

AGENDA – communications from around the state:

I. WARMUP (30 – 45 minutes) meeting opened at 10:09 am

A. Introductions – Attendance: Donn Livoni, Jeanne Ensign, Dick Weber, Keegan Witt, Ellen Parchen, Carrie Jacobs, Emily Von Jentzen, Ali Brondsen, Peggy Stringer, Charlotte Sandall, Deb Grebenc

- a. Committee Goals identified as each person in attendance checked in: communication; organization; moving our group forward; improving and renewed focus of what we are doing in the LMSC with ways to support the workout groups and coaches around the state; to get more benefit to our member swimmers, who are feeling nickel'd and dime'd, and not seeing the benefit back to themselves – getting benefits back to the member; member questions re: “where does our money go, how do I get benefits, if not in swim meet”, though swimmers maybe in open water/triathlon events, USMS as an organization seems to not have anything to offer to the swimmer members in the pools; massive facility problems statewide (poor quality, lack of, lack of time available) – which compounds the swimmer's sense of how much money and time they want to spend in pools, training and working toward competitive events; what do we have to offer to join the organization other than just showing up to the workout group or state meet; Hard to make the argument as a coach when you have the same questions or concerns; there are a handful of swimmers that understand why to join and support USMS; many workout groups have adults coming to new facilities who do not know why and how it is beneficial; here to see what MT masters can bring to our community, many swimmers in a workout are not going to pay \$\$ to show up to swim one state meet; there need to be more benefits and pay back at the community level; more events, events that don't take all day; how to build more resources – clinics, member contact benefits, etc so the swimmers begin to see what MT masters has to offer; more bang for the buck or keep fees down; (putting on events that you can only be a USMS swimmer to participate); a new facility? Committee formed for helping communities get new facilities(*USA Build a pool connection*); get enthusiasm back (personally), increase events requiring USMS registration, get more swimmers connected to the Dual meets with USA swimming events; Helena workout groups has adopted a new logo – the Ridley turtle ;

After introductions, Carrie addressed the Intention and origin of this meeting, as identified on a recent BOD call, during which we identified the needs for better communication between coaches, contacts, members to share information back to the BOD so that we have suggestions from the member base re: operations. The concern was that more time and money needs to be spent improving what needs to be addressed in the state vs travel outside of the state.

II. MAIN SET – Communication around the state – information gathering from workout groups around the state. Those represented: Helena, Missoula, Kalispell, Helena, Hamilton

1. What's working? and What do we want to work on?

Notes **highlighted in RED** were topics in which **further action** was discussed

- a. Helena -The member list sent to the coaches by the Registrar has been helpful; it allows coach to know who is and is not registered. (*The registrar sent the current and prior year lists to workout coach contacts just after the beginning of the year*)
- b. Helena -having events that require USMS membership has increased local/workout group participation
- c. Kalispell hosted a clinic that included the fees for USMS which resulted in increased numbers as 90% are already signed up for this year; requiring USMS membership for open water swims
- d. Having a series of events in workout groups helps increase participation
- e. Missoula – Some facilities do not allow fees for events – hampers clinics, events, etc that have been useful in other areas.
- f. As a new club – KATS negotiated renting the pool so they then can host their club events; they pay facility a percentage of monthly dues; having a certified coach help; as well as liability coverage by way of USMS; The club has been a bonus for the facility, though hard to convince at first
- g. Polson – when they did require membership – small turnout, when no requirement many more folks showed up for coached workouts; cost can be prohibitive even if a small fee to participate
- h. Is the purpose of being a Masters swimmer to compete? – Maybe it is time to update the identity of MT LMSC swimmers is – what are the more compelling reasons – fitness, camaraderie, etc. We need better education at the local level to share with all members,
- i. Contact people and swimmers no longer understand why it is important to be a member and we have a false image of what USMS is these days ie: competitive profile rather than how it can support swimmers who have no interest in competition
- j. New clubs have a dual struggle – how to get members to show up to workouts, and how to persuade swimmers about fees, in addition, how to best organize groups,

- k. ****We do not sell ourselves very well – let’s create a campaign to facilitate information to the membership about what and who we really are.... (see conversation later about creating a video to show at State meet)**
- l. Struggles for rural vs urban are different yet similar. The National office has been working on communication last 5 yrs; 23% USMS members compete at the national level – many members are fitness swimmers; communications from the national organization are improving. How do we increase interest from swimmers who do not compete, and connect swimmers to the information, so they benefit
- m. How do we better facilitate passing that information, logistically - suggestion to consider how that works at the local level and at the state level. **Define State meet meeting logistics and communications, scheduling meeting and the information to be shared. Conference call with BOD before event**
- n. What kind of members do we want to have and what kind of members do we have?
- o. What do our members want? What about those members who do not come to meets? We are not hearing from approx. ½ of the members since they do not participate in the competitive events **Action below – survey members and workout participants who are not members to share back with the leadership group)**
- p. Things most swimmers care about – social, workout, coaching, fitness,
 - i. Swimmers want to have fun, socials, relays, team building activities
 - ii. Impossible to get new folks if they are intimidated by the existing group. How to encourage the new comers or novices?
 - iii. How to build the diversity of age, ability, and needs in a workout group?
 - iv. How to build numbers when facility space is limited, times are limited?
- q. Coaches are the day to day contact with members and passing on of info – they are the ones who have a handle on their members in the water – how can we best communicate between coaches and LMSC to support them with our membership needs/wants
- r. **** Suggestion - Can we create a workout pass in MT for member to travel to other workouts? Needs further discussion re: logistics, LMSC Budget**
 - 1. Montana skiing area does the same thing with a half day rate
 - 2. Use of pass to travel the state for workouts, for business, etc
 - 3. ½ price of facility fees if USMS membership card
 - 4. Could also be good for out of state travelers?
 - 5. Would benefit the facility too

