

**EMPIRE RFU GU**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
July 23, 2017

Empire GU met for its Annual General Meeting via conference call on Sunday, July 23, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL - ATTENDANCE**

Voting Members: Bayonne, Brooklyn Men, Brooklyn Women, Buffalo, Danbury Men, Danbury Women, Fairfield Yankees, Gotham Knights, Hudson Valley, Ken-Ton, Long Island, Monmouth Men, Monmouth Women, Montclair, Morris Men, Morris Women, New Haven, North Jersey, NYAC, NYRC Men, NYRC Women, Old Blue Men, Old Blue Women, Old Maroon, Princeton, Rochester Women, Rochester Aardvarks, Rochester Colonials, Rockaway, South Buffalo Men, South Buffalo Women, Suffolk Women, Syracuse, Union, Union Women, Uticuse, Village Lions Men, Village Lions Women, White Plains

A quorum is in place with 39 clubs present.

**DAN PAYNE - USA RUGBY**

Dan Payne, CEO of USA Rugby, joined the call. He congratulated EGU for the strong attendance at the AGM and said it was one of the highest he has seen. He commended EGU for its strong efforts in the area of High Performance for both men and women, moving players and clubs on to higher levels. The model and approach has had success - not only for players advancing to a National Team, but a significant number of players moving to higher levels. Dan said EGU is a model for other GUs across the country. He thanked EGU and its athletes for its efforts and it is appreciated.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ken Pape thanked everyone for joining the call and noted this is the highest attendance total for an EGU AGM. Ken noted that the EGU is regarded as the strongest GU in the country and is being used as a model for others across the country.

Ken highlighted the strength and growth of the HP programs for both men and women. The level of competition has grown as has the number of member athletes taking part. Educational opportunities are growing and will continue to do so in the coming year.

Ken is encouraging more member club / athlete participation in EGU Board meetings. Meeting attendance is available on the EGU website > Info > Meetings.

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) was instituted which is required of each club. We are in a strong financial position and EGU is able to roll forward a significant amount of money. Communications continue to improve and EGU will be moving to a Google platform.

Sevens was stronger than ever and the competition this year was fantastic. The Men's and Women's directors had a great year and showed outstanding leadership. Lex Maccubbin and Angela Corpus were excellent in creating balanced schedules which reduced travel and cost, while improving competition.

The referees led by Brad Kleiner continue to improve offerings, education and mentoring.

Some things we will work on this year are training and education, Bylaw revision, refining High Performance. The EGU continues to grow and we continue to add member benefits.

## **ADMINISTRATOR REVIEW**

Sean Horan provided an annual review of J.C. Whipple, EGU Administrator. Sean recapped his written evaluation of JC for the year.

## **ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP**

Saracens and playing Newcastle Falcons on Sept 6 in Philadelphia. Exciting player/coach initiatives will be taking place around this. Young players (ages 15-24) will be able to take part in training and for the opportunity to win a trip overseas to join in local training in England. [premiershiprugby.com/usa](http://premiershiprugby.com/usa). Wayne Morris of Premiership will be announcing this tomorrow at Pig n Whistle in Midtown (6-9pm) and all are invited to join. There is a need for high-level coaching education - Premiership coaches will be in attendance at a clinic. Looking for feedback on player and coaching initiatives.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Rosalie MacGowan said the fiscal year was closed on June 30. All financial documents for the year will be posted on the website. With the new VP Finance, the transition will provide a fresh set of eyes on our financials.

Rosalie said she projects our revenue each year to be 97% of the previous year. Member dues to USA Rugby are \$90, of which EGU receives \$45. We were able to roll forward to a significant amount of money and use those funds for important projects and funding opportunities. We do a good job a funding various efforts each year and are looking to assist emerging clubs or those in financial stress.

It is worth noting we predicted a tight budget for this fiscal year and we were able to stay on point. As seasons continues to grow, we do collect a \$1000 bond from each tournament host; ultimately that money is returned if the host meets the stated benchmarks - those funds are not EGUs to spend.

## **PROPOSED / PENDING EGU POLICIES / DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **1. Northeast Academy Presentation**

Steve Lewis of NEA thanked the EGU for its continued support. He provided an overview of the founding and growth of NEA. The growth has come from requests of the two GUs (EGU/NERFU) and players - addition of a women's program, addition of Buffalo. The success of the program is tangible - several tournament wins, Eagles Caps, players come from over 20 separate clubs in the Northeast, Coaches have spent time in Chula Vista at National Camps. Moving forward, NEA is looking at adding New Jersey as a new Academy site. This year there will be more open attendance opportunities, not just limited to selected players.

Jim Tobin of Rochester Aardvarks asked about EGU funding the Northeast Academy and how it benefits the GU. In 2016-17, EGU provided \$30K to NEA. Rosalie MacGowan said the NEA has been able to expand its services while keeping its budget at the same level. Lex Maccubbin spoke about the growth of the Buffalo Academy and the benefits to the region and athletes. A discussion took place on the member benefits for NEA. Steve Lewis said the budget request for the coming year has been adjusted from \$30K to \$25K. Ken Pape stated that grants are reviewed each year and the opportunity is there for any organization or club to submit grant requests to EGU. Steve Lewis and Ken will meet prior to a presentation / vote for the upcoming budget year.

### **2. HP Presentation**

Ken Pape said EGU reformatted the HP program. On the Men's side there is Upstate, NYC and NJ. Each area has a director and coaching staff. The sides came together on June 10 for an Empire Cup and it was a great competition. Two USA National Team coaches were in attendance and approached a few players on potential camp invites. EGU has a commitment from USA Rugby for attendance at all EGU HP events. Capital and Texas GUs have approached EGU on potential cross-over games. Teams are fully kitted through Canterbury.

