



Board of Directors Meeting December
Mon Dec 8, 2025 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM EST

1. Call to Order

Date: December 8, 2025

Location: Remote

President Smith Lilly called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM EST.

Roll Call

A quorum was present. Board members attended remotely, with several absences noted, including one honorary member.

Present: Diane Hauslein, Sara Mayer, Chris Schubert, Malissa Welke, Smith Lilly, Kristen Bagdasarian, Anna Marie Knipp, Sophia Fischer, James Nichols, Rachel Seifert, Joan Todd, Sandra Currier, Clif Paulsen, Allison Deardorff, Larry Hartsock, Julie Behrends Jones

Absent: Jennifer Dixon, John Scheidt, Joe O'Brien, Allen Bosworth

Attendance

Members

Remote: Diane Hauslein, Sara Mayer, Chris Schubert, Malissa Welke, Smith Lilly, Kristen Bagdasarian, Anna Marie Knipp, Sophia Fischer, James Nichols, Rachel Seifert, Joan Todd, sandra currier, Clif Paulsen, Allison Deardorff, Larry Hartsock, Julie Behrends Jones

Absent: Jennifer Dixon, John Scheidt, Joe O'Brien, Allen Bosworth

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Agenda: Adopted unanimously as submitted.
- Previous Minutes: Approved without change.
- Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

3. President's Report – Smith Lilly

Saddlebred Summit

The President reported on the Saddlebred Summit, a strategic brainstorming session focused on identifying new initiatives and opportunities for the association.

Board Vacancy

The resignation of Christy Parker was announced as she pursues another opportunity.

Motion: Appoint Cece Hagan to fill the vacant board seat.

Vote: Approved.

Cece Hagan was recognized for her organizational experience and longstanding commitment to the association.

4. Executive Director's Report – Sara Mayer

Board Schedule (2026 Term)

- The January 2026 board meeting will be held Monday, January 19, 2026, following the UPHA Convention.
- The board acknowledged the need for additional time to complete year-end financial reporting.

World Championship Horse Show (WCHS) Proposal

The proposal was acknowledged and included various proposed items for partnership with the show, as well as approval to restore the trainer's ring tradition for the 5-Gaited Stake.

5. USEF Affiliate Meeting Report - Chris Schubert

Chris Schubert summarized the USEF National Breed and Discipline Affiliate Summit in Cincinnati. Key needs identified across affiliates included:

- Strengthening relationships with USEF
- Increased grassroots engagement
- Enhanced promotion
- Governance improvements

6. Council Reports

Development Council – Chris Schubert

Giddy Up and Give Annual Campaign

- The Don Harris Giddy Up and Give campaign exceeded fundraising goals.

- 157 new donors participated, with small-dollar contributions significantly expanding the donor base.
- Positive member engagement and reconnection efforts were highlighted.

Additional Funding Opportunities

Upcoming convention sponsorship opportunities were outlined, including horse sponsorships and walk-in magazine features.

Marketing Council - Joan Todd

Affiliate Marketing Program

A new affiliate marketing program was introduced, allowing partners to use the association logo while protecting brand integrity and generating revenue. The conclusion of an exclusive contract was addressed.

Journal Update

- 71 advertisements sold, exceeding the prior year's total.
- 44 formatted pages completed, including stallion bundles and breeder spotlights.
- The journal is scheduled to go to print on December 12, with mailing planned for early January.

Affiliate and Holiday Stores

Updates provided; members encouraged to participate.

Programs Council – Sara Mayer

Convention & Youth Conference

- Emphasis placed on early-bird registration, volunteer sign-ups, and hotel reservations.
- The Legends ticketed event is expected to sell out.
- Vendor booths remain available.

Competitions Council - Sandra Currier

- A letter of appreciation was received from Charlotte Kurtz, acknowledging the organization's support and expressing intent to give back during the 2026 show year.
- The Select Series expanded from 21 to 25 shows, with discussion of potential high-point recognition.

Judges Clinics & Key Dates

- UPHA Annual Conference: January 15–16, 2026, Las Vegas, NV (Aria Resort & Casino)

- ASHBA Convention: February 12–13, 2026, Lexington, KY (Campbell House)

Governance Council - Sara Mayer reporting for Jennifer Dixon

Annual Meeting Software

- The council recommended adopting an electronic voting platform used by other Associations in and outside the industry.
- The proposal does not require Board approval as the cost is within the Treasurer and President's approval range.
- Voting procedures were reviewed and approved with strict validation controls.

Annual Meeting Details

- **Date:** Friday, February 13
- **Time:** 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Campbell House, Lexington, KY
- Scheduled immediately following the awards luncheon.

7. Finance Council

Treasurer's Report – Rachel Seifert

- Financial performance is improving, though budget goals have not yet been met.
- Strong attendance at recent Founder Circle meetings was noted.

Budget Approval

The board reviewed and approved a corrective budget reflecting:

- Projected annual loss of \$84,000
- Total expenses of \$637,000
- Planned FTE back up to 12 full-time employees by 2026.

8. Special Committee Reports

Nominating Committee - Joan Todd

The committee is finalizing four candidates for general membership vote, selected from six interviews and 15 unique nominations. The updated process was noted as more efficient.

Database Taskforce - Sara Mayer for Jennifer Dixon

- Project plan completed

- Meeting scheduled with USEF regarding results delivery

Internal Controls - Sophia Fischer

- Quarterly review confirmed compliance with the social media policy.
- Recommendation made to review and update the gift acceptance policy.
- The board agreed to begin the 2025 review/audit process in Q1.

Audit Updates

- 2023 audit is ongoing.
- The 2024 Form 990 is prepared and will be filed.

9. Meeting Adjourned