

# MINUTES

## 2016 Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Division of USA Fencing

The 2016 annual meeting of the Tennessee Division of USA Fencing ("USAF")(the "Meeting") was held on Saturday, July 30, 2016, at the Music City Fencing Club, located at 2543(Rear) Lebanon Pike, Donelson (Nashville), Tennessee 37214. Notice of Meeting (the "Notice") had been provided by email from USA Fencing/Tennessee Division earlier in the month. (See **Attachment A** to these Minutes for a copy of the Notice.) Six members of the Division and one guest attended the Meeting. (See **Attachment B** for the names of the attendees.) Four other members had submitted their voting proxies to the Chairman. (See **Attachment C** for the names of the members voting by proxy.)

### Contents of these Minutes

- A. Call to Order.
- B. Chairman's Introductory Remarks and Old Business.
- C. Actions taken at the Meeting. (Not in sequential order.)
- D. New Business – Announcements and Administrative Policies.
- E. Election of 2016-17 Officers.
- F. Annual Budget and Financial Transactions Report.
- G. Adjournment.
- H. Attachments to these Minutes.

### **A. Call to Order.**

Chairman Robert Piraino called the Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. CDT. In the absence of the Division's Secretary/Treasurer, member Ron Wilson volunteered to record the minutes of the Meeting. There was no objection to member Wilson acting as recording secretary for the Meeting.

### **B. Chairman's Introductory Remarks and Old Business.**

Chairman Piraino provided an introductory overview of the Division's major activities during the past season. He enthusiastically noted that more clubs had held more tournaments during the 2015-16 season than had been held the year before. He also was pleased to learn that a couple of clubs intend to conduct at least one more additional tournament than they conducted last year. He proudly noted that the Division was well represented at the USA Fencing National Championships held in Dallas earlier this month. He pointed out that several Tennessee fencers achieved respectable finishes in the rankings for the National Championships, and that one Tennessee fencer won the USAF National Championship Gold Medal in the Women's Foil Veteran Age 50 event. The Tennessee Division gives special recognition and congratulations to Kristin Vines (Coach, The Baylor School, Chattanooga) for this significant accomplishment.

Chairman Piraino explained that he wanted the Division to work harder and be more visible in helping the individual clubs across the state promote the sport of fencing and encourage more school-age kids and adults to take up fencing for recreation and fitness benefits, as well as being able to participate in organized and well run competitions within the state. Chairman Piraino believes that more Tennessee fencers and more Tennessee tournaments will lead to positive benefits for Tennessee's individual clubs and the Division as a whole.

There was no known unfinished official business carried over from last year's annual Division Meeting, so Chairman Piraino opened the floor for any and all topics that Division members had on their minds and wanted to discuss. The most significant of those topics are reflected in the voting actions that were taken during the meeting (see Section C of these Minutes), or discussed separately with no voting action taken (see Section D of these Minutes).

### **C. Actions Taken at the Meeting.** (Not in sequential order.)

Discussions of a wide range of topics and members' interests were discussed throughout the entirety of the Meeting. Member approval actions were taken regarding some of the ideas, while others were deemed to fall within the existing authority of the Chairman, in consultation with the Division's other Officers. Other ideas were to be further researched and developed by the Chairman, other Officers, or interested members. If necessary, the approval of Division members would be sought at a later date before implementing any such ideas.

The purpose of this Section C is to provide in one Section all of the actions that, after much discussion, were formally presented and voted on by Division members. The sequence of the presentation below is not necessarily the same sequence in which the topics were discussed and acted upon during the Meeting.

In addition to electing officers for 2016-17 (*see* Section E of these Minutes), six other voting actions were taken at the Meeting, as follows:

#### **1. Procedures for Clubs to qualify for Division-sanctioned tournaments.**

During the 2016-17 fencing tournament season, the following qualification procedures shall apply to enable the Division to sanction club-sponsored tournaments:

- a.** The Division's tournament fee for each club's sanctioned tournament will remain \$5.00 per fencer, per tournament (i.e., one \$5.00 fee per fencer, regardless the number of events in which the fencer may participate in the same tournament).
- b.** The Division's tournament fee shall only apply to a club's first three sanctioned tournaments held during the same fencing season (typically August 1st through July 31<sup>st</sup>). For the fourth sanctioned tournament (or more), the Division's tournament fee shall be waived.
- c.** If the Division does not receive the club's payment of the tournament fee within 30 calendar days after the Division submits its tournament fee invoice to the club, then any request from the delinquent club seeking Division sanction for its next tournament cannot be granted, until the Division has received the club's delinquent tournament fee payment for all prior tournaments for which the Division has submitted invoice(s) to the club, and more than 30 calendar days have elapsed without the Division receiving the club's tournament fee payment(s) .