The Women's program was led this year by James English and has done a tremendous job. Over 50 women from across the GU attended a camp earlier this summer. A select side from that camp will be competing at Saranac. The team will be housed, fed and kitted. Ken said it is impressive to watch the level of players continue to grow - WPL and D1 players have been great resources for all players in the program. \$10K was allocated to the Women, for the Men each area receives \$5K. As part of the program, EGU purchased 100 tickets to the USA-Ireland match at Red Bull Arena as a thank you for their participation in the start of the

program. Ken stressed that everyone should remember this program is in its infancy - it will only continue to grow and thrive. Based on a question on camp location, Ken committed to a

### 3. Funding Allocations

Rosalie MacGowan said there isn't much more to discuss on funding allocations based on the previous two points. She encouraged anyone with questions or funding requests to direct them to [finance@empiregurugby.com](mailto:finance@empiregurugby.com).

### 4. Sanctions for teams / divisions in connection with Playoff forfeits

Ken Pape said this was an item brought forward from a member club. Ken said this would be an item for discussion with the new Board. Ken opened it to the floor for discussion. Frank Rotovnik from Danbury said if a club forfeits in playoffs, on a case-by-case matter, the club should forfeit the next year.

### 5. Discussion EGU Remaining a Member of USA Rugby

Ken Pape said this question came from Gary Heavner of Old Blue. Gary states every CIPP requires a \$90 payment - \$45 of which EGU receives. The banner member benefits received from USA Rugby are insurance coverage and championships events. Ken stated there have been various issues within USA, including eligibility and club offices. There is a perceived lack of value through the membership with USA Rugby. Ben Martin (Brooklyn) said the benefit of insurance (secondary) cannot be understated as the staff was helpful this year with a Brooklyn player who experienced a significant injury. He also stated that member benefits / access could be much improved since USA Rugby spends significant funds on major events. Brad Kleiner stated that if EGU would leave USA Rugby, there would be an issue with playing under the World Rugby lawbook.

### 6. Women's Equity / State of Women's High Performance

Ken Pape said this topic was brought forward by Phaidra Knight. Ken asked Michael Crafton (alternate Congress rep) to speak on this topic. Michael said USA Rugby's Men's and Women's National Team funding does not come from member dues, rather cooperate sponsorship. There is not an equity issue, though the Women were severely underfunded. Dan Payne addressed this with the Women's program and it was determined an additional \$150K needed to be raised. This is a one-off situation with the Women's Rugby World Cup this August, though it will be an issue in future cycles. Michael said USA Rugby is at the forefront of equity for Women's Rugby, requesting the World Rugby 7s be contested in the same venue (Men / Women).

### 7. MetNY LAU Funds

Ken Pape said Michael Crafton and Gary Heavner are working through this matter. Approximately \$100K is in a fund and it is being determined how best to approach securing those funds. Ken said this would be tabled for the time being until Michael and Gary are ready to present on the topic. Michael said a plan is being formulated for presentation and vote by the last-seated MetNY Board. Ken asked Michael if this could be wrapped up in Q1 of the new EGU fiscal year. Michael said the funds either need to be spent or directed to a non-profit organization.

### 8. Tax Filing Status

Rosalie MacGowan said she has been in contact with a firm regarding our filing status. Rosalie feels the recommendation is we back away from the current EIN and move toward filing as a 501c3. EGU would be looking at accounting firm / law firm to help sort this matter out.

## **ELECTIONS**

President: Ken Pape  
VP Operations: Michael Crafton  
VP Finance: Jennifer Salomon  
VP Communications: Pat Moroney  
ED Men: Lex Maccubbin  
ED Sevens: Rosalie MacGowan  
ED Women: Jennifer Jones | Gary Heavner

Nomination: Morris  
Nomination: Monmouth; Second: Morris  
Nomination: Monmouth; Second: Brooklyn  
Nomination: Brooklyn; Second: Morris  
Nomination: Monmouth; Second: Rochester  
Nomination: Monmouth; Second: Buffalo  
Vote

Vote: Jennifer Jones: 28 | Gary Heavner: 7 | Abstain: 1  
Jennifer Jones wins election as ED Women

Proposal for the slate: Ken Pape (Monmouth), seconded by Lex Maccubbin (Buffalo). The slate is elected to the Board for 2017-18.

## **REVIEW / VOTE ON APPLICATION OF NEW CLUBS**

Binghamton Men's RFC  
Long Island Women's RFC  
Saratoga Men's RFC  
Southtowns Men's RFC

A discussion took place regarding the validity and viability of each club regarding their membership with EGU.

Vote: Yes: 29 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0

The above four clubs are admitted as full members with a one-year probationary period.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Ken Pape is considering a proposal on a change in length of term for Board members from one year to two. Ken is bringing this to the members for discussion. White Plains and Danbury affirmed this makes sense to give people time. Brooklyn asked what the contingency plan would be for Board members who fall off. Ken said that the potential would be for a Board member who falls below 75% meeting attendance would be up for review. A proposal was made to stagger the end of term for Board members so a new Board would not roll on / off at the same time.
2. A discussion took place on competition for Upstate clubs against Pittsburgh and Cleveland clubs (friendlies / crossovers) and whether there is a thought about incorporating those clubs into EGU.
3. Sharon Berger discussed the potential for assisting new or troubled clubs with financial assistance, starter kit, etc. Clubs that are well established could provide good assistance to these new clubs and help to continue growing the game. Ken Pape said there is discussion on creating a new position with EGU to assist those clubs as a liaison.

Being no other business, Rosalie MacGowan proposed the close of the meeting; seconded by Angela Corpus. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
J.C. Whipple  
EGU Administrator