



## United States Mondioring Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 3, 2019

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Don Lee at 2015 hrs (or 08:15 P.M. CST). A quorum was present.

### Members Present

President	Donald Lee	Director	Francois Massart
Vice President	Paul Anthony	Director	Heather Ratynski
Secretary	Angelyn Leonberger	Director	Karen Shivers
Treasurer	Jake Scott		

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- May 2, 2019
  - Jake motioned, Paul second, to approve the March 3, 2019 Special Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
- May 27, 2019
  - Jake motioned, Angie second, to approve the March 18, 2019 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

### Officer Reports

**President** - As submitted by Don.

- “I want to address a couple things that I said in the January 2019 board of directors meeting. I strongly believe that the board of director’s purpose is to support the membership and to help the membership be successful in their training and their trials in the sport of Mondio Ring.

We are literally halfway through the first year of 2019. We have identified several problems, however as a board, I believe we have failed to address the problems effectively. We seem to spend more time finding problems in our people, instead of focusing on problems within our organization

As an example, we recognized that we do not have a policy for score books. We recognized that we have an ineffective process for selecting our FMBB team members. Both of these issues have been posted on our BOD page. The problem is that we have done very little to almost nothing to solve these identified problems.

I would like to get a commitment from each of you. Instead of focusing on issues with our people, I want us to commit to focus on solving problems. I suggest that we strive, as a board of directors, to problem solve and make this organization a better organization by focusing on the needs of our membership.

There will be times when we as a board have to deal with a problem person. But, for the most part we have a BOI that has the ability to look at the problems and come up with reasonable solutions. I suggest that we let the BOI do their work.

I recognize that all of us are volunteers. With that, I would like us all to focus on problem solving, and to let go of some of our issues from the past. Let's move USMRA and our membership forward with purpose; and then celebrate the successes."

**Vice President** - No report

**Treasurer** - Jake reported the following: Wells Fargo – \$35,497.95 PayPal \$4,958.01  
Total: \$40,455.96

**Secretary** - Angie reported the following: 2019 YTD numbers: 207 members and 23 clubs

**Director at Large** - No reports.

### **Committee Reports**

**Judge's Committee** - No report.

**Decoy Committee** - No report.

**Membership Committee** - No report.

### **AWDF Update -**

- In an email from Anne Camper, AWDF President, that was forwarded by Ann Putegnatt:
  - "Please distribute this to your membership.

To enter a trial held by an AWDF member club, you must show proof of current membership and a scorebook from any AWDF member club. You can find a list of AWDF clubs on the AWDF website. The AWDF also accepts scorebooks from international FCI organizations.

AWDF organizations will accept a breed club and a DVG scorebook at their trials.

As per the information on the AWDF website, competitors may use their USCA membership and USCA issued scorebook until June 30, 2019. Titles earned after

January 1, 2019 at UScA trials will not be recognized by AWDF member clubs. Titles earned before January 1, 2019 will be recognized.

In accordance with FCI direction, as of January 1, 2019, GSDCA judges cannot judge AWDF trials.”

### **Nationals Committee -**

- Report submitted by Jake:
  - “I haven’t gotten to finish what I originally started working on for us to discuss so here is a bulleted run down of some of the pros and cons of the event and some major points I think we need to address for years to come based on my experience this year. I would love it if each of you guys who attended and also those who didn’t but watched the event unfold via livestream or through planning could throw your thoughts, pros/cons, and anything else into this post as well.

#### **CONS\***

- communication across the board this year proved extraordinarily difficult between the three hosts, committee, board of directors, and in turn the membership/competitors.

- this led to components of the trial not being addressed or prompting last minute rushed accommodations, hectic planning etc. This would include the following;

- transportation for decoys and judges not being planned or provided. Both judges reached out to me prior to arrival asking what was going on and later to ask the hotel address so they could take a taxi or Uber. I ended up personally arranging transportation by my girlfriend who was on vacation and isn’t even a USMRA member let alone part of this event’s planning to ensure our international guests would be welcomed personally and brought to and checked into their hotels. Following this I additionally arranged transportation for Morgan as well as personally drove Jake Faas for the entire event. For our international guests it is my opinion that this is incredibly inappropriate. Our judge and jury are our guests and we should be ensuring they are welcomed appropriately.

