

THE PULSE

LOCAL ASSOCIATION NEWS NATIONWIDE

Former AFOA President Selected for Alaska High School Hall of Fame

Clarence Thompson, who served two terms as president of the Anchorage Football Officials Association (AFOA), was among those selected as a member of the Alaska High School Hall of Fame Class of 2020. Thompson, of Anchorage, has been a football and basketball official for more than 40 years. As the AFOA president, he instituted a system of written evaluations and numerical rankings to assist association members in assessing areas of deficiencies. He also worked to get adequate locker room facilities and pay increases for sports officials.

NYSWOA Presents Lifetime Service and Contribution Award

The New York State Wrestling Officials Association (NYSWOA) presented longtime area wrestling official Norm Thomas the Lou Pettinelli Award for lifetime service and contribution to wrestling at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Wrestling Championships in late February. The award was presented by Scott Wessel, NYSWOA president.

Former ECSOA President Named to the Connecticut Soccer Hall of Fame

Melissa Morrone Taintor, the first female president of the Eastern Connecticut Soccer Officials Association, is among the six new members of the Connecticut Soccer Hall of Fame Class of 2020. In addition to serving as a longtime high school and USSF referee, she was a successful soccer player at the University of Connecticut and at the high school level. As a college player, Taintor made three NCAA Final Four appearances, was named All-New England three times, All-American her senior year, and earned the UConn Club Outstanding Senior Athlete Award. She was also an outstanding player at E.O. Smith High School, winning four state championships without losing a game.

SOURCES: ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS, THE POST-JOURNAL (JAMESTOWN, N.Y.), SOCCERWIRE.COM

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN BOARD MEETINGS

By Donald C. Collins

Q What if a member wants to come in and listen to a board meeting? Should bylaws address it or are there state laws that guide in this area? What else dictates who can attend?

A An officials association's board meeting really is a meeting for the board, not for the members. Still, it's often difficult to tell members they're not welcome.

A lot of boards have no meeting regulations. They'll allow a member to sit in as long as it doesn't happen too often and the attendee causes no problems. This is probably a wise goodwill gesture — why irritate a member over a small thing? Problems can occur when the small thing becomes a big deal, and the board is stuck between the precedent it set and its desire to regain control.

Formality is needed. A board should determine whether and under what circumstances members can attend board meetings, whether and under what circumstances non-members can attend, and what the members and outsiders can do when they attend. Answers to these questions need to be written down.

Boards should act. Bylaws, board votes and written meeting procedures are among the ways they can act.

Associations should note that the issue of who can attend a board meeting is usually the board's decision. However, when an organization is receiving funds to operate a government function the board may have to comply with a state's open meetings law. An association would have to consult local counsel as the open meeting regulations vary by state. Generally, though, a contract to officiate games should not subject an association to a state's open meetings law.

Boards have to do more than determine who can attend meetings. A board also has to set basic ground rules. It's not enough to default to Robert's Rules of Order. The board must consider whether it should use the more informal Robert's Rules modifications for smaller boards, go full bore with the complete rules, or try to keep things really simple.

Sometimes simplicity trumps Robert's Rules. A small board may be able to run a fine meeting with the following rules: (a) Nobody speaks unless recognized by the chair or president; (b) nobody interrupts the speaker; (c) the chair can cut off a person who goes too long; (d) non-board members can only attend if the board allows them to attend; (e) non-board members can only speak if the board invites them to speak; (f) board members must agree on the language of what they're voting on before they vote; and (g) the board will agree in advance as to whether the chair can vote or if the chair can only vote to break ties.

Boards can set all the parameters they want, but those have to be distributed to the members. Nobody wants to be the bad guy, turning the member away at the door. It's better to let the member know in advance.

Organizational goodwill isn't the only reason to set out one's meeting procedures. Many a board has had a member, non-member or attorney who came in for a meeting and just took over. Now, you have an uncomfortable board, a runaway meeting and your board isn't doing what it was elected to do. Failing to set standards can have negative ramifications.

Donald C. Collins is the commissioner of the San Francisco Section of the California Interscholastic Federation. He is a longtime basketball official and lawyer. This article is for informational purposes and is not legal advice. ■