

Southern California Division, USFA
Board Meeting
July 19, 2025, 12pm
Via Zoom Teleconference

Present: James Beihold (Chair), Karl Jordon (Vice-chair), Eric Speicher (Treasurer), Karen Lieu (Secretary), David Baxter, Chris Craig, Lucas Dobrzanski, Elizabeth Geyer, Victoria Geyer, Michal Gurrola, Phillip Hareff, Anna Jordon, Shelby Kim, Swan Kim, Laura Lynton, Pavle Medvidovic, Kevin Reeve, Guerin Reighard, Tim Robinson, Greg Schiller, Tigran Shaginian, Rudolph Streitz, and Mike Vazquez. (23 attendees)

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm.

M/S/C(unan) minutes from August 12, 2024, November 7, 2024, and March 22, 2025 meetings approved.

Financial Report (Presented by Eric Speicher, Treasurer)

The proposed 2025–26 budget anticipates hosting Junior Olympic and Summer National qualifiers, plus one local tournament. Projected revenues are about \$15,000 with expenses of \$16,500.

- Rebates: Membership rebates from USA Fencing increased last season to \$4,734 (likely due to improved processing); next season's estimate is \$4,500.
- Other Income: Equipment rental (\$1,000) and possible t-shirt sales. Estimated income for t-shirts is \$800. The expenses for the previous season's t-shirt sales were \$500.
- Referee Clinic: None held in 2024–25; prior clinic (2023–24) ran at a net loss (\$500 income vs. \$1,200 expenses), but was successful, producing a lot of local referees. Another clinic may be scheduled.
- Donations: In previous seasons, fencers that were owed refunds could choose to donate them to the division. Now, with the efficiency of the processing of refunds, fencers typically choose to claim their refunds, so we don't anticipate any donations this coming season.
- Largest budget item: Proposal to purchase up to four conductive strips for \$12,000. While the Division has cash available, this would be a significant expense. Alternatives include renting strips from local clubs, which would also involve transportation costs. Economic conditions and timing were noted as factors in the purchase decision.
- Other Expenses: Generally steady compared to previous years.

Discussion: James Beihold noted the division roughly breaks even each year, which Eric confirmed. The membership rebate has helped offset costs, and this past season ended with about a \$2,000 surplus.

M/S/C (Unan) – Budget for 2025-26 approved.

Elections Discussion

Due to technical difficulties the Zoom polling system was not loading to take the votes. As Karen attempted to resolve the issue James shared that his daughter's latest music video (Brutus) has fencing in it. James then turned the discussion to proxy ballots: He asked if anyone would object to Tigran Shaginian's request to verify the proxy ballots for himself, or would that create a problem with anonymity? Eric Speicher: I am assuming Karen did verify all the proxies votes. James: Yes, Karen did verify them, but Tigran has asked to verify them himself since Karen is running for office. Tigran: I have a problem with someone running for office and also checking eligibility. Eric: Our by-laws state that the secretary is to receive the proxies and verify eligibility. Mike Vazquez: Tigran, aren't you running for office? So verification should be done by a 3rd party. Tigran: The person verifying is supposed to be neutral. You don't have a person running for office and checking the ballots. Chris Craig: The discussion is on whether or not there is the issue of anonymity of the proxies. We should check with the people who submitted by proxy and ask them if they are concerned about it. James: Let me just state that the proxy ballots are verified by the National Office. So its not like there is someone here making those decisions (on the validity). Tigran: When fencers contact the National Office to change their division (to SoCal, so they can vote) it takes a long time. Sometimes months. Karen: It does not. Eric: I am not sure why we are discussing this. The original thing you requested was that we send the proxies to you. That is the open question. Now, I didn't have an objection to it, but I'm starting to have an objection. Does anyone have an objection to, after the meeting, having Karen share the proxy information? Lucas Dobrzanski: Are we asking to verify that the person who voted is actually the proxy? Eric: No, Karen has already done that. What Tigran is requesting is to have the proxy information shared with him. Lucas: But is it the account of how the person voted? James: In some cases they put down who they voted for, in others they designate someone else to vote for them. Lucas: I'm not sure I want to let Tigran know how I voted. Elizabeth Geyer: I think every vote should be private and that the proxies go to the Secretary and it gets voted. Chris: If USA Fencing is verifying these things then that should be that. Let's just move on. James: Yes, that's how its been done. We've sent any questionable proxy names to USA Fencing and they've given us a response.

As technical issues persisted, members discussed alternative ways to vote. Eric suggested a hand vote. Mike Vaquez suggested that the votes could be submitted through the chat feature. Laura Lynton: You don't have to go to chat. You can just go to participants and find Karen and then select her and you just type to her what your vote is. And its private. As there were no objections, this method of voting was adopted. Members discussed potential future solutions like Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, or an election app. There was also some discussion about Zoom host controls, which may have prevented polls from being launched.

Eric asked Karen to confirm once all votes were received, and that anyone not voting should notify her. Rudy asked for a confirmation that his name was on the Committee list (it was confirmed), and Elizabeth asked about accessing the slate of nominees in the main chat. The group confirmed that both the current Officers and Executive Committee were up for re-election, with additional nominations possible.

Vote Counting

Karen began tallying votes. Suggestions were made to copy votes into a spreadsheet to simplify counting, and Karen noted she was tracking them in Excel. Then she read off the list of names whose votes she had received to confirm. Karen: I'll yell out the names that I

got. James, Swan Kim, Eric Speicher, David Baxter, Laura Lynton, Pavle, Tigran, Elizabeth Geyer, Tim, Phil Hareff, Chris Craig, Karl Jordon, Michael Gurrula, Mike Vazquez, Anna Jordon, Lucas D., Victoria Geyer, Shelby Kim, Rudy, Kevin Reeve, and I have to vote myself. Anna asked if results would be shared afterward, and Karen confirmed they would.

Final Vote Tallies						
Position	Candidate	Absentee Votes	Proxy Votes	In-person Votes	Total Votes	Elected
Chair	James Beihold	19	18	16	53	√
Chair	Tigran Shaginian	31	0	4	35	
Vice-chair	Karl Jordon	17	18	16	51	√
Vice-chair	Nana Demerchian	30	0	4	34	
Treasurer	Eric Speicher	16	18	16	50	√
Treasurer	Swan Kim	30	0	4	34	
Secretary	Karen Lieu	19	18	16	53	√
Secretary	Shelby Kim	30	0	4	34	
EC Member	Liz Geyer	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Phil Hareff	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Anna Jordon	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Tim Robinson	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Greg Schiller	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Rudy Streitz	2	18	16	36	√
EC Member	Daryl Taylor	3	18	16	37	√
EC Member	Mike Vazquez	2	18	16	36	√

Note: There was one abstention.

Proxy Dispute

Tigran objected to how proxy votes were handled, accusing others of unfair practices and leaving the meeting. James noted that proxies are expected to remain confidential but suggested that a neutral third party, such as USA Fencing, could review them if contested. Karen confirmed this could be done through the National Office. Tigran specifically disputed six proxies, arguing they involved his coaches and that division affiliation changes take too long to process. Others disagreed, saying such changes can be resolved quickly. Eric concluded the matter was ultimately between Tigran and USA Fencing.

Next Board Meeting to be announced

Meeting Adjourned at 1:10pm

Respectfully submitted.

Karen Lieu (Secretary)