- no judges outing or entertainment. I honestly don’t know who to ask from the 3 clubs why there was nothing arranged for our guests. My girlfriend took a day trip with Emma to the pier to see the sea lions and go out to lunch on the water. This wasn’t planned, this was a plan b because Emma’s alternative was sitting at the hotel. Celso was driven to the airport by another national committee member David Broderick. He made the comment that the view of the ocean from the highway was his first and only time seeing the beach while in the USA for the first time while spending the entire trip just a few miles away.

- sponsorship miscommunications, it came to my attention that after originally being posted, field sponsorship opportunities were later changed in description on the website to now ask for sponsors to provide their own banners after some sponsorships may have already been sold. I’m not sure if every sponsor got their

placement or not on the fence, Mahogany Gamble can absolutely add insight on this because my information is the trickle down from the last few days leading up to the event as things got really hectic.

\*In a whole most if not all of my cons come down to miscommunications, people thinking someone else was responsible for something, misunderstandings etc.

- The field was the bare minimum for a Mondioring trial let alone a championship event. While there were some really neat individual pieces of decoration and hides, the field was extremely empty.

- Food for spectators, competitors etc. was a challenge because the city did not allow food vendors, so the hosts had to cook, transport, and serve lunch.

- Merchandise fulfillment; the online orders were shipped near if not exceeding 2 weeks past the original date listed on the website.

- Official invites for Judging were sent out practically days before the event causing frustration with our Judges and their kennel clubs.

- Personal possessions of Jake Faas were lost by 2 of the hosting clubs in value of approx. \$400USD to include a bite suit bag containing; one pair of Salomon shoes, one pair of Adidas soccer cleats, a rain jacket, a knife for making sticks, and a bundle of 5 clatter sticks. Not having this bag caused Jake to have to ship his bite suit home via Fedex for \$110 the day of his return flight.

- It was expressed by the Judges that it was rather forward that USMRA without any invitation or discussion informed them they would be conducting a Judges college and assumed they would be doing this outside of the scope of judging the event. This needs to be part of the invite for this event if our organization wishes to host a Judges college and have it led by our international guest Judge.

- Judges were left with personal expenses including the parking of their vehicles at their local airports.

- The FCI Judges daily fee of 50eu was not offered or discussed.

## PROS

- The livestream; this year's livestream was from Marvel K9 and I thought it was done super well including being sorted by dog/handler team on their facebook which made it really easy for everyone to access and find specific routines. Excellent parking.

- Field location; the location was fantastic, it was 25 minutes from the airport, 10 minutes from the hotel that many competitors, the decoys, and judges were at, and just as close to the venue for the dinner and members meeting.

- Hotel arrangements; from the number of USMRA members staying at the La Quinta where the judges and decoys were with their dogs it appears like it was a really great choice and worked well for the attendees.

- Aghajani Photography provided a video highlight reel for our event for competitors to enjoy as well as share with friends/family. This was a nice touch in addition to the wonderful photos that were made available to the competitors.

My thoughts for improvement;

I think we need to fully utilize our committees to streamline the process of planning and executing our National Championship each year. I would like to discuss setting a deadline many months in advance for our Decoy committee, Judges Committee, and ourselves the National Committee to formally appoint, and invite our international jury. I think we should trust those committees to make the appropriate selections of Decoy and Judge as they are our subject matter experts within our organization. World level events and Championships the decoys and Judges are announced almost a full 12 months in advance. I don't know if that's realistic for our event, but I think 6 months would be reasonable if not 8. This would allow for proper planning, travel arrangements, formal invitations etc. I would like to see the National Committee create a true play by play check list for movement of judges, decoys, and other essential event staff, it seems that some hosts simply did not understand common etiquette when hosting an international guest. Every year we are reinventing the wheel with new venues, new clubs, new hosts, and new challenges. I think if we can put together as much structure as possible to help streamline the planning and execution of this trial it would lead to a smoother production and allow the event to continue to grow.”

#### **FCI Committee -**

- Purpose is to ensure that the USMRA is in compliance with the FCI Mondioring regulations at the end of the 5 year variance.
- David Broderick & Aida Flick were recently added. See Facebook Business below from May 7th for motions.
  - President Don Lee discussed with them the purpose of the FCI Committee.
    - How we can continue participation for non-FCI dogs.
    - Non-FCI dogs may not be able to participate at Nationals.
    - It is possible that an international judge may refuse to judge.
- Don recommends Michon Mills to Chairperson of the FCI Committee.
  - Approved, motion passed unanimously.

**International Committee -** No report.

**Election Committee -** No report.

## **Board of Inquiry -**

- As submitted via email by Angela Smith on behalf of the BOI:
  - “May 20, 2019

Board of Directors of USMRA

RE: Increased fees for complaints to the BOI

We, the BOI, as individuals and as a collective believe in the membership having a process to resolve conflicts regarding violations of the USMRA by laws. When we accepted our positions on the BOI we did so with the idea that we are a stronger organization with such a process. We have a responsibility to carry out our duties as the BOI to every member including the membership at large, the complainant, the defendant, the decoys, the judges, and all of the officers of the board as outlined by our bylaws.

Although we would, of course, prefer there be no conflicts, therefore no complaints, we believe that to be unrealistic. Unfortunately, people will have discord and sometimes that will be significant enough to generate a complaint. We are tasked to determine whether those complaints are relevant or irrelevant. We accepted these duties when we accepted the positions on the BOI.

We do not feel it is in the best interest of the organization to prevent access to individuals by charging a large fee. We also believe that the board should not allow concerns for past, present, or future complaints to justify an increase of fee to file a complaint as a deterrent.

As far as the inference that complaints are being filed based on gossip and innuendo, it is irrelevant since our task is to determine whether by-laws were violated.

Sincerely  
The BOI”

## **Unfinished Business**

- Complaint submitted against Otto Sturm by the previous BOD.
- A member complaint was sent to the Board of Inquiry on March 17, 2019 by Dave Kroyer against Don Lee, Angie Leonberger & Maggie Klein.
  - On April 19, 2019, the BOI found no charges to be relevant. This decision was unanimous.
- A member complaint was sent to the Board of Inquiry on April 12, 2019.
- A member complaint was sent to the Board of Inquiry on April 20, 2019.
  - This inquiry was withdrawn on April 22, 2019.

## **Evaluate the Status of USMRA Clubs**

- **Discuss/motion for approval of new clubs.**
  - None to approve.

## **New Business**

- Sean Knudsen sent in a request of resignation from the BOI to Don Lee. Due to time constraints of his personal life, he felt it was in the BOI's best interest.
  - With Sean stepping down, Don Lee requested that the BOD consider Mary Granda as the BOI chairperson.
  - Don motioned, Karen second, to move Mary Granda to the Chairperson position on the BOI. Motion carried unanimously.
- May 7, 2019 via Email
  - Don notified Dave Kroyer that he would be removing him from the Chairperson position of the FCI Committee.
  - Dave replied on May 8, 2019 and requested to "resign from all USMRA committee's effective immediately."
- Inappropriate comments on the Official USMRA Facebook group.
  - Discussion was had regarding comment threads sometimes becoming a bit heated, leading to inappropriate comments being made amongst members.
  - Reevaluate Facebook group rules.
  - Repercussions for personal attacks, religion, etc.
  - Code of conduct - pinned to top.
  - Heather - brainstorm ideas for moderating Official page based on personal experience working with a large organization that is heavily on social media.
- Discussion was had to consider creating a separate USMRA Facebook group for official announcements only.
  - Posts would be to disseminate important information, trials, announcements, policies, etc. Commenting would be turned off to ensure that social posts did not clutter the feed.
- Determine who accessed USMRA paypal and made funds transfer on 01/21/2019
  - Was on the agenda but was not addressed during this meeting.
- Discussions for additional security measures for our account information and access.
  - It appears that previous BOD members still have their personal information listed on the banking and or insurance accounts. Look into removing their information and ensuring that current BOD members are listed.
- Insurance payments due
  - Directors & Officers through the Hartford is due and was mailed to Angie.
  - Will send to Jake for payment.

