***Draft Minutes***

***Tri-State Wheelchair & Ambulatory Athletics Board Meeting***

***September 13, 2014***

The meeting was held at Saint Peter’s University, Jersey City, and was called to order by Chairperson Ken Brucato at 9:28 am.

**Present**: Ken Brucato, Debbie Armento, Ralph Armento, Carolynne Bethka, Jim Cuevas, Phil Galli, Jennifer Johnson, Dan Martin, Carlos Quiles, Maggie Redden, Pat Redden, Trisha Yurochko

**Absent:** Joan Wheeler

**Guest:** Abe Waugh

**Chairperson’s Report:**

Ken Brucato noted that this was his last meeting as chairperson. He thanked the board for its work, which resulted in a new venue for the TriState meet and 501(c)3 status. The board responded that they appreciated his leadership.

**Minutes:**

Trisha Yurochko moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 29. The motion was seconded by Phil Galli and accepted unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

We have a balance of $9322.05, thanks to donations from Paralympic Sports Clubs of NJ, Rainbow Girls ($300), Wheelchair Sports Council ($4500), ABC Medical (they had table at meets and netted $350), and Carolynne Bethka. There are no outstanding bills.

We purchased a massage table which will be used for classification. We also received a grant from US Swimming for $2900, which paid for transportation for classifiers and also for part of the massage table. The Rainbow Girls have also adopted us as their ongoing project.

Debbie Armento moved to accept the report and to formally thank Paralympic Sports Clubs for their donation. Phil seconded the motion and it was unanimously accepted.

**Reflections on 2014 TriState Games:**

The only real problem was with the weather on the opening night, although Carolynne Bethka noted that the venues for table tennis and powerlifting need more of a “professional” environment. It was noted that solutions are on the way. The road racing was excellent, with a good course and help from the park and from the county police. NYU School of Medicine volunteered medical help after seeing information on the website, but they didn’t bring much in the way of supplies; luckily this wasn’t a problem. Some discussion ensued about getting a good first aid kit with a defibulator unit, which will cost less than $2000, and that will be put on the TSWAA wish list. Currently, we have 3 coaches who are Red Cross certified and Phil Galli is planning to recertify. Archery went well, but some of the marking lines may have intersected field lines. Although no one seemed to have a problem with this, we may want a different location next year, particularly if registration by veterans increases, when we may want to schedule archery at the same time as field. Some of the target bales and all the target stands have been missing since NJDC last year; new stands are being made. Field and track went well, but some equipment is missing or with problems. The clubs in particular are questionable and we need a 700 gram javelin. Recommendations will be made to purchase equipment during sales, and some of the Paralympic Clubs of NJ money will be used for this purpose.

We will need more volunteers next year; Jim Cuevas is making connections with local high schools. The new timer was good. Facilities, including the port-a-potties, were good, but we really need a curb cut instead of a ramp for access. The food donations were appreciated. Signage for venues needs to be improved. A truck had been donated this year, but we can’t count on that every year; we can write its rental into a Wheelchair Sports grant. It was suggested that we keep the truck for a week so it can stay packed for both TriState and Masons meets.

**TriState Reunion:**

Carolynne reported that she and Trisha had written a letter for New Mobility about the reunion and have made connections with disability groups on Facebook. Trisha noted that we shouldn’t say the reunion will definitely be in Atlantic City, given all the problems there. The casinos in Connecticut were suggested as a venue.

The committee has had some changes. Gil Perez has left the board, Jennifer Johnson withdrew from the committee and Joan Wheeler is involved with the new adult team. Carolynne asked for new volunteers; Maggie Redden, Carlos Quiles and Abe Waugh volunteered.

The $50 deposit was discussed, with Phil noting that we had already decided that if the event did not happen the money will be refunded unless it has been used for expenses. Ralph Armento pointed out that there is a problem with depending on email, since so many addresses change, so we should use snail mail as well.

Debbie suggested starting simply by having the first reunion as a banquet at the 2015 TriState Games on Memorial Day weekend, and an extended discussion ensued. Phil suggested having the banquet catered at Giant Stadium. The Hall of Fame could be a draw, and we could include the registration for the games in the cost of the banquet.

It was decided without a vote that this year’s reunion would be combined with the meet banquet, and that nominations to the Hall of Fame would be requested with information on the reunion.

**Social Media:**

April Martin has been posting on Facebook, and all information should be forwarded to her. Our Facebook page is linked to the TSWAA website. The suggestion was made that our Facebook page and group should be combined as a page.

Maggie Redden will write some articles for publication in Sports ‘n Spokes.

**Adult Team:**

Joan Wheeler was absent, but it was noted that the purpose of the adult team is to work and possibly train together. Joan is currently working on including archery.

**Awards:**

Debbie has made a list of what plates for individual events (to be placed on the meet plaques) she currently has.

**TSWAA Hall of Fame**:

There was extended discussion on setting up the Hall of Fame. Ken will chair the award committee, and old TriState members will be asked to serve on the committee. Pat Redden pointed out that we have to develop categories and guidelines for each category soon if we are to announce the first honorees in May. Ralph suggested that in the first year we have 2 categories (athlete and other, including coaches) and give honor 5 in each category, then in future years add 1 in each category. WASUSA expects a nomination letter for nominees to their Hall of Fame. Honorees will receive individual awards and there will be a virtual Hall of Fame on the website.

