay and the annual meeting together in 2023 and 2025.
- The board may consider holding Relay and the National Coaches Clinic together in 2024.
- This three-year plan will still require deficit spending in 2023 (even with the 2023 fee recommendation) but provides the National Office greater operational efficiency, and the multi-year approach lends valuable clarity for planning purposes.
- The intention is to re-evaluate plans for national volunteer meetings again in 2025 in light of experiences from the meetings held in the various formats since 2020.

**The in-person annual meeting has historically cost USMS nearly \$300,000, split various ways in recent years between national and LMSC funding. The total expense was \$0 in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, USMS is projecting national expenses for the hybrid annual meeting will be approximately \$135,000, with 60% of delegates attending in person. LMSCs will have costs associated for the in-person attendees for travel and incidentals. Based on airfare estimates and with 40% of delegates choosing to attend virtually, we are projecting the cost of the annual meeting collectively will be around \$200,000, with LMSCs absorbing approximately \$70,000 of that total in airfare and incidental expenses.*