## **Facebook Business**

- March 1, 2019 via Facebook
  - Jake motioned, Paul second, to open a USMRA bank account at Chase Bank and transfer all funds from the Wells Fargo account and subsequently close it. Heather - Aye Francois - Aye
  - No vote by Karen & Angie.
  - It was recommended by Don that an official audit should be completed prior to changing banking institutions.
  - During his time in California for the Nationals, Jake was able to stop by a local Wells Fargo location to be added to the USMRA bank account.
  - 4/15/2019 - Angie requested that Jake consider withdrawing the motion as he is now listed on the Wells Fargo account.
  - Jake requested to withdraw his initial motion.
  
- March 23, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don motioned, Karen second, to move Mary Granda to the Chair position on the BOI. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- March 28, 2019 via Facebook
  - Jake motioned to approve, Paul second, temporary membership from April 12-14 for Alexa Dufour and Christian Mattudsi to participate in the 2019 USMRA National Championship.
  - Angie, Francois, Karen - yay
  - Heather - no vote
  - Neither competitor signed up for Nationals.
  
- April 6, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don presented the BOI's recommendation of Angela Smith and Ray Turnborn for alternate positions on the BOI.
  - Discussion was had that it's best to separate the recommendations.
  - Don withdrew his initial motion.
  
- April 12, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don presented the BOI's recommendation of Angela Smith for an alternate position on the BOI, second by Paul. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- April 12, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don presented the BOI's recommendation of Ray Turnbow for an alternate position on the BOI, second by Paul. Motion carried with majority, one nay.
  
- May 2, 2019 via Facebook
  - Jake motioned, Paul second, to approve the March 3, 2019 Special Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

- May 4, 2019 via Facebook
  - Jake motioned, Paul second, to approve Francois Massart, Maggie Klein and Paul Anthony to represent the USMRA at the 2019 FMBB.
  - Yay - Francois, Angie
- May 7, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don motioned, Jake second, to add John Lugo to the Decoy Committee. Motion carried unanimously.
- May 7, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don motioned, Angie second, to add David Broderick to the FCI Committee. Motion passed by majority, one abstain.
- May 7, 2019 via Facebook
  - Don motioned, Angie second, to add Aida Flick to the FCI Committee. Motion passed unanimously.
- May 22, 2019 via Facebook
  - Approve March 18, 2019 Meeting minutes
    - Jake motioned, Angie second, to approve the March 18, 2019 meeting minutes.
- June 3, 2019
  - Don recommends Michon Mills to Chairperson of the FCI Committee. Approved, motion passed unanimously.

**Member's Concerns** - Any concerns that USMRA Members may have.

- Discussion was had on the USMRA group page regarding neutered dogs being allowed to compete at Nationals.
  - Once the variance expires, it will be a non-issue. It states neutered dogs may not compete. Spayed female may compete.
  - Variance does not state neutered dogs.
  - 2016-2018 neutered dogs have competed at Nationals.
  - Don recalled conversations with Frans Jansen when the variance was first created. The primary concern was regarding mixed breeds or dogs without FCI registration.
- Submitted by Gail Marit to entire BOD via FB messenger:
  - “Hoping I didn’t leave someone off this group. I am so sorry if I did. As an active member of the usmra, former bod member and former chair of the boi, I want to share my concern with the number of complaints being filed with the boi. It seems to me that this valued committee is being used as a venue for personal vendetta. I think we can agree that there have been more complaints filed in the last 2 years than in the history of this organization, probably all combined. I believe it is vital that the bod address this situation. I also believe that boi members must have experience In order to deal fairly and quickly with this foolishness. I know the

