



2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2025, Christine Sinclair Community Center, 3713 Kensington Avenue, Burnaby BC

Board members, candidates and staff in attendance:

President: Laura Marquez (Chair)

Vice President: Mathew Halagian

Director: Dante Prins

Director: Helena Fehr

Director: Nick Durpey

Note taker: Mary Blazevic

Candidate: Heather Anderson via Zoom

Candidate: Agathi Christodoulidi

Executive Director: Michelle Boss

1. Call to order

- The meeting was called to order at 5:18pm on September 6, 2025

2. Confirmation of voting credentials, acknowledgement of proxies, allocation of votes

- Burnaby Hurricanes - Rosemary Zhou
- Coquitlam Lions - James Andrusiw
- Fraser Valley - Bryn Porter
- Kelowna - Kristen Smart proxy
- North Van Titans - not present
- Pacific Storm - Bernie Eigl
- Surrey - Cynthia Springate
- UBC - Matthew Ho proxy
- Vancouver Seniors - Bob Nichols
- Vancouver Vipers - David McDonald
- Whiskey Jack - Michael Smith
- Vernon - Kristen Smart proxy

3. Adopt rules of order - Roberts Rules

4. Approve the agenda

- Bernie motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Cynthia. Approved unanimously.

5. Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes

- Matthew motioned to approve the 2024 AGM minutes. Seconded by Rosemary. Approved unanimously.

6. Unfinished business from the last general meeting

- There is no unfinished business.

7. Financial Statements

- Finances are in the audit process as things were not finished
- A special meeting will be called to show the financials and approve them once they have been completed.

8. Volunteer of the Year

- Sean Fitzgerald

9. President's Report

- As submitted
 - Moved to accept by Kristin, seconded by Bryn second; approved unanimously.
- *For future reference, submission of reports do not require approval except when recommendations are made.

10. Executive Director's Report

- As submitted
 - Matthew motioned to accept, seconded by Bernie. Approved unanimously.
- *See note above.

11. Appointment of Scrutineers

- Dante and Mary are the scrutineers

12. Election of Directors

- Dante described that the election would be for 1 unaffiliated and 2 out of 4 affiliated.
- Dante explained the voting process and then are passed around the written description for everyone to read

- Kristin motioned to adopt the Voting Process for 2025 AGM. Passed unanimously.
- A question was posed about the definition of “unaffiliated” and how many were already on the board.
- David McDonald motioned: *For the purpose of the 2025 AGM elections, the definition of ‘parent and guardian’ as it relates to affiliation be that of an athlete 18 or under; and that the board put forward a resolution next year to clarify the definition and parent/ guardian.* Michael seconded.
- Meeting went in camera as board left the room during the discussion, Michelle took over the role of chair
- 7 members voted in favour of the motion, 4 members voted against the motion. The motion passed, allowing the slate of candidates to stand as is.
- Unaffiliated voting results:
 - Matthew Halagen was voted in as unaffiliated
- Voting for the affiliated nominees: Round 1
 - Helena Fehr received 8 votes
 - Agathi Christodoulidi and Heather Anderson were tied with 6 votes each
 - Aleksander Mladenovic received 2 votes
 - Helena Fehr was elected to the first affiliated seat
- Voting for the affiliated nominees: Round 2
 - Heather received 5 votes
 - Agathi received 6 votes
 - Agathi Christodoulidi was elected to the second affiliated seat.

13. Other business

- There was no other business.

14. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 6:48pm on Saturday September 6, 2025.

President's Report

Dear Club Presidents and Guests,

Welcome to the Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Water Polo West Association, held on this 6th day of September, 2025.

I've just completed the first year of my two-year term as President, and it has been an absolute honor to serve this community and to collaborate with our new Executive Director, Michelle Boss, and our dedicