

President

Ed Coates

Last year's elections resulted in two new board members joining the Board: Erika Braun as Secretary and Denise Dombay as Treasurer. We also had one board member return in a different position, Carrie Stolar as VP of Programs. At the conclusion of this year's Annual Meeting, three of our current at-large board members will step down: Jeff Commings, Samatha Kraft, and Trey Taylor. I want to thank these three board members for their service to the Board over the past two years.

While 2025 brought some unexpected challenges that distracted the Board and staff from certain strategic activities, in 2026 we were able to refocus and devote time to long-term strategic efforts. During our two in-person Board retreats this year, we spent the majority of our time focused on four strategic pillars:

Club Development and Services

- How we can support new clubs and club growth
- Offering different levels of support if clubs require membership

Knowledge Network and Coach Education

- Reimagining the offering with a modular design, more topics, and greater user choice
- Including in-person, on-deck components

Local/Regional Chapter Governance Modernization

- Focusing LMSCs on clubs, events, and coaches
- Having administrative functions performed by a small number of regional contractors
- Evaluating the sustainability of the current model

National Governance Modernization

- Implementing best practices
- Modernizing the bylaws

Given the importance of our national governance, the Board has engaged an expert consultant to assist in evaluating our current structure, sharing best practices, and helping us plan for future modernization tasks. The Board has also begun creating certain best-practice tools recommended by the consultant. Other items, such as changes to our bylaws, will be addressed in future HOD sessions.

The Board has also worked with several committees this year in an effort to become a more flexible and nimble organization by removing procedures from the Rule Book. Several proposals this year resulted from this effort.

The Board also reviewed and approved updates to three Board policies. In addition, we approved two new policies, including one addressing the proper use of AI within the organization. This policy is designed to protect the organization's confidential information and ensure human oversight of anything produced using AI. The other policy was approved by the Board contingent upon removing membership categories from the Rule Book.

I am extremely proud of all the hard work the Board has done this past year, and I am excited about the work we will do next year. I am also looking forward to our upcoming joint session of Relay and the National Coaches Conference in Denver, as well as our joint participation in the USA Swimming Foundation's Golden Goggles ceremony.

Our relationship with the Foundation has benefited USMS in many ways, and we look forward to expanding our efforts to help adults learn the life-saving skill of swimming. Last year, we awarded grants to 42 organizations totaling \$150,000, funded by member donations. But this did not nearly cover all the grant requests we received. The Board is looking to partner with the Foundation to increase our grant funding through a five-year initiative beginning in the run-up to the 2028 Olympics. But there is no need to wait—you can make an impact today by donating. [Save a life. Help teach an adult to swim.](#)

Lastly, I want to thank the Board, committee members, and all our local volunteers for their support of USMS and its mission. I know every Annual Meeting delegate is dedicated to the success of the organization and will have its best interests in mind during the meeting. I also ask each delegate to keep this in mind during forums and debates in our legislative process and to treat everyone respectfully.

While we will not be meeting in person, I look forward to seeing and hearing from everyone during our virtual Annual Meeting, and I hope to see you at the pool sometime in the future.

Vice President of Administration

Julie Dussliere

The Vice President of Administration oversees three committees: Legislation, Rules, and Records & Tabulation. The VP of Admin is an ex-officio member of these three committees and serves as a resource to the committees and their chairs for any issues that may require attention or advice from the Board level. Detailed reports from each committee outlining their activities in the past year are available in the committee reports section of the annual meeting webpage.

The Legislation Committee (chaired by Kristof Kertesz) is responsible for the compilation, changes, and updates related to Parts 2, 4, 5, 6, the Glossary, Organizing Principles, and Legislation's area of jurisdiction in Appendix B of the Rule Book. The committee met in July and August to discuss proposed amendments as well as to prepare the packet of recommendations submitted to the House of Delegates for the Annual Meeting.

The Rules Committee (chaired by Mollie Grover) is responsible for ensuring that the competitive rules in Part 1 of the USMS Rule Book provide for fair and equitable competition in the best interests of all USMS members. The committee works throughout the year to ensure that USMS members are informed of current rules, interpretations, and rule changes. The committee accepts, considers, and reports proposed amendments to Part 1 to the USMS House of Delegates in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. The committee held an introductory meeting in February, and met several times in June, July, and August to consider proposed amendments and prepare the pre-convention delegate packet.

