



I couldn't be prouder of the collective response from the USMS community to the challenges we've faced in the last few months. I continue to be impressed by the creativity and determination of USMS members, coaches, and volunteers to find ways to stay healthy and fit through swimming, even while sometimes removed from the water. We've watched members keep their teams connected via Zoom happy hours, socially distanced socials, or coordinating lane reservations so teammates can swim together. We've seen coaches advocating and lobbying local officials to re-open pools and to create enough space for their swimmers to train. Volunteers have continued to invest their personal time in USMS to create the USMS COVID-19 Grant Relief Program, consider the modified year-plus promotional offer, to learn Zoom, and to prepare and educate themselves for this weekend's first of its kind virtual annual meeting.

We are going to face more challenges in the coming year and must continue to work together to build upon the positive communication that took place and improve our flexibility to make decisions on the fly.

Before I talk about what to expect for 2021, I want to take a few moments to recognize people who have helped USMS navigate 2020 in extraordinary ways. Since we are on Zoom, rounds of applause don't apply, but please find a way to applaud in your own way – perhaps since it's Friday night, you have a cocktail near you and can raise a glass or send a text or email to those you know who have been instrumental in these efforts.

The Finance Committee and Board of Directions should be commended for considering financial recommendations throughout the year and quickly navigating adjustments.

The board communication working group deserves recognition for the ongoing communication with LMSCs on the unified fee, the modified year-plus membership option, and club relief funding. Thanks to Dan Cox, Teddy Decker, Chris Colburn, Jeff Strahota, Carrie Stolar, Maddie Sibia, and Ed Coates.

The club relief funding panel has met regularly over the last several months to construct the plan, answer questions, and review and approve applications. Thank you, Teddy Decker, Carrie Stolar, and Jeff Moxie.

The SSLF Board of Trustees supported club relief funding by quickly adjusting our fundraising efforts and putting together a successful online auction. Thanks to all the trustees for their efforts and a special shoutout to Jay DeFinis for leading the charge and Brandon Franklin for the heavy lifting of managing the auction.

Thanks to all USMS coaches who have worked tirelessly to keep their teams connected, provide workouts remotely, negotiate with facilities and local officials to reopen pools, and acquire lane space for Masters members.

LMSC volunteers around the country deserve recognition for keeping up with the barrage of information we've sent and responding to surveys, requests for phone calls, learning Zoom, educating themselves for the annual meeting, and participating in meetings throughout the month of September.



For these final two items of recognition, I want you all to think back to a swim practice at which your coach purposely kept moving the finish line and extending practice. I can remember learning there would be a 400 free for time after what we thought was the conclusion of a 9000-meter workout.

What we all hoped would be a short-term adjustment due to a pandemic has turned into many months of reacting to external factors quickly, adjusting daily plans to meet the needs of the day, late nights with committee meetings and newly created webinars, and helping clubs and coaches find creative ways to stay engaged with their swimmers and get back in the water. I have been asking our National Office team to repeat 9000-meter workouts and throwing a 400 for time in at the end nearly every day for going on six months. Sometimes it's likely felt like a 400 IM. They have met the challenge and exceeded expectations all while working from home offices nearly 100 percent of the time. Thanks to the National Office team for your diligence, work ethic, and determination in support of USMS. You have all stepped up to the challenge in extraordinary ways and under considerable pressure

Lastly, we all owe Peter a virtual round of applause. I don't know if any USMS president has had a first year as exciting as Peter's, but it is safe to say his presidency has been unlike any other. Although he claims to be retired, I doubt he feels like he's embarked on a traditional retirement. Thanks Peter for your responsiveness and wisdom in helping USMS navigate 2020. I hope you're ready for 2021 – I suspect there may be a few more 400 IMs for time in our future.

