

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Jan 18, 2024 | WFencing Board of Directors

[Calendar event link](#)

Agenda

Items requiring board action are shown in **boldface**.

Items included for information/discussion purposes are shown in *italics*.



Standing Items (10 minutes)

- Call the meeting to order (Cathleen)
- Check-in – How are you doing? (All)
- **Review and approve meeting agenda (this document)**
- **Review and approve meeting minutes:**
- **Treasurer's Report** (Jen)
- Chair's Report (Cathleen)

Committee Updates (20 minutes)

- Professional Development Committee (Jen)
- Social and Media Committee (Adeline, Kathy)
- Marketing Committee (Heather)
- Allies Committee (Taro)
- Tournament Committee (Rich)
- Executive Committee (Vickie)

Old Business (15 minutes)

- **Athena Project**
- Proposed 2024 Budget  Draft Budget - 2024.xls
- Draft Strategic Plan  Strategic Plan Draft.doc
- **Bylaws Changes**

New Business (10 minutes)

Social at Junior Olympics

Housekeeping (5 minutes)

- Announcements and review of action items
- Date of the next meeting – Quarterly Board Meeting, Thursday April 13, 2023 at 11:30 am Eastern Time

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Minutes

Attendees

Board Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHUNG-FEDER, Adeline<input type="checkbox"/> GRIFFITH, Christine<input type="checkbox"/> HAMMONDS, Carissa<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILLER, Vickie<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OLDHAM, Jennifer<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RANDALL, Cathleen<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHANKWILER, Heather<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VAIL, Kathy<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WEISS, Rich<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YAMASHITA, Taro	Others/Guests: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● KASS, Sara● FOURNIER, Madison●
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- Meeting Called to order: 11:35 AM Eastern Time
- **Review and approve meeting agenda (this document) -- Approved**
- **Review and approve meeting minutes:** [Oct 2023 Quarterly meeting minutes](#) -- **Approved**
- **Treasurer's Report (Jen) -- Approved**
 - Current balance: \$8,144.92
 - No substantial change from last meeting;
- **Chair's Report (Cathleen):**
 - Current: 9 lifetime members; 45 charter members; (as of 1/17/2024)
 - Plans to expand membership;
 - Started discussion on website overhaul-- more to come;

Committee Updates (20 minutes)

- **Professional Development Committee (Jen)**
 - Current members: Jen Oldham, Sandra Marchant, Adeline , Nat Goodhartz, Cathleen Randall, Vickie Miller.
 - With the decline of demand for online professional development sessions as the pandemic recedes, this group is shifting focus back to more in-person activities. The Athena project is one project.
 - **Athena Project**

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- From the [published notice](#). “The Athena Project’s mission is to develop and support young women leaders in fencing.”
- This is considered a replacement for the past Colloquium project. It has similar goals:
 - Training opportunities for athletes;
 - Development of athletes into coaches;
 - Development of women coaches;
- Athena Project sub-committee
 - Members: Michael McTigue, Jennie Salmon, Adeline Chung-Feder, Jen Oldham, Sandra Marchant.
 - This group has met approximately weekly over the past 4 to 6 weeks.
- First event hosted at Northwest Fencing Center in December 2023 was successful and well-attended.
- Registration opens 2/1/2024 for Summer Athena Project event (Aug 11-17, 2024).
- Have Budget, need fundraising -- working with USFA. Includes recruiting for sponsorships.
- Clarifications made in response to questions by board member, Taro Yamashita, who was primarily curious about how men (allies) might be able to participate in or connect with the Athena Project:
 - No men will be allowed as participants in the Athena project. This under insistence from both WFencing and NWFC.
 - Men may make sponsoring donations.
 - While the Athena Project is a replacement for the Colloquium, Allies could run something like Colloquium if interested and motivated that could be co-ed.
- Social and Media Committee (Adeline, Kathy)
 - Kathy stepping down as Vice Chair of USFCA in order to do WFencing work.
 - Planning for an event for the 2024 JOs has started.
 - Grassroots discussion at other events to meld with this (and other) social events.
- Marketing Committee (Heather)
 - Heather Shankwiler presented several questions to the board to “paint the picture” of the scope of the thinking that she is doing. Essentially, this “picture” has the key features:
 - Need to define the focus/identity of WFencing itself as it is perceived by others
 - Need to set priorities within WFencing, especially given our limited resources of people and money
 - Need to identify market segments and to provide each one with tangible benefits of membership and participation in WFencing