bod has been the target of many of these complaints and that may make you hesitant to make some changes. That concern needs to be set aside. I would like to formally suggest a \$500 fee to file a complaint with each complaint incurring a separate fee. If the complaint is legitimate the member will get their money back. If it is not this will deter this silliness. This has been suggested before when the fee was changed to \$150. It is hugely embarrassing to this organization that last year and this year we have had disgruntled handlers complain formally about our nationals field help and dignitaries. Both years our international judges have been made aware of our handler complaints by being required to dispute unfounded claims based on poor sportsmanship. This is a huge problem for this organization. Our bod having to spend hours justifying decisions because of unfounded complaints will certainly make getting great members to work on this bod nearly impossible. Please please consider your options to fix this problem and please put my request for a fee change on your next agenda. I also think adding a clause at the bottom of our Registration form stating that and complaints or concerns regarding the trial must be addressed prior to the judges signing score books. By registering each participant agrees to the terms of the trial. Thank you.”

- Discussion was had regarding changing the fee for submitting a formal complaint. One possible option was a flat fee plus an additional fee if it was found to be unfounded. It was determined that it could be exhausting to chase people for additional fees. Best to keep it as a flat fee for submission with a refund available should the complaint be founded as per the BOI.
  - A member on the Official page had suggested staggered pricing that increased with each formal complaint submitted. If that were to occur, no price change should occur if a member has multiple founded complaints. The biggest downfall to this would be the additional work placed upon, likely, the secretary in needing to keep track of formal complaint submissions and pricing.
  - The BOD did agree that an increase might be a good option to help dissuade unfounded complaints being submitted.
- Jake motioned, Paul second, to increase BOI submission fee to \$250.
  - Motion passed unanimously.
- Filing complaints and false complaints.
  - Previously covered in other areas of the minutes regarding unfounded complaints.
- OB judge qualifications - was brought up by a few USMRA members to Paul.
  - Stepping stone for judging for those inside the MR organization.
  - Didn't appear to be Mondio people helping Mondio people.
    - Even though some members have titled multiple dogs in Mondio, these members still did not entirely fit the OB judge criteria.
    - Must have MR1 to submit to be an OB judge.
    - Requirements include judging.
      - To the interested members, the requirements seemed more open to AKC/UKC judges.
      - Purpose for the previous judging experience is that judging, trialing and training are all vastly different.

- Can revisit the criteria for judging.
- Nationals hospitality concerns.
  - Primarily addressed by Jake's National Committee report.
    - Judge's were expected to plan their own transportation once they landed. No outings or meals planned.
    - Per diem was not offered. \$400 stipend for each judge was not received.
    - Apology letters to judges on behalf of USMRA. Will plan to reimburse judges' expenses.
- As submitted by Michon:
  - "Discuss the status of NARA titles. The International Rules of Mondioring allow for reciprocity with Ring scores but if SCC no longer recognizes NARA, I dont know that we as an FCI organization can accept NARA scores for reciprocity. Or accept their books as FCI requires an FCI recognized organization scorebook."
    - Frans Jansen sent a message that our judges should not sign the NARA books.
    - SCC still recognizes NARA but they are not allowed to use French judges or decoys due to NARA not being in compliance with the new palisade.
      - NARA had voted at the beginning of the year on if the membership wanted to immediately comply or wait until the end of the current trial period. Majority of the membership requested to keep the old palisade (without moving ramp) until the end of the trial season. 2019-2020 will begin the use of the new palisade design.
    - Not enough info to discuss at this time.
- Anonymous:
  - "Jake stated on FB that "We just got in a lot of trouble for transferring Nara scores without permission....". What trouble is USMRA in and what did USMRA do wrong"
    - The USMRA did not get into trouble, there was a disagreement regarding scores having been previously entered into Maggie Klein's AWDF book.
    - At the suggestion of Anne Camper, the previous AWDF book that contained the NARA scores, was mailed to the NARA secretary. Another AWDF book, without NARA scores, was issued to Maggie Klein.
- Anonymous:
  - "how can a usmra member be removed from a championship team if that team has not been voted on or approved by the usmra bod yet?"
    - Last year's team (2018) was voted on as noted in February minutes and January's minutes of the prior year.
    - AWDF announced the team before our BOD voted.
      - It was discussed that the USMRA BOD do not need to vote on the FMBB team. Yes, the BOD did not follow the correct procedure as outlined in our USMRA/AWMA selection criteria, but that procedure still does not require a vote by the BOD.
      - The BOD did prematurely vote to rescind the FMBB packet submitted by Maggie Klein as there was important information that we did not yet have.