Pat and Ralph volunteered for the committee to draft the guidelines. They will meet by phone conference.

**NDA Conference, November 6-9:**

The Eastern RPO is meeting virtually on Wednesday, September 17, to discuss representation. A chapter can only have 1 person voting on the RPO Council and Assembly; the number of representatives from an RPO is based on membership. TSWAA, Paralympic Clubs of NJ, and Lightning Wheels are chapters. We won’t know how many will be funded until after the September 17 meeting. Ralph (WASUSA office), Trisha (Lightning Wheels), Phil (WTFUSA) and Debbie (Junior Committee) are already going to the conference. Reimbursement for the meeting is usually registration, $250 toward the airfare, and half of the room cost ($450 last year). Phil moved that we identify $1000 for 2 board members to attend NDA; Debbie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**TriState Games 2015:**

Jim Cuevas and Phil have talked with Kessler, who will help with funding and include the Kessler 10K race on Monday as part of the meet. The host hotel for the race is in Annandale, and elite athletes participating in the race and the meet will be lodged there. The race provides transportation for them, but we will need transportation for the meet as well. Kessler will accept a grant request for up to $10,000-$15,000 a year for the next 2 years, which would cover most of the meet expenses. We will continue to seek participation from veterans. Carolynne questioned why Wheelchair Medic doesn’t come to the meets anymore; Ken said they weren’t invited and that we are investigating a sponsorship with NU Motion that might conflict.

The meet banquet will be on Saturday night, and Sunday night will be a pasta dinner for the participants in the 10K race.

We can’t officially book Overpeck Park until January 1, but we have a verbal agreement. We would need the track for the 10K racers on Saturday night for warm-ups and track events, which would interfere with the meet banquet. There is a local table tennis club that is accessible and might be a good venue for those events.

We should give out a flyer at the NY Marathon, particularly aiming at international athletes who could make the standard for the World Games at the Kessler race.

Veterans enjoy competition in bowling, air guns and slalom, so we should consider adding those events to the meet. Debbie asked all to think about some of the fun events for the athletes at NJDC, so we could include them at our meets. The meet needs to be IPC-approved; we don’t need a technical director but will need national classifiers.

Ralph is looking at the Hampton Inn ($129 a night + tax), the Hilton Gardens ($169 + tax), and the Marriott GlenPoint (no definite price but might be about $240 + tax). We were shut out of the Hampton Inn last year. He suggested booking 30 rooms there this year; it is close to the venue on route 46.

**NU Motion Sponsorship:**

Ken met with representatives from NU Motion at the Expo and talked about a possible sponsorship; they are currently negotiating with Ray Martin’s agent, Debbie McFadden, and April Martin has also been in contact with their vice president. The company bought out AllCare Medical in Perth Amboy. They may give tee shirts or goodie bags, but we need to set levels and procedures for formal sponsorships.

**Election of Officers:**

Dan Martin received only 1 letter of intent for chairperson and for secretary. The slate is therefore Ralph Armento for chairperson and Pat Redden for secretary. Carolynne moved that we accept the slate by acclamation; Phil seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Conferences and Outreach:**

Trisha spoke at the NewJerseyAllPeopleEqual (NJAPE) conference on May 8. Many physical education teachers attended, but she hasn’t received any feedback from attendees.

Jennifer Johnson conducted 3 table tennis clinics. The Bronx Veterans Administration asked if she could come back once a month, and they may have athletes for our meets.

Phil is working with DSUSA to pull together disability groups across the country to integrate track, field, swimming, tennis, etc. into the schools.

Carolynne spoke to NJ Spina Bifida association about TSWAA running a fun day. They are introducing kids to other sports, but she will try to push the connection.

The Challenged Athlete Foundation ran an amputee clinic with 100 attendees in Overpeck Park a month after the TriState meet, and it was suggested that we try to partner with them.

There is an arthrogryposis conference every year in NJ; Dan Martin will contact them.

There is a rock climbing activity in New Paltz on September 21, and it was suggested that we send out an announcement to the entire membership.

A Veterans Administration grant to WASUSA includes money to run 8 field clinics at regional meets. This will be planned at NDA. We would need to build in at least 4 hours for the clinics.

**Open Comments:**

Debbie noted that there are several applications for future NJDC events, including Puerto Rico, Dayton (Ohio), Lincoln (Nebraska) and New Orleans, but there is no venue set for 2015. She asked if TSWAA would be interested in hosting 2015, probably at Rutgers at the end of July. Pat moved that we consider hosting if no on else does; Debbie seconded the motion and it passed with 1 abstention. Debbie is trying to get Dayton to respond in the next 2 weeks. The host will have to raise $75,000 to commit and $150,000 in cash and kind for the meet.

Carolynne noted that she is looking to move out of the area to a senior independent living facility in the next few years, so she may resign from the board at that time.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is on Saturday, November 15, possibly at Burke Rehab.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.