**Purpose.** The purpose for clarifying these fee payment procedures related to Division sanctioned tournaments is to ensure that the Division timely receives funds to help defray the Division's cost in connection with sanctioning and administering club-sponsored tournaments. In addition, by limiting the Division's tournament fee requirement to only the first three sanctioned tournaments held by one club during the same fencing season, the Division hopes to encourage clubs to sponsor as many sanctioned tournaments during the season as they can.

*Motion:* Vice Chair Joe Oliverius.

*Second:* Member Robert Szokolay.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

**2. Bylaws Amendment – Allow non-officer Members to be appointed by the Division officers to attend any Division tournament and represent the Division.** ARTICLE III, SECTION 8 of the Division's Bylaws shall be amended to clarify that the "official Division representative" who must be present at every Division-sanctioned tournament may be any Division member in good standing, who has been appointed in good faith by the Chairman or any Vice-Chair.

**Purpose:** The purpose for this amendment is to clearly provide for the Division's flexibility to meet the requirement of ARTICLE III, SECTION 8 of the Bylaws, which states that at least one "official Division representative" must be present at every Division-sanctioned tournament. Clarifying the Division's

flexibility to allow the Chairman to appoint a non-officer to be the Division's representative at a tournament is important, because more sanctioned tournaments are expected to be held during the 2016-17 season (and in the future), and the geography of Tennessee creates long travel distances among widespread tournament locations.

*Motion:* Vice Chair Joe Oliverius.

*Second:* Member Tom Knowles.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

**3. Bylaws Amendment –Timing of the Division's Annual Meeting.** ARTICLE VI, SECTION 1 of the Division's Bylaws shall be amended to provide that the Annual Meeting of the Division shall be held "on or after" the date of the Division's National Qualifying Tournament.

**Purpose.** The purpose for this amendment is to provide flexibility for setting the date for the Division's Annual Meeting in relation to any Division tournament. The current Bylaw provision requires the Division's annual meeting to be "held during the annual division championship." Holding a business meeting on the same day of a tournament is not practical, because most Division members, who would travel to a tournament location, would also likely be participating in the tournament.

*Motion:* Vice Chair Joe Oliverius.

*Second:* Member Robert Szokolay.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

**4. "Tennessee Fencing" introductory brochure or packet.** The Division shall design and produce a high quality brochure or information packet to be given to new members of all USAF/Division registered fencing clubs across the state.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the brochure or packet is to welcome new fencers into the sport and provide them (and their parents) helpful information about participating in the sport. It also will introduce them to the Tennessee Division, which is a partner with their local club in helping them have a good early experience with the sport of fencing. The Division's officers will be diligent in controlling the costs of such an introductory brochure, which costs shall be borne by the Division. The details of the method of distribution of the brochure will be determined as the project progresses.

*Motion:* Chairman Piraino.

*Second:* Member Robert Szokolay.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

**5. Certificate for new fencers who complete their introductory training at their local club.** The Division, working with the clubs, shall award to any new Tennessee fencer, who completes his or her club's first level of training, an attractive certificate that recognizes the novice fencer's hard work and achievement to become a Tennessee fencer.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the certificate is to encourage new fencers (both youth and adults) to be proud of their accomplishment and further encourage them to continue their enjoyment and training in the sport of fencing. It is envisioned that the certificate will be well designed and bear the signatures of both the local club's senior officer or coach and the signature of the Tennessee Division's Chairman. The costs of the certificates shall be borne by the Division. The precise procedures for coordinating with the clubs and establishing uniform criteria for distributing the certificates will be developed as the project progresses.

*Motion:* Chairman Piraino.

*Second:* Member Matt Cooper.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

**6. Division Patches.** The Division shall design and produce a Division patch, intended for fencers to wear along with their club's patch, if available, as a statement of pride and as recognition of the Tennessee fencer's statewide fencing family, standing along side his or her local club family.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Division patch is to foster recognition by all Tennessee fencers that in addition to their local affiliations, they also are members of a state-wide community of athletes and coaches, who are promoting fencing all across the State of Tennessee. It is anticipated that novice fencers, experienced fencers, and coaches all will be eligible to receive the patch, if they qualify. It is further anticipated that qualifying for the Division patch will in some manner be tied to a fencer's (and his or her coach's) participation in one or more Tennessee Division sanctioned tournaments. In addition, if feasible, there may be some form of monetary incentive granted to the clubs in connection with its fencers (and coaches) qualifying for the Division patch. The costs of the patches shall be borne by the Division. The precise requirements for qualifying for the patch and the specific distribution procedures will be developed as the project progresses.

*Motion:* Vice Chair Joe Oliverius.

*Second:* Member Robert Szokolay.

*Voting Results:* Unanimous approval.

## **D. New Business - Announcements and Administrative Policies.**

Under this Section D, there is a summary of three important topics that were addressed during the Meeting, but no vote of the Division's members was needed in relation to these matters. These matters could have a significant impact on the Division's oversight and administrative responsibilities related to Tennessee fencing.

**1. Schedule of Tennessee Clubs' sanctioned tournaments.** Chairman Piraino announced that on July 18, 2016, he had posted on the Division's web page a request that Tennessee clubs interested in hosting sanctioned tournaments for the 2016-17 season provide him as soon as possible the dates and locations of the tournaments they are planning for the coming season. He intends to follow up his request and ask all the clubs to respond with their proposed schedules before September. He explained that it is critically important for the Division to be aware of all of the state's tournament dates in advance, not only for sanctioning purposes, but also for creating an opportunity for the Division to suggest scheduling coordination designed to avoid as many tournament date conflicts as possible. Chairman Piraino indicated that one of the Division's goals for the coming season is to encourage Tennessee clubs to cross-participate in each other's sanctioned tournaments. Not only would this enhance Tennessee fencers' skills development, but it also may create an element of camaraderie among fencers in different geographic areas of Tennessee; perhaps foster a sense of vigorous inter-club competition; and over time, maybe even generate a few friendly inter-club rivalries.

**2. New USA Fencing Rule mandates that all sanctioned tournaments must obtain the services of at least one rated Referee.** Chairman Piraino and Vice Chair Oliverius announced that the new USAF Rule regarding the use of tournament referees will become effective on August 1, 2016. The essence of the rule is that every sanctioned tournament conducted by any registered club or any Division of USA Fencing must have at least one rated referee working at the tournament. If not, then USA Fencing will not sanction the tournament. Chairman Piraino and Vice Chair Oliverius explained their understanding of the new rule to the Meeting and pointed out the potential impact it could have on Division-sanctioned tournaments in Tennessee.

To prepare the Division for complying with the new rule in an efficient and cost effective manner, Chairman Piraino intends for the Division to host a referee seminar (followed by an observational tournament) as soon as feasible – during September or early October this year. The Division will widely publicize its referee seminar and encourage as many Tennessee fencers as possible, and the parents of young Tennessee fencers, to enroll in the seminar and complete the observational tournament. Chairman

Piraino and Vice Chair Oliverius speculated that the cost of the seminar per enrollee could be in the range of \$80 or more, but if feasible, the Division will try to find some method to keep the tuition as low as possible for Tennessee enrollees. The training not only will enlarge the pool of qualified referees from which the Division may draw for its sanctioned tournaments, but it also will teach active fencers (and interested parents) the details of the fencing rules, and how those rules are currently being interpreted. Chairman Piraino's optimistic goal for the Division during the 2016-17 season is to double the number of qualified referees in Tennessee and to increase the numerical rating of existing Tennessee referees by at least one numeric value. **[NOTE: Three days after the date of the Division Meeting, USA Fencing issued a notice on August 2, 2016, that the effective date of the new rated referee rule has been extended to August 1, 2017.]**

**3. Promoting the public's awareness of Tennessee fencing.** One of Meeting's attendees observed that based on her friends and work colleagues, she believes that relatively few Tennesseans are aware of the fencing opportunities that are available to them within the state. Chairman Piraino agreed with that observation and explained that as Chairman of the Division, he personally has been thinking about what role the Division could play in helping the individual clubs "get the word out" in their communities about Tennessee fencing. To that end, he has had several ideas for promoting fencing in Tennessee, some of which he is already working on.

**a. Enhancement of the Division's Website and Social Media.** Chairman Piraino has, and will continue as time permits, to expand and improve the Division's website and its presence on social media. For example, (i) he is considering placing more basic information about fencing on these sites, designed to pique the interest of non-fencers in the sport; and (ii) he may institute a Tennessee fencers blog page linked to the sites, and invite Tennessee fencers and coaches to contribute short essays about the sport of fencing, such as how much they enjoy the sport, training tips, tactical tips, fitness benefits, and the overall fun and sense of accomplishment that comes with participating in a highly disciplined and unique sport.