The Records and Tabulation Committee (chaired by Chris McGiffin) is responsible for the processes of recording and verifying Top 10, All-American and All-Star rosters, and USMS National Record performances and determining related policies. The committee supports Top 10 recorders in utilizing the tools available for results uploads and collaborates closely with the USMS National Office for the automation and publication of lists, rosters and records, and pool measurement verifications. The full committee met monthly throughout the year and communicated regularly via email and Slack. R&T established three working groups this year with the following areas of focus: document management, LMSC Top Ten recorder best practice training, and rules-policies-guidelines delineation. The working groups met regularly outside of normal committee meetings throughout the year.

In addition to the work with the assigned committees, I served as a member of the Governance Committee (chaired by Phyllis Quinn) and the Compensation and Benefits Committee (chaired by Ian King) and participated in the Governance Project Working Group during 2026.

Vice President of Local Operations

Crystie McGrail

The Vice President of Local Operations (VPLO) oversees three committees (History and Archives; LMSC Development; Recognition and Awards). The VPLO is an ex officio member of these three committees. Detailed reports from each committee's activities are available in the committee reports section of the annual meeting packet or by reviewing committee meeting minutes posted on www.usms.com.

In addition to working with assigned committees I am a member of the Governance committee. I also participated in the Board Communications efforts with the Zones and LMSCs. Robert Heath and I had a call with the Northwest Zone on July 22nd to share updates from the board.

Recognition & Awards

With the support of staff the committee successfully rolled out a new online platform for award nominations. They are still working on streamlining the recognition process and cataloguing current awards policies. Details on their progress can be tracked through their committee meeting minutes on the USMS website.

LMSC Development

The committee meets regularly as a whole and separately with smaller sub-committee groupings for more efficient work time. The Volunteer Relay group continues to support organizing an engaging agenda and speakers for the annual event with the staff. The 2026 topic is Events and will take place September 25-27 in Denver, CO. Work is still being done to figure out how to best connect with and support volunteers and this committee has been one of the early adopters of using the USMS Slack Workspace.

History and Archives

The committee was tasked this year with creating a robust rationale for keeping and updating the Olympians list. As of this report that is still in progress. The other primary focus area for this committee was updating information for the History website page including creating a narrative of important pieces of the history of USMS in a digestible format. At the time of this report there has been a lot of discussion and not much progress in creating any products.

Vice President of Programs

Carrie Stolar

The Vice President of Programs is the EC liaison for, and serves as an ex-officio member of, the Championship, Long Distance, and Officials Committees. All three committees have a continuous work cycle throughout the year, preparing for pool and open water National Championship events and working on related activities. My role as VP includes supporting these committees and attending their meetings. Detailed reports from each committee are available in the Annual Meeting packet and in the committee meeting minutes posted on the USMS website. Here is a summary of each committee's work this year:

Championship Committee (Chair: Erin Sizelove, Vice Chair: Mark Rubacky) The Championship Committee serves in an advisory capacity to pool national championship hosts and makes recommendations and decisions that enhance the quality of championship meets. The committee also works with the National Office regarding the championship bid selection process and marketing opportunities for USMS Corporate Partners. In 2026 the committee continued to manage the timelines for the National Championship meets which included determining the order of events and setting event caps with wait lists to ensure manageable days for the athletes and volunteers. The committee and liaisons worked with the hosts, the National Office, and the Officials Committee to finalize early details and address issues and questions for the National Championship meets in Greensboro and Sacramento. In addition, the committee selected Richmond, VA as the host for the 2027 summer LC nationals.

Long Distance Committee (Chair: Catherine Rust, Vice Chair: Dave Brancamp) The Long Distance Committee meets monthly and is responsible for the oversight of the rules and administration of open water and long distance events, and for promoting the development of, and participation in, open water swimming. The committee works in a coordinating and advisory capacity with event hosts and makes recommendations to enhance the quality of long distance championship events. The committee is also responsible for assuring that the competitive rules in Part 3 of the USMS rules and regulations provide for fair and equitable competition in the best interests of all USMS members. This year the committee updated the LDC operating guidelines as well as the long distance administration page on the USMS website. The committee prepared three Part 3 rules proposals that will be presented to the HOD at the annual meeting. The committee and liaisons worked with the Open Water National Championship hosts to finalize details and results for the three Championship Events this year (the marathon distance event was canceled due to a low water level). The committee also selected and approved 6 OW National Championships for 2027, which will be announced later this year. The committee also clarified procedures for verifying Virtual National Championship entries.