**** Survey of members: Emily and Carrie will design questions; send to BOD for suggestions before it goes live to membership. We need feedback from non-member as well; prizes to submitters – draw 5 and announce at the state meet; Emily and Carrie will submit to BOD by Jan 24th ; BOD will give feedback to Emily and Carrie within a week; Survey goes live to membership by Feb 4th . Will be sent to membership in email with any meet updates; results reviewed by Feb 20th. Coaches can share link and talk up awards and need for input especially from non-members.**

Question re: attending the LMSC or Club MT meeting times at the state meet: “As a member why should I go to the meeting?”

Suggestion: If we move it to the social as an informal business meeting, we will have a captive audience – *see more below on State meeting info*

Question: how do coaches communicate to people in workout groups; answer – email, website, Facebook, Go Swim TV – send out a video the swimmers can see before a workout focus on specific drills

2. Services to members - what is possible?

- a. Volunteer recognition – **volunteer of the year, inspirational swimmer,**
 - **** Action – Set up a committee to define awards and set up process to select and announce/award. Ellen will seek others to be on this committee**
 - **Suggestions for “prize”:** Pay for membership for following year; true awards – plaque or something cool. Name an event after awardee, such as a memorial swim at the state meet- as an honor
- b. Adult Learn to Swim (as presented at convention and advertised last year) – **already in process in Missoula at Peak, and discussion with Y**
 - Resources on the website (ours and USMS) – workout group needs to be registered, swimmers need to be USMS registered, the program is truly meant for fear based adults and a one on one program to improve their confidence and willingness to swim at whatever level they can
 - Resource support from national office? There are both handouts, and other advertising support offered by the national office
 - How to advertise – and target the right folks to get in the program – PEAK is using the TV screen and machines in the weight room; contact goes directly to the coach vs front desk, that way swimmers can be matched to volunteers, and paperwork can be filled out as needed.
 - It is a great way to give back to the community – also a great way to get swimmers involved, how to give back to the facility – over time, the facility benefits – brings in more interest in swimming
 - ****Put the info packet on the state website**
 - ****Communicate to other coaches at the state meet**

- c. Member growth – how do we improve?
 - a. Connect coaches with fun activities and create more awareness in the community
 - i. Fun swim across the state; service projects
 - Data from coaches re: from groups re: swim across Montana – (Canyons and other groups – swim around Flathead lake) – track time and map distances; compete with others across the state – post google map with pins on the webpage; per workout group;
 - ii. ****Communicate what USMS is, and age bracket; education**
 - iii. Why did you decide to join? Question to ask of the membership
 - Comment: LMSC portion of fee was raised to \$10 and we need to do more for our members to justify – growth will happen with obvious benefits
 - Question: can we reduce our fees? Either LMSC or club
 - Point of Information: USMS annual fees will be increased \$2 per year for the next 5 yrs.
 - o Budget is set by staff at the national office and approved by the House of Delegates (Jeanne). The national office provides many services that we have had access to, including:
 - Coach certification; learn to swim instructor programs are products that the national office is providing to us, travel of those training staff
 - If you look at that fee spread out over a year, that \$\$ can feel different
 - National office Service provided is more than the cost – websites etc, magazine, insurance coverage,
 - Point of clarification: LMSC portion of fees goes to insurance for open water fees, coaches clinic stipend; travel to convention;
 - Is there way for the national level to see that there is a difference in different states re: #'s and income, etc and offer a sliding scale registration fee?
 - Suggestion from Jeanne, MT might be able to absorb some of the \$2 per year increase in fees maybe every other year, as PNA has done in recent years. This allows the membership to not feel the increase every year.
 - **** Possible inclusion in the survey** – do changes in dues affect decision to join USMS or not?
 - Are there any scholarship options of donation/sponsors to assist those in need?
 - ****Suggestion:** Needs based discount on registration – senior rate, student rate, needs based rate is same discount – the discount would come off the LMSC fees – check the box on the registration (*this is set up by the registrar prior to membership registration date in November*)
 - o Point of info: The additional \$5 dollars for LMSC was set up for website maintenance etc
 - o **We can take this discussion to the membership and propose changes at the State meeting – re: 2016 budget and registration fee discount, reducing fees, or the LMSC pay the increase,**
 - Suggestion: Senior discount applies once you hit that age, and add another line to offer that discount paid as a contribution to the LMSC

Question re: LMSC option for funding to coaches training – Level 1 and 2 hosted this past year by Kalispell?

- Kalispell lost about \$600 to the clinic as the host, can the LMSC reimburse?
 - Comment: It was too good an opportunity for coaches around the state to have to have the host club be stuck with deficit
 - Coaches clinic scholarship was budgeted at \$200 in the LMSC budget, and was not used
- to support our coaches education with funding from the LMSC is one way to recognize they are the regular contact people with the membership, this is a tangible member benefit and one answer to where their dues goes.
- **Motion for LMSC to reimburse KATS \$200 to close the gap of the loss for hosting the clinic; motion 2nd.**
 Discussion – re: what about the other \$400 lost by the club? Is there other money that could be allocated? Conversation about how the budget and allocations occur and when, related to same year expenditures. The current budget is above original projection due to reimbursements coming in under expectation.
 - o Question re: how do we allocate for the coming year?
 - o Point of clarification: \$ 200 was the actual amount that KATS paid out to USMS, *the other amount was to have been used to pay other coaches present for swimmer portion.*
 - o **Motion carried** with unanimous in favor
- Coaches Clinic – Coeur D’Alene Feb 21 and 22nd: Peggy, Carrie, - MM scholarship \$ budgeted for ½ of fees, is there still \$ to forward to coaches who want to go to that clinic?
 - o Peggy level 3; Donn – level 1 and 2; Carrie 1 and 2; Emily 3, Ellen 3 as a maybe
 - o Cost/person \$180 for 1 and 2; cost for \$225 for level 3
 - o Level 1 and 2 on Saturday all day – Sun am; level 3 Sunday – 12 – 7
 - o Concern – this opportunity should be opened up to all of the other coaches around the state. Club MT funding will be based on a 1st response, 1st served
 - o Jeanne – still has credit for a level 1 and 2 – if over our budgeted amount, she will check with national to transfer her registration fee to one of our members. (*thank you’s from around the table*)
 - o Registration deadline online with national – by Fri Feb 20th

- ****Carrie and Peggy will need to confer with the rest of the Club MT board re: allocation of funds for this coming clinic. Once that decision has been made, information will go out to coaches from Emily re: opportunity and scholarship info**
 - **The communication process and scholarship lingo from the last clinic was not clear, so that will need to be better this time. Should there be two different forms, or one form and forwarded to the LMSC; Discussion re: non- MM reimbursement, and how to forward them on to LMSC for potential for reimbursement. *Since the budget does not currently accommodate that as a line item, interested parties can put this forward for reimbursement at state meet during the discussion of the 2015 budget.***
 - d. Club and workout group development – see above conversation
 - e. Member survey – see above conversation
 - f. Clinics – swimmer & coaches- See above conversation
3. Website/e-newsletter
- a. Concerns: (MontanaMasters.Com and .org) were purchased and set aside by Michael, since that time there has been no action. If we are not interested in maintaining them or want to take them over, he would like to be reimbursed for the amount: \$22/yr for the past 7 yrs,
 - i. Motion to Refund Michael: Moved, seconded and carried Unanimously. The treasurer will reimburse Michael. This includes letting the names go

Ellen has built a google site and shared with many of the workout group coaches as well as others who have editing rights. By using this site each location has the option to edit the site and add information pertinent to their members. It is also a great place to share information re: state goings on, and information from the national office re: programs or new ideas. Currently there – all locations have a tab; there is a meet and records page with all documents pertinent to hosting a meet etc; the membership documents are on the state page. Benefits of this page – easy access to all coach contacts around the state; improved communication; free, easy to edit

**** Action – Ellen will send Anna Lea the link to have it live on the USMS website; Mission statement of USMS from the front of the rule book, included on the webpage**

Actions identified during the meeting:

- 1) Define what LMSC is and what it can do for its membership
- 2) What does it mean to be a member of the USMS; define what the benefits of membership are beyond the magazine; competition; include the mission statement on the webpage
- 3) Survey of members: Emily and Carrie – design questions; send out to BOD before it goes live to membership – will need feedback from non-members – as well; prizes to submitters – draw 5 and announce ; deadline – for submitting to BOD Jan 24th ; BOD gets feedback back to Emily and Carrie; to membership by Feb 4th ; To be sent out to membership in email with any meet updates, website, etc; results reviewed by Feb 20th ; Coaches can share link and talk up awards and need for input especially from non-members, etc
 - Donn will ask about prizes submitted by national, LMSC, fun interesting – not just the freebies, etc
 - sponsors gear,
- 4) Communication plan revealed at the state meet so more members hear that process (improve our image/ marketing of who Masters swimmers are.....)
 - imagery – 3 min video – What does it mean to be a masters member
 - a short clip from workout groups – Emily will edit; deadline to get her pics, video, quotes, etc ; Emily to send out email Sunday, Jan 18th to coaches so that she will get the info back to her. Deadline – 16th Feb so she has time to edit
- 5) Fee structure conversation – re: how can the LMSC support the membership: as national fees increase; in a way that the swimmers see benefits to joining USMS; swim card discounts, scholarships for education, absorbing the fee every other year,