



Committee Name: Board of Directors	Date/Time of Meeting: September 14, 2026: 8:00 p.m. ET
Committee Chair: Ed Coates	Minutes recorded by: Erika Braun
Committee members present: 18	Committee members absent: 0
Ed Coates (President); Julie Dussliere (VP of Administration); Crystie McGrail (VP of Local Operations); Carrie Stolar (VP of Programs); Kenny Brisbin (VP of Community Services); Denise Dombay (Treasurer); Erika Braun (Secretary); Dawson Hughes (CEO); Peter Guadagni (Immediate Past President); Katie Kenyon (Legal Counsel) At-Large Directors: Sam Kraft (Breadbasket); Guy Davis (Colonies); C.J. Rushman (Great Lakes); Rob Heath (Northwest); Phyllis Quinn (Oceana); Nicole Christensen (South Central); Trey Taylor (Southeast); Jeff Commings (Southwest)	
Other guests: Meredith Buchanan (Coordinator, Volunteer Services), Jessica Reilly (Senior Director, Business Operations), Open to all member observation	

Actions Taken

Action	Outcome
August 17, 2026, Minutes	Approved unanimously, with no opposition or abstentions.
Governance Project Over-Budget Request	Ratified the previously approved online vote unanimously, with no opposition or abstentions.

Call to Order, Agenda and Conflicts of Interest

President Ed Coates called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. ET. The agenda and supporting materials had been posted in the Board's shared folder. No changes to the agenda or conflicts of interest were reported.

Approval of Prior Minutes

Secretary Erika Braun presented the August 17, 2026, Board meeting minutes for approval. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the minutes unanimously. There was no discussion, opposition or abstention.

Ratification of Governance Project Over-Budget Request

The Board considered ratification of an online vote conducted after the August meeting regarding an over-budget request for the governance project. Board members had requested additional review time before voting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board ratified the online approval unanimously, with no opposition or abstention.

Board Recognition

Ed recognized departing directors Trey Taylor, Samantha Kraft and Jeff Commings, whose terms will conclude following the Annual Meeting and who are not seeking reelection. He thanked them for their service and contributions to the Board and USMS.

Minute of Good News

Peter Guadagni shared that he and his wife had completed their goal of physically entering all 63 U.S. national parks. Their travels began with a three-month trip in 2018 and concluded with a return to North Cascades National Park, including the drive into the park and a hike to Cascade Pass.



Legal Update

Ed reported that a federal lawsuit filed against USMS in California had been dismissed by the court, subject to the possibility of appeal. Settlement discussions in the Florida matter remained active. The Texas matter was expected to be delayed into 2027, and USMS was not then incurring legal fees related to that matter.

CEO Update

Club Development

CEO Dawson Hughes presented a revised, broader club-development framework following the Board's discussion at the summer Board retreat. The approach will address five pathways: relationships with USA Swimming clubs and coaches; outreach to facilities and facility directors; coach recruitment; identification of pools that could support a Masters program; and resources to help existing clubs grow. Final details will be developed through the upcoming budgeting and staffing process.

The staff's principal recommendation is a full-time position dedicated to club development. The role would focus on both starting new clubs and helping existing clubs expand, rather than distributing the work among staff members who also carry other program responsibilities.

Coach Education and Knowledge Network

USMS plans to begin its broader knowledge-network work with an overhaul of coach education and development. The proposed model will combine on-demand online modules with in-person training focused primarily on deck. Staff are evaluating learning platforms, internal development options and staffing requirements. The program is expected to become self-supporting over time, although the first year will likely require investment to cover development costs.

Work is underway toward an early-2027 launch. Level 1 training will continue in the interim, including a planned October session, to support facilities and programs that require training through the national governing body. The current offering is expected to be retired after the new program is available.

Club Services: Member Club and Affiliate Benefits

Dawson clarified that USMS has not created tiered club memberships or changed the membership price. A comparison chart has been posted to explain the distinctions between member clubs and affiliate clubs or workout groups.