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- Heather then posed questions to the rest of the board seeking decisions and directions:
 - Identify the key focal events for marketing priority. Heather recommended at most 2 such events. Vickie Miller agreed. They are:
 - Athena Project -- August 2024
 - WFencing-sponsored tournament (RYC or similar) -- Date TBD.
 - Heather pointed out the connection between the events we choose to sponsor and the target audiences/markets. Whereas WFencing started out being an organization for women professionals in fencing, it has involved to include athletes. This is reflected in the Athena project.
 - With events and target markets better defined, the next piece is to plan how to use the events to drive (paid) membership growth.
 - Should membership be restructured? If so, how?
 - The board generally agreed that YES, restructuring was a good idea, but did not have time to discuss HOW.
 - Heather quickly outlined possible membership classes (Allies, Coaches) and some tangible benefits to membership (discounts, early registration to events, content access). Fleshing out the membership classes, the benefits, and the mapping between them is still TBD.
- Allies Committee (Taro) -- In the interests of time, update skipped in favor of Tournament Committee update.
- Tournament Committee (Rich)
 - Presented the idea of a WFencing tournament, which presents the opportunity to connect the values of WFencing to all aspects of a tournament. The opportunity to reach all classes of people associated with fencing (athletes, referees, parents, coaches, etc.) through various aspects of the tournament, such as clinics, or even through subtle changes in how things are currently done (such as layout, hiring, assigning, etc.)
 - First step will be to win a bid to host a tournament from USA Fencing.
 - Jen Oldham and Rich Weiss have been working with USA Fencing in order to be able to submit a hosting bid as WFencing. Rich and Jen have a meeting scheduled with USA Fencing's Phil Andrews (CEO) and Brad Suchorski (director of membership, service, and growth).
 - Cleveland State University, where Jen Oldham is now head fencing coach, is a possible venue for the tournament bid.
 - The current bid schedule allows for an RYC/RJCC. Rich pointed out that it may be possible to add an ROC to the RYC/RJCC bid later.
 - Bids are due March 15, 2024 for the 2024-2025 season.

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- Rich has volunteered to absorb any costs associated with submitting this bid.
- Heather Shankwiler expressed concern about the timing of the tournament, and how it will fit with the Athena project. The hope is that this will be resolved in the coming weeks as discussions with CSU continue.
- Jen Oldham noted that in the future, such tournaments could be done in each Region.
- Sara Kass: stepped forward as resource for Northern Ohio regional event .planning (including Cleveland). Rich would like to engage Molly Hill, also.
- **Motion: to put up WFencing specific bid for 2024-2025 tournament season AND to stand up necessary committees to work on this.**
 - **APPROVED**
- Executive Committee (Vickie)
 - Update skipped due to time constraints.

Old Business (15 minutes)

- **Athena Project**
 - <https://www.wfencing.org/post/the-athena-project-coming-soon>.
 - **Motion: to approve proposed budget for Athena project, and WF support for Athena, solicit fundraising funds to support project.**
 - **Approved.**
- Proposed 2024 Budget  Draft Budget - 2024.xls
 - EMail vote? (Unanimous consent)
 - **Special meeting: Feb 8, 2024 11:30 AM eastern time. AGenda to cover only the WFencing 2024 budget and strategic plan.**
- Draft Strategic Plan  Strategic Plan Draft.doc
 - Need to have discussion to revisit
 - Table to email vote on budget and strategic plan
- **Bylaws Changes**
 - No progress has been made on bylaws changes since previous decision to scrap the work that had been done in the summer of 2023. That work was scrapped due to identification of flaws in scope of proposed changes.

New Business

- Social at Junior Olympics (Covered earlier)

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Housekeeping

- Announcements and review of action items
- Date of the next meeting – Quarterly Board Meeting, Thursday April 13, 2023 at 11:30 am Eastern Time
- **Meeting adjourned at:** 12:55 PM Eastern Time.

Action items

- Jen-Send Athena project spreadsheet info to Heather
- Heather: Send Taro documents related to marketing focus for board.

Summary of Actions

- APPROVED: Agenda for this meeting
- APPROVED: Minutes from previous meeting
- APPROVED: Treasurer's Report
- APPROVED: To put up WFencing specific bid to host a USA Fencing tournament during the 2024-2025 season, and to stand up any subcommittees needed to complete such work
- APPROVED: Athena Project budget, WFencing support for Athena Project, and to solicit funds to support the Athena Project
- Special Meeting called: Feb 8, 2024 11:30 AM Eastern Time. Agenda to be limited to:
 - WFencing 2024 budget
 - WFencing Strategic Plan