



BRITISH FENCING

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AGENDA: AGM
DATE: SATURDAY, 20TH OCTOBER 2012
TIME: 11:00
VENUE: BOA, 60 CHARLOTTE STREET, LONDON W1T 2NU

In the Chair David Teasdale

Directors present - Julia Bracewell, David King, Piers Martin, Alp Orge, Libby Payne, Graham Paul, John Troiano, Georgina Usher.

Apologies – Murray Morrison.

Other apologies from members - Lynne Melia, Norman Randall, Jane Hutchinson.

Introduction

Chair asked Keith Smith to start the meeting by presenting BF honours, as recommended by the Honours Committee. The honours were presented, by KS.

Keith Smith relayed a message from Ioan Pop of the FIE that the Olympic Games were the best ever Games for fencing. KS also congratulated Clare Halsted on her result at the Veterans World Championships.

Chair announced that the Board wished to add three names to the honours list to receive the BF gold medal: Mavis Thornton, Mike Thornton and Piers Martin. That for PM was duly presented, by the Chair, and as they were not in attendance, those for Mavis T and Mike T were to be given to them at a later date.

AGM

Chair introduced the Resolutions, for AGM decision.

Resolution 1 - to approve the minutes of the AGM held on the 29th October 2011

Resolution 1 - Minutes approved - proposed Ray Stafford, seconded Henry de Silva.

Resolution 2 - to approve the minutes of the GM held on the 19th May 2012

This Resolution brought discussion from members. Clare Halsted queried the Committee review, the Chair advised that the proposals mentioned will be progressed once the new Board is in place. John Glasswell expressed concern about the Directors' earnings not being in the minutes. Chair agreed to put members' questions to the new Board and to add job descriptions to that list of questions.

Lawrence Burr expressed concern that, if proposals for a President were put off for 1 year, it would leave this issue open. He argued that the BF Articles state that British Fencing must have a new President within 3 months of the old President resigning. Out of all FIE countries, BF is the only one without an elected president – a President is vital for British Fencing and international standing. He asked that as BF was no further forward on the articles, should we have a President in the meantime.

Ronald Velden said there was a question whether BF should have an elected president. The key point was that the role was filled by someone who knows fencing and has links with the FIE, as other current managers are not from the sport. KS mentioned the existing life honorary president.

Chair responded that the new Board (fully in place by April 2013) will discuss the concerns. The new Board will have eight Directors elected by the members. There would not be a lack of fencing knowledge. Previously the Board was not in favour of an elected President. He also pointed out that a key change made in 2010 was to introduce an independent chair – but then the distinction in roles and responsibilities between President and Chair were not spelled out. Peter Jacobs noted that the FIE statutes refer for the National Federations only to President and Secretary General.

Chair agreed that the articles should be tidied up, and required review by the new Board.

Resolution 2 - Minutes approved – proposed Ray Stafford, seconded by Clare Halsted. Opposed by John Glasswell.

Resolution 3 - to receive and adopt the report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012.

Before discussion, a letter from BF Finance Chair Andrew Brannon was read to the meeting by DT and posted on the screen.

Ronald Velden expressed a number of concerns. He noted that the directors' finance role was delegated to the Finance Committee (Andrew Brannon, Murray Morrison, Piers Martin and Milind Pradhan). Directors of BF are responsible for the accounts and how they are presented to the membership. RV believed that a Board meeting was not held to agree the accounts and at least three members did not record approval of the accounts. The accounts had not been published before the week of the AGM, this was inadequate communication to members, some of whom had already sent proxies. Further, RV noted a large increase in staffing costs and directors/consultants fees which he felt was a disproportionate amount of income spent on administration - depriving the sport of money which could be spent on infrastructure. He would have expected an explanation of losses (with breakdowns of spending) from the Chair or auditors to the entire membership not just the AGM attendees.

Chair explained that the Board's decision to delegate reviewing powers to a specialist Finance Committee, led by Andrew Brannon, who had vast experience, was believed to be appropriate, providing for a more detailed level of scrutiny, and also enabled BF directly to involve our partners England Fencing. Four Board members took part in Finance Committee meetings. The accounts came with AB's approval plus the auditors that have been elected by members for a

long time. The accounts were delayed a little by the Olympics as all staff resources were heavily committed to extensive work on that event.

Piers Martin explained that UK Sport made it compulsory to have a CEO as Accounting Officer. Increased resource effort on finance was necessary because the turnover had doubled. All other roles were funded through income from Beazley, UK Sport, Sport England etc – all of whom make demands on what they want to see in terms of the programmes. Ray Stafford explained that there was a misunderstanding with some members on how Sport England and UK Sport worked. Neither body writes a cheque and then lets NGBs spend as they wish. Thus the CEO and Board are accountable to funders rather than the membership.

Mark Kent supported RV in suggesting that the Board needed to publish breakdowns of payments so members were better informed.

Chair noted the key question for members must be, is BF cost effective? Sport England was funding forty six sports and on recent survey figures BF was one of eleven NGBs to meet the targets set. But, he would take the concerns and issues raised to the new Board, and in particular whether or not the Board should delegate financial responsibilities to a Finance Committee. Future decisions clearly would need to be communicated better to members.

Steve Hyman asked, how to recoup losses, and what are the next year projections? Chair said both questions are for the new Board to review, with CEO. There are changes in the sports marketplace of which we must continue to take account. We also awaited decisions on funding for the next cycle 2013-17.

Lawrence Burr stated that the accounting officer was no longer Piers Martin, now Peter King; and asked if Peter King would like to say anything. Peter King stated that he was not happy with results and will not want to see the 2013 accounts in the same shape. The best thing to do is to agree that they are disappointing but move on.

Resolution 3 proposed – Jed Beardmore, seconded Rupert Davies-Cooke – accounts received and adopted.

Resolution 4 – to reappoint Spofforths as auditors of the Company and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.

In a short discussion about the auditors PM confirmed that BF had used the present auditors for over twenty years. PK said he would review their cost effectiveness with the Board. Andy Pavaday expressed concern about the level of fees, could we review before reappointing them? PK and Chair advised to reappoint now, subject to review.

Resolution 4 proposed - Ray Stafford, seconded Ronald Velden – auditors reappointed.

In further discussion, Henry da Silva noted it was some time since a BF Director visited the IoM. He hoped a visit could be arranged soon.

Chair formally closed the AGM, giving members warm thanks for attending and giving their views and advice.