Officials Committee (Chair: Omar de Armas, Vice Chair: Teri White) The Officials Committee meets every six weeks and is responsible for conducting training, education, and certification programs to ensure that the competitive program offered to USMS members is conducted with the highest standard of professional officiating and in full conformance with USMS rules and regulations. The committee worked with the hosts of each National Championship meet (Greensboro and Sacramento as well as College Club Nationals) to ensure that the meets were fully staffed with appropriately trained officials. The committee continues to promote and facilitate USMS certification activities for swimming officials. The Rules Committee consulted with the chair of the Officials Committee for discussions about technical rules as needed. The Officials Committee also continues to work on its policy handbook to assist officials in the standardization of procedures.

Vice President of Community Services

Kenny Brisbin

USMS Diversity and Inclusion

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee went through a little bit of a reset this year with new leadership and a new focus on how the committee can better help our members, clubs and LMSCs.

One of the main projects has been putting together Best Practices for welcoming and bringing new swimmers into Masters Swimming. The committee reached out to several coaches to find out what they are currently doing and what has worked for their programs. The goal is to take those ideas and develop something that can be shared with clubs and coaches throughout USMS.

We have also spent quite a bit of time talking about how we get swimmers from programs like Adult Learn-to-Swim and Grown-Up Swimming into a Masters program. There can be a pretty big gap between learning how to swim and being ready or comfortable joining a Masters workout. We need to find better ways to help those swimmers make that transition and feel like Masters Swimming is something they can do.

Another good discussion has been about how we portray Masters Swimming. A lot of what people see focuses on competition and our faster swimmers, or our older swimmers at big events, which can be intimidating to someone who is new to swimming or just looking for fitness. For many of our members, the friendships and community are just as important as the swimming. Discussion has been about different ways of showing that side of USMS and showing that Masters Swimming really is for swimmers of all levels.

The committee is also working on a D&I newsletter that would go to LMSC Chairs, D&I Chairs and coaches. The idea is to share information, ideas and Best Practices that can actually be used at the local level.

We have also discussed ways to identify programs that are beginner-friendly or offer different levels of accessibility. Someone looking at Masters Swimming for the first time should be able to find a program where they feel comfortable and know that they don't have to be a competitive or experienced swimmer to participate.

The committee is moving in a good direction. There is still work to do, but the focus has moved toward projects and ideas that clubs and LMSCs can actually use. If we can help clubs do a better job welcoming new swimmers, help swimmers make the transition into Masters Swimming and show a broader picture of who our members are, I think the committee can have a positive impact on USMS.

Coaches Committee

The Coaches Committee continues to be a great resource for our coaches and members. The committee has stayed very active this year, with the different subcommittees working on education, communication, mentoring, workouts, awards, and ways to help our coaches stay connected.

One of the bigger projects this year was selecting the 2026–2027 USMS Web Workout coaches. We received 53 applications, and with the help of the National Office, we selected 14 coaches. The committee continues to look at the workout program and ways we can make it better and more useful for our members.

Coach education has also been a big topic this year, especially with the retirement of Bill Brenner. Following his retirement in May, the Level 1, 2 and 3 Coach Certification courses and some of the other coach education programs were put on hold while USMS reviews what coach education should look like moving forward. With the USMS and National Office, the Coaches Committee will be a part of those discussions.

We have also continued looking for ways to get coaches talking and sharing ideas with each other. The Coaches Discord (which will move to Slack) has grown and gives coaches a place to share workouts, ask questions, and exchange ideas. The Peer-to-Peer group has also been working on additional educational opportunities. In June, more than 100 people registered for an open water webinar presented by Coach Marcia Cleveland, with 53 attending live. Based on the response, the committee would like to offer more of these types of programs.

A lot of work has also gone into planning the 2026 National Coaches Clinic in Denver, which will be held in conjunction with Relay in September. Speakers and sessions have been confirmed, including Olympian Cullen Jones and University of Florida Associate Head Coach Whitney Hite for the in-water portion of the clinic.

Other committee programs have continued throughout the year. On-Deck Coaching had good participation at Spring Nationals and is being organized again for Summer Nationals. The mentoring program continues to connect coaches with other experienced USMS coaches, and the LMSC Communication group continues to provide information to our LMSC Coaches Chairs. The Awards Subcommittee has also been busy reviewing nominations for the Kerry O'Brien Coaches Award and USMS Coach of the Year, which will be recognized at NCC.