- Insurance: Clubs that do not require USMS membership are not covered by USMS insurance. USMS will discontinue issuing certificates of insurance to clubs and workout groups that don't require membership.
- Marketing: Member clubs may receive additional targeted marketing resources as USMS can connect campaign spending to resulting memberships and evaluate effectiveness.
- Affiliate access: Affiliate clubs will remain visible in Club Finder and may continue to benefit from broader campaigns that direct swimmers to available programs.

USMS was communicating these distinctions to clubs ahead of the October 1 registration opening.

Top 10 Results Modernization

Dawson reported substantial progress modernizing the Top 10 results process, which currently relies on extensive manual work by 51 LMSC Top 10 recorders and USMS staff. The new process was tested on the completed 2025 individual Top 10 results with a 98% match across all three courses after the applicable date ranges were corrected.

Review of the remaining discrepancies found that most resulted from manual handling in the legacy process, including late or omitted meet submissions, inconsistent treatment of splits, missing supporting data, eligibility fields that were not consistently completed, pool-measurement verification and results missing from the database. Dawson clarified that these issues generally concerned data entry or treatment rather than an incorrect swimmer name or recorded time.



The next steps are to validate relay results and test the process against the finalized 2026 short course yards results before deciding whether to use the new process for the long course season. Preliminary results would continue to receive human review by the Records and Tabulation Committee, LMSC Top 10 recorders and other reviewers. If significant discrepancies arise, USMS can revert to the prior process.

The longer-term plan includes a gated submission portal that requires complete, validated data before results enter the system; digitized pool-measurement and related forms; integration of records applications; and exploration of LMSC-level reporting. Dawson noted that local record rules vary among LMSCs and will require discussion and greater consistency. The Board emphasized that automation should improve accuracy and efficiency while allowing volunteers to devote more time to local clubs, coaches and events.

Second-Quarter Financial Update

Treasurer Denise Dombay reviewed the second-quarter financial report and year-over-year summary. The full-year outlook remained strong, and the organization was on target for a favorable year. Known expense overages included previously approved amounts for compensation and the governance project.

Certain technology costs were reclassified from capital expenditures to current expenditures on the profit and loss statement. The change affects the reported outlook but does not affect cash flow. The investment portfolio continued to perform well and remained under regular Investment Committee review. The Finance Committee had completed a detailed review of current results and had begun considering the 2027 budget.

Performance-Enhancing Drug Position Statement

The Board reviewed an informational position statement intended to help USMS staff and directors respond consistently to questions about performance-enhancing drugs and the relationship between USMS and World Aquatics rules. The statement is guidance and is not Board policy or an enforcement document.

The Board discussed whether the statement should be published for members. Some members noted the value of public guidance, while others expressed concern that publication could be mistaken for an enforcement policy or generate grievances based on suspicion. No action was taken. USMS will retain the statement as a response resource and may publish it or related educational material if future need warrants.

Electronic Media Communications Policy

The Board had previously reaffirmed the current policy while proposed revisions were developed and reviewed. Since the revised draft was not ready for approval, the Board agreed to keep the current policy in effect, retain the working draft and seek guidance from Charney|Keyse as part of the Board manual project. No director objected to this approach.

Legislation, Rules and Long-Distance Proposals

Forums on proposed legislation, rules and long-distance matters had concluded, with related questions and answers available to Board members. Ed encouraged directors to review the materials, including Board proposals, as well as community discussions before the Annual Meeting.

Draft policies related to pending proposals are posted on the Annual Meeting page since they are not yet effective. If approved, committee policies will be updated, and the new board policies will be posted on the website.

Governance Project and Board Manual

A working group will meet with Charney|Keyse, with some participants attending in person and others remotely, to begin compiling the Board manual. A virtual half-day session for the Board will be scheduled for December 12, 2026, to review and accept the compiled manual.



Annual Board Orientation and Calendar

The Governance Committee will conduct orientation and training after the Annual Meeting and the seating of new directors. Ed will circulate a Slack availability poll and confirm the new directors' availability.

The next Board meeting remained tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 19, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. ET and could be postponed if the agenda is light. The Monday, November 16, 2026, meeting will focus on the 2027 budget, with advance materials to be provided by staff and the Finance Committee. Proposed 2027 Board meeting dates will be circulated after the Annual Meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m. ET.

Respectfully submitted,

Erika Braun, Secretary