**b. Traditional advertising techniques.** Chairman Piraino noted that there may be a place for traditional advertising techniques to help promote Tennessee fencing. Television ads and small social oriented newspapers (e.g., *Nashville Scene*) can be effective in promoting recreational sports. Internet ads are also a possibility. These advertising ideas are only concepts for now, but are being considered.

**c. Photos and videos depicting Tennessee fencing.** To help Chairman Piraino implement some of his Tennessee fencing promotional ideas, he asked Division members at the Meeting to spread the word that he would like to receive from clubs, coaches, and fencers across the state any photos and videos they would like to submit to help promote the history and current status of Tennessee fencing. He is looking for photos (old and new) and videos, that depict fencing-related activities, such as tournament medal ceremonies, fencers actively fencing, fencers hanging out together at their club, and coaches coaching – plus anything else that could be interesting, informative, or even funny, as long as it is in good taste and related to Tennessee fencing, past or present.

## **E. Election of 2016-17 Officers.**

In accordance with ARTICLE IV of the Division's Bylaws, four officers were elected at the Meeting. Prior to the Meeting, an advance nomination of member Ron Wilson to serve as Secretary/Treasurer had been received. (See the Meeting Notice, **Attachment A.**) (See also **Attachment D** for a summary of member Wilson's qualifications for this position.) In accordance with ARTICLE VII, SECTION 1 of the Bylaws, Chairman Piraino opened the floor for additional officer nominations. There were none. Based on informal communications prior to the Meeting, Chairman Piraino understood that, in addition to himself, the current 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair also would be willing to serve again, if re-elected to their respective positions. Chairman Piraino called a vote separately for each of the four officer positions. In each case, there was no opposition and each officer was unanimously elected or re-elected as follows:

Chair – Robert Piraino (Music City Fencing)  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair – Lindsey Cheney (Cheney Fencing)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair – Joseph Oliverius (Cheney Fencing)  
Secretary/Treasurer – Ron Wilson (Cumberland d’Escrime)

In accordance with ARTICLE IV of the Bylaws, these officers will serve through the Division’s next annual Meeting in 2017; or until their resignation; or until otherwise removed in accordance with ARTICLE IV, SECTIONS 6 or 7 of the Bylaws.

#### **F. Annual Budget and Financial Transactions Report.**

Due to the absence from the Meeting of the Division’s prior 2015-16 Secretary/Treasurer, these two reports, which are provided for in ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4 of the Bylaws, were not available for the Meeting. To the extent available, the Division’s financial records were delivered to the newly elected Secretary/Treasurer. Chairman Piraino and Vice Chair Oliverius requested the new Secretary/Treasurer to review, analyze, and organize the Division’s existing financial records and report his findings to the officers of the Division. Newly elected Secretary/Treasurer Wilson stated that he intends to deliver to the Division’s 2017 Annual Meeting an appropriate budget and a financial transactions report in accordance with ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4 of the Bylaws. In the meantime, in consultation with the Division’s other officers, Secretary/Treasurer Wilson, after studying and organizing the Division’s financial records now in his possession, hopes to be able to compile an interim report for the Division’s offices reflecting the Division’s current financial status, even if some data must be estimated based on outside sources, such as records available from the Division’s current bank or banks and/or USA Fencing administrators.

#### **G. Adjournment.**

There being no further business or discussions brought before the Meeting, member Tom Knowles moved to adjourn the Meeting, which motion was seconded by Vice Chair Joe Oliverius. Hearing no objection, Chairman Piraino thanked everyone for taking the time to come and participate in the Meeting, and he adjourned the Meeting at 6:50 p.m. CDT.

**H. Attachments to these Minutes.** (Copies of these Attachments are available upon request to the Division’s Secretary/Treasurer. Please email requests to [tennesseefencing@gmail.com](mailto:tennesseefencing@gmail.com)).

- A – Notice of the Meeting delivered to Division members via email from USA Fencing/Tennessee Division.
- B – List of names of attendees present at the Meeting.
- C – List of names of Division members voting at the Meeting by proxy.
- D – Qualifications Summary of Division member Ron Wilson for the position of Secretary/Treasurer.

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Respectfully submitted,

***Ronald F. Wilson***

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*[The physically signed original of these Minutes is maintained in the Tennessee Division’s permanent records.]*

Ronald F. Wilson  
Secretary/Treasurer  
USA Fencing - Tennessee Division  
August 18, 2016

(Revised 08-31-2016 to correct the spelling of an officer’s last name and to add in the Attachments the name of the fourth member voting by proxy.)