- As submitted by Mahogany May 19, 2019:
  - “In the most recent BOD notes, comments made by a USMRA member to the BOI clearly address a report I presented, then retracted, to the BOI. I would like to take a moment to address this based on my decade of experience in upper level, international non-profit management.

The equivalent of the BOI in my organization played a critical role. Their primary role was not to exact punishment onto members or leaders within the organization, but to identify where change needed to be made. Their connection to the BOD allowed them to be a healthy voice when members or leaders of the organization felt change was warranted, and they acted as both a buffer and an accountability manager for the BOD in this regard. I was an upper level manager for nine of my ten years at the company, and within those years I encouraged numerous people to report to the BOI equivalent. If employees that I supervised had challenges with me or saw areas that they believed would benefit from change, I encouraged them to voice their concerns in a way that could result in change to the most appropriate body within the organization. All managers recognized our limitations to spur change beyond our own direct areas of responsibility. Ultimately, all members and leaders were empowered to speak up when they believed it was necessary. This openness and involvement on various levels created an atmosphere of acceptance, accountability, and continual growth and progress.

In my short time within the USMRA, I have observed that there is a culture of silence and intimidation from voicing concerns. It is always seen as punitive to all involved, and members are very quick to ridicule those who speak up. They are called snowflakes, thin-skinned, troublemakers, or silly and unsportsmanlike. An organization where people are punished for openness, mistakes, or simply speaking up cannot grow significantly.

I withdrew my BOI report because the intention with which I wrote it was far from the way it was received, perhaps by my own fault and perhaps because of the culture within the USMRA. Rather than it being a voice that could potentially result in the growth of the organization as a whole, it quickly became a conflict of sides and a platform for widespread gossip. Perhaps the USMRA can identify best practices to initiate change, which would be especially helpful for newer members of the organization, whose voices are valuable. My observation within my non-profit was that the two critical keys to unparalleled expansion were: 1) the ability to make mistakes without fear of punishment, which fosters creativity and idea sharing; and 2) the ability to voice concerns without fear of punishment. Recent research shows that the strongest U.S. companies where company success and employee/employer happiness are both at their peak also adopt these two key principles.

USMRA members are quick to be punished for sharing or motioning for change, sometimes in open forum by members of the BOD and sometimes by other members. If there is a better avenue for members to express concerns to a body of the organization that can impact change, I encourage both the BOD and BOI to

make it known and to encourage the membership to use it without prejudice. I believe the organization will see incredible growth with further openness and acceptance, of which the ability to be honest and to be oneself is paramount.”

- The BOD encourages the membership to express their opinions and concerns with no fear of backlash. All members are welcome to reach out to any and all of the BOD members.
- Anonymous submitted May 20, 2019
  - “The March meeting minutes are 63 days late. The bylaws state that meeting minutes are to be made available to the membership within 60 days of the meeting.”
    - The BOD acknowledges our shortcoming and will work harder to get the meeting minutes out in a timely manner, as listed in the by-laws.
      - One note that the meeting minutes were 3 days late, not 63, at the time of the member’s concern submission.

### **Announcements**

Next regular BOD meeting - June 17, 2019 at 8:00 PM CST

### **Adjournment**

No objection, meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 2353 hours (11:53 P.M. CST)

Angelyn Leonberger  
USMRA Secretary

**Approved (Approved as Corrected)  
BOD Electronic approval**

Angelyn Leonberger  
USMRA Secretary  
August 2, 2019