Moving on, the CEO report posted to the annual meeting page documents 2020 activities, challenges, and successes, and leads into the 2021 business plan assumptions that are also available. If you haven't read them already, please make sure to get to them before we get started tomorrow. It's important background for when you hear from Finance Committee Chair Jeanne Ensign and CFO Susan Kuhlman-Parker about business plan assumptions and fees in the morning. Rather than cover that information tonight, I'd like to provide you a glimpse into the immediate future including a few things we're likely to encounter and will need to address together. Previously we had the luxury of well-established historical data and some certainty in our budget forecasts. With that, our time could be more heavily focused on the long term. This year will be different because we will need to place more focus on the immediate needs of USMS.

2021 club renewals begin on Thursday. This will be the first real indicator of the impact COVID-19 has had on our clubs. We will be asking you all to help us with outreach to clubs in your LMSCs that don't renew in October. As you know, if they aren't renewed, members can't affiliate with them when individual registration begins on Nov. 1. Clubs have had to adjust to per-lane swimmer limitations, lane reservations, local regulations, and worst of all, pool closures. Some still don't have access to pools. Although we have analyzed survey data, we don't have a solid forecast on how many clubs will renew. It's important to learn from those that haven't renewed and understand the challenges that have led to that decision. You know your local situations better than anyone, and that information will be critical to decide how and where to focus resources. For many, financial support may be helpful, and the USMS COVID-19 Relief Program is designed to provide clubs that monetary support. For others, tools to educate local officials on how to operate safely and advocacy efforts may be more important. USMS can help support those efforts as well.

Individual membership registration begins Nov. 1. The first week of registration is when many of our longtime members join and may give us an insight into renewal trends. However, the two



weeks on either side of New Year's Day have the highest volume of registration during the year. And we typically see an increase in the volume of new members during this time frame as well. We have historically had a strong base of consistent members who rejoin annually during this period and much will be determined based on how the November to January time frame takes shape.

The business plan assumptions, which we will learn more about tomorrow, provide a wide range of potential membership, revenue, and expense outcomes for 2021. There is still a great deal of uncertainty and many factors related to the pandemic will remain out of our control, but the next four months will determine much of how USMS approaches our mission for the remainder of the year. We expect a full budget review and forecast toward the end of the first quarter of 2021 to adjust to current information. We could see continued impacts from the pandemic, with events needing to be canceled, lane space limited, and large in-person gatherings still not being safe. More optimistically, we could experience a year where national championships resume, pools that have been closed find ways to safely re-open, increased interest in swimming leads to more people venturing out to try Masters Swimming, and a marketing campaign around the U.S. Olympic Team Trials and the Summer Olympics may all help to kick-start a rebuilding effort for USMS. Given those possibilities, we've crafted assumptions that bookend the scenarios.

Despite any external challenges, there will be much focus on weathering the effects of the pandemic in a fiscally responsible manner and helping as many members engage with their swimming routine and community as possible. We will also continue to plan for the future in parallel. Restarting coach development efforts with a scalable and sustainable structure to support coaches into the future is already underway in conjunction with the Coaches Committee. We are evaluating the results of the Virtual Championships and discussing tweaks for the future, including how virtual events like it may be incorporated into our traditional ePostal and Fitness Series events. We will be evaluating new ways to provide additional benefits to Masters members and attract the next generation of adult swimmers. And based on the outcome of decisions this weekend, we may have newfound flexibility to explore membership offerings like multi-year memberships, simplify the messaging used to attract new swimmers, and evaluate partnerships to support their interest in swimming.

We have an incredible network of USMS champions around the country who are vested in the success of the organization. This network combines coaches, volunteers, contractors, and staff. Peter and I have discussed how we can continue to improve on the interaction between these groups and how USMS can best utilize these champions to have the greatest impact on members, support coaches and clubs, and build Masters Swimming communities both locally and nationally.

We will successfully navigate our challenges together, and USMS will come out the other side stronger and more focused on our mission to support health, wellness, fitness, and competition for adults through swimming.