

VSA Meeting Minutes

Date: October 6, 2025

Call to Order: by Emily Millbank @ 6:30 p.m.

Attendance (remote): Emily Milbank (Vice President / Acting Chair); Rich DeGraff Murphy (President / traveling); Kyle Koenig (Secretary); Keith Roberts (Risk Management); Matt Spitznagel (Treasurer / joined later); Andrew Minnis (ED); Lori Levinson (Ops Manager); Jason Marika (TD); Chris George (Guest)

Absent: Bill Edwards

1. Approval of Minutes:

- Date of Previous Meeting: October 6, 2025
- Action: Motion to approve minutes as written
- Result: Approved unanimously

2. Public Comment:

Way of Champions & Cultural Development in Coaching Led by Chris George

- Program Overview and Philosophy
 - Chris George presented on the "Way of Champions"—a coaching philosophy focused on deep cultural change and holistic environment-building for youth sports, originating with Jerry Lynch.
 - Emphasis on the RIVER values: Respect, Importance, Value, Empowerment, Relevance.
 - Shift coaching focus from behaviors solely aimed at outcomes (e.g., winning games) to relationship and value-based environment-building for players, coaches, and clubs.
 - The aim is to teach other coaches how to build these cultural frameworks.
- Vermont Perspective and Application Ideas
 - Discussion around how this could be integrated into existing VSA programming, especially in ODP Olympic Development Program) and coaching courses (e.g., supplementing US Soccer D License courses).
 - Suggestion to host workshops, value-setting exercises, and possibly a seminar at the VSA AGM Annual General Meeting) for broader exposure.

- Chris expressed willingness to provide sessions with flexible pricing (values the impact over cost).
- Implementation and Next Steps
 - Potential rollout as an add-on during coaching education or as a separate event/panel at the AGM.
 - Options for pilot (small, in-house) programs before a full launch, to better understand logistics, content impact, and fit for ODP.
 - Questions around practicalities, scalability, integration for younger age groups, and how to engage coaches and parents.
 - Board members expressed desire to move forward cautiously, focusing on value and sustainable implementation.
- Action Items
 - Andrew to coordinate further with Chris regarding panel vs. workshop at the AGM.
 - Board and staff to provide feedback via email over the next few days.
 - Potential pilot program suggested before larger ODP integration.

3. President's Report

A. Forever Summer Facility Partnership/User Agreement

- Proposal Summary
 - VSA board met with Forever Summer regarding potential new office and conference space. Discussion of usage agreement including VSA Office relocation / conference & educational usage / ODP Training and Leagues
 - Legal and Operational Considerations - user agreement generated & agreed upon by both parties with review by landlord.
- Athlete Wellness and Injury Prevention Initiatives
 - Emily raised concerns about injury prevention (notably ACL injuries among youth and female athletes) and potential for VSA to integrate US

Soccer/USYS health and safety programs as a value add for clubs/members.

- Discussion about existing resources US Soccer's PDFs/webpages) and how to make these tools more accessible and actionable for coaches at the grassroots level.

- Action: Andrew to research further with US Soccer/USYS about available materials; possibility to build VSA's own guides or integrate into coach education.

B. AGM Reports

- Staff/board are to submit their annual reports for the AGM by December 5, 2025.

4. VP Report (w/ Lori Livingston)

A. Awards Gala

- Budget at \$5,100 for 85 attendees; costs include menu, DJ, flowers, awards, and cash bar.
- Early planning aiming to release announcements post-October 23 meeting.

B. Fall Festival

- 120 teams registered, vendors/dj/costume contest set, event scheduled 95 (one day),
- Plans for cash payments to referees.
- Event management and volunteer presence confirmed w/ volunteer parking assistance.

5. Treasury Report

A. Current Balances As of October 6, 2025

Total: \$329,500

Checking: \$107,000

Referee account: \$33,000

Savings: \$189,000

- Outstanding receivables mostly collected; \$56K anticipated previously, now largely resolved.
- Fall program registration income is strong (over \$70K already received).

B. Budgets and Reporting

- FY24/25 closeout with third-party support; official reports expected October 10, 2025.
- Transition to QuickBooks Online in progress; less granular reporting going forward, but greater accessibility and efficiency.

5. Secretary's Report

6. Risk Management Report

A. Background Checks

- Expanded checks through Vermont Criminal Information Center, revealed incidents not found on federal checks. Some individuals failed to disclose DUIs and other convictions; one coach was denied/removed due to undisclosed and serious prior conviction.
- VSA standards exceed most (if not all) local youth sport organizations.

7. SRA Report (Andrew proxy)

A. Referee Program Updates

- High coverage rates: all games this season have had referees, with only one recent scheduling error.
- New referee clinics for next year being scheduled early for better accessibility
- Near-term focus: Young referee mentorship is a challenge due to scheduling conflicts with mentors/advisors.
- New initiative: All referees age 17 and under will be issued green badges for easier identification; reminders on abuse prevention and reporting to go on the website.
- Enhanced training on incident reporting for both new and returning referees.

8. Technical Director Report:

A. ODP

- Head coaches announced for all age groups with profiles
- Support staff announcements to follow prior to November tryouts.
- 266 players registered (plus 90 more in progress).
- Recruitment ongoing—players who can't attend tryouts are scouted at matches and invited to assessments.
- Emphasis on developing standard processes for player evaluations and inclusion.

9. Executive Director Report

- A. Leadership Symposium & National/Regional Collaboration
 - Leadership attended a symposium in Kansas City; positive feedback on networking, learning sessions, and future opportunities.
- B. US Soccer launching state association analysis for assessing effectiveness
 - VSA has participated and will continue collaboration.
- C. Soccer Forward: Planning for 2026 World Cup-related events.
 - VSA likely to spearhead large-scale public viewing/mini-games in cooperation with local municipalities and US Soccer Foundation support. Logistics/details still pending.
- D. Emphasis from USYouth and US Soccer to reengage state associations more directly with national programs.
- E. Officeholder/Corporate Housekeeping
 - Need to update corporate records to reflect Andrew Minnis as Executive Director for administrative and banking purposes.
 - Process: Lori (admin account holder) and Keith Roberts (legal) coordinating to update state registry and provide documentation to banks as needed.
- F. Grant Request: Far Post “Change the Game” Summit
 - Request from Far Post for \$3,500 grant to support the July 16, 2026, event focused on female leadership (women and girls in soccer); intention is that event is open to the full Vermont Soccer membership.
 - Current concern: Last year's event may have been limited to internal Far Post participants despite public communications. Examples of declined participation (e.g., Lori, not a current coach).

- Board discussion: Need clarity on event criteria, openness to all, concrete communication/marketing steps, and detailed budget breakdown before funding.
- Action: Andrew to request formal, detailed proposal and clarification from Far Post before bringing back to board for decision.

10. Other Board and Staff Updates

A. AGM planning

- 90/60/30 day notices to be sent, with clear expectation of mandatory attendance.
- Nominations for two expiring board positions are in progress; current incumbents Kyle and Matt) renominated.

11. Executive Session

- Not needed

12. Good of the Game

- Board members shared select team updates (e.g., Emily's high school team undefeated; Matt's anniversary)

ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to Adjourn: Passed
- Time Adjourned: 7:40 p.m.