There have been a lot of changes this year, especially with coach education, but the committee continues to look at how we can better support our coaches. I think there is a real opportunity as we move forward to look at how USMS educates, communicates with and supports coaches and make sure we are giving them resources they can actually use.

Immediate Past President

Peter Guadagni

As immediate past president, there are no specific organization responsibilities on which to report. I serve as a member of both the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors and, when appropriate, provide background on why certain historical decisions were made. I continue to be impressed with the dedication and commitment of both the elected national leaders and the U.S. Masters Swimming staff.

My appointment to the Finance Committee marked my 13th year being associated with the group in some capacity. The business acumen and financial expertise of my fellow members of this committee are impressive. USMS is fortunate to have this team overseeing the organization's finances and related processes.

Finally, I continue to serve on the Governance Committee.

Secretary

Erika Braun, Secretary

As I complete my first year serving as Secretary for the USMS Board of Directors, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, USMS staff, and the many volunteers whose commitment and service help advance the mission of U.S. Masters Swimming. It has been an honor to contribute to the governance and strategic work of the organization.

During the past year, I fulfilled the responsibilities of Secretary by recording and maintaining the official minutes for Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings, including both virtual and in-person sessions. Following review and approval, I worked closely with staff to ensure meeting records were finalized and posted in a timely manner, supporting transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

In addition to these responsibilities, I participated in Board and Executive Committee discussions focused on organizational priorities, strategic planning, and the future direction of USMS. These conversations provided valuable opportunities to contribute to initiatives aimed at strengthening member engagement, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and supporting the long-term success of the organization.

Throughout the year, I collaborated with staff to explore and leverage emerging AI-enabled technologies to improve administrative efficiency. These tools assisted with meeting summarization, action item tracking, scheduling and calendaring coordination, and the overall management of Board records. By thoughtfully incorporating technology into our processes, we were able to streamline administrative tasks, improve accuracy, and allow more time to focus on strategic priorities.

I am grateful for the support, collaboration, and dedication of my fellow Board members and the USMS staff. Serving as Secretary has been a rewarding experience, and I look forward to continuing to support the important work of U.S. Masters Swimming in the coming year.

Key Accomplishments

- Maintained official records and minutes for Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings.
- Partnered with USMS staff to ensure timely review, publication, and accessibility of Board records.
- Participated in Board strategic planning discussions and organizational priority-setting initiatives.
- Leveraged AI-enabled tools to enhance meeting documentation, calendaring, action item management, and administrative efficiency.
- Supported transparency, governance, and effective Board operations throughout the year.

Treasurer

Denise Dombay

As I complete my first year as Treasurer, I am glad to say USMS remains in a very strong financial position. Revenue remains strong and in alignment with budget for 2026. Slight increase in membership, as well as growth in Grown Up and College Club Swimming, has had a positive impact on our financial results. This has helped us offset some unusual legal expenses and Board-approved spending related to governance enhancements. USMS has a healthy financial base, with a strong investment portfolio, and we don't anticipate needing to draw more out of our savings reserves than budgeted in 2026.

As Treasurer I oversee 3 committees: Audit, Investment and Finance. These committees work diligently throughout the year to monitor and oversee our financial risks. They take their respective roles very seriously and provide us comfort that our financial assets are being managed appropriately.

Audit: The 2025 audit and 990 tax returns are completed and approved by the BOD. A copy of the financial statements will be publicly available through the USMS website.

Investment: The investment Committee (IC) continues to meet quarterly to review USMS's investment portfolio. As of the end of June our investments are sitting at about \$4.1 MM or approximately one year of operating capital.

Finance: The finance committee (FC) has met several times in 2026. Accomplishments so far include continuing to monitor current financial results and outlook and starting to work on the 2027 budget.

Legal Counsel

Katie Kenyon

Introduction

This role supports the Board of Directors and USMS by providing governance and oversight assistance and serving as a resource on a wide range of issues as they arise. To be an effective advocate for USMS, I work with USMS staff, the National Board of Review, and various committee and board members to understand and support the organization's activities, challenges, and goals. I view my role as a partner and advisor where needed.

Discussions and Projects Since Last Annual Meeting

1. Participated as a non-voting member of the USMS Legislative Committee.
2. Participated, when requested, in the USMS Eligibility Review Committee.
3. Attended scheduled meetings of the USMS Board and USMS Executive Committee as a non-voting member.
4. Worked with the National Board of Review when requested.
5. Consulted with external legal counsel regarding pending and threatened litigation.
6. Provided assistance to USMS and the Board as needed.