

2026 U.S. Masters Swimming

Committee Name: Northwest Zone

Committee Chair: Jill Wright

Minutes recorded by: Sally Dillon

Date/time of meeting: March 2, 2026, 6 pm MT time

Actions taken: MSA to approve SCY Zone meet bid from Blue Wave Aquatic Club. Meet date: 4/11-12/26

Number of committee members present: 20 **Absent:** n/a

Committee members present: AK-Kent Hamilton, Ken Winterberger; IW-Robert Heath, Paige Buehler, Dave Cabrey, Margaret Hair; MT-Jeanne Ensign; OR-Paul Windrath, Christina Fox, Jayette Pettit, Sandi Rousseau, Joy Ward, PN-Linda Chapman, Sally Dillon, Diana Hermanson, SR-Jim Clemmons, Jill Wright, UT-Aaron Norton, Jerry Treiman

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm MT.

A. General Business and reports

1. Actions taken between meetings: The December 1, 2025, meeting minutes were approved by the LMSC chairs via email. They are posted on the Zone and USMS websites.
2. Chair: Jill had nothing to report.
3. Finance Ken reported that the Zone account balance is \$10,529. \$636.68 was spent since the last meeting, for delegate assistance (Porter, MT). The annual LMSC per swimmer fee will be invoiced at the beginning of May. There was discussion as to whether the Zone needs to collect this fee and a subcommittee was formed to discuss the future of the fee and if we keep it, how can we better encourage LMSCs to apply for financial support. Paul, Sally, Jeanne, and Ken volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. It was MSA to hold off collecting the fee until the committee reports at the June meeting with its recommendations. The current assessment is 50¢ per LMSC swimmer as of May 1. The funds have been used to purchase award ribbons and sometimes shipping costs to send to meet hosts. Ribbon orders only occur every 5 or so years. The intention of this fee has also been to support smaller LMSCs so they can send delegates to the in-person USMS Annual Meeting (no longer taking place annually). This would apply to the USMS Relay event as well. LMSCs have been encouraged to request funds to offset the cost of hosting clinics for coaches and athletes.
4. Website: Dave reported that links on the last Chatter were not working. The problem is resolved. He continues to update the website with new records, meet information, etc.
5. Records: Steve Darnell reported via email that all NW Zone records for SCY, SCM, and LCM courses are up to date with information received through 3/01/2026. He continues to encourage swimmers, coaches, and/or LMSC Record chairs to send data for swim times that break existing records at fincialwizard2@comcast.net. Steve regularly sends updates to Dave for the website.
6. Zone Chatter: Christina published the quarterly issue prior to the meeting. She was complimented for producing another great issue!
7. Secretary: Sally prepared the December minutes, received corrections, and then final approval from the LSMC Chairs. They are posted on the Zone and USMS websites. She continues to update the Zone Leadership Team roster; it's a "moving target" as LMSC team members come and go. She also provided a document that lists all the 2026 USMS committees and their members.
8. NW Zone At Large Director: *From Rob's Chatter report . . . USMS is still battling multiple legal challenges to our Eligibility Policy. Florida and Texas have filed lawsuits against us and are both in the Discovery phase of the process. Our attorneys in those states both feel that the suits will be dismissed, as the evidence does not support the accusations against our organization. California and New Jersey are also states where some action has already been taken, though no lawsuits have been filed yet. Our interim Eligibility policy has evolved again, to allow us to adjust the policy based on the local jurisdiction's requirements. In King County, for example, we would allow transgender women to compete and place for points, while in Texas, we will have to alter the policy to meet their requirements.*

The board is also currently involved in reviewing the structure of our LMSCs around the country, trying to find ways we can better support the smaller entities around the country. We have retained a consulting firm to look into the efficiency of the current LMSC structure and practices, and the legal matters of operating 52 independent organizations under our umbrella national organization. This firm has extensive experience with non-profits, like ours, in identifying areas in which we can move our organization from a 50 year-old structure into one that is more efficient in the current age. This study should conclude in July 2026 and will help the board prepare a process that will be clear and identifiable to our members. At our recent board meeting, the board was divided into 4 groups to re-imagine what the organization might look like if we were to start it today. The discussions were lively and productive in identifying what we do really well and areas where we can improve the process.

Rob further reported that the USMS Board had an in-person meeting recently. Texas and Florida are suing USMS, and California has a discrimination personal lawsuit in the other direction. USMS has filed to dismiss in all cases. The board has chosen to adjust regulations according to the jurisdiction as much as possible. They also discussed AI, and reviewed governance, coach certification, education, club business models, and LMSC and Zone structure. They considered how USMS would set up the organization today as opposed to what was done 50+ years ago. A consulting firm might be polling members in ~July about modernizing our system. Jeanne said she has thought for years that we should centralize finances instead of having 50 LMSCs do it. Other suggestions were bounced around about how finances might be managed with more help from the USMS National Office.

9. NW Zone SCY Championship bid: Jill received a late bid for the SCY championship meet from host Blue Wave Aquatic Club (PN) on April 11 & 12 at KCAC in Federal Way. The event has been “on hold” due to USMS and King County having opposed opinions regarding transwoman participation. USMS (Dawson Hughes), PNA (Linda Chapman), and KCAC/King County (not sure who) have worked to come to an agreement. Linda noted that while Dawson feels very positive that we will have the meet, PNA has not been notified that the deal is final. She explained the following: We have 21 states where laws go one way, 29 that go the other way. Where USMS has a meet, USMS will comply with the local laws. For example, in King County a transwoman can participate in the women’s competition and receive awards accordingly. Her official results would not be eligible for USMS national awards and top ten because USMS rules don’t allow them to be. Paul questions whether the national office can manage this at the national level. Sandi asked if there would be special language on the entry information and Linda said yes. Rob reminded us that when we register for USMS, the relevant questions are asked. **MSA to approve the BWAQ bid for the SCY meet.** Linda will send Dave C the meet info so he can post it on the website. It will initially be “pending”.

B. New Business:

1. USMS National Committee membership: Sally encouraged NW Zone members who are serving on national committees to share at zone meetings, information from their committees that might be of interest to the group. Committees often fall behind in posting their minutes, so appropriately shared information would be appreciated by many.
2. 2026 USMS meetings: Annual meeting (virtual) is 9/18-19 & USMS Relay (in person) is 9/25-27.
3. Bids for other 2026 NW Zone championships: No bids have been received. UT does not have a qualifying event to host OW this year. It was suggested that we open OW and LCM events to all LMSCs and “invite bidders” with an April 1 deadline. Jill will message contacts in all LMSCs. Linda will update LMSC chairs regarding the SCY meet announcement when information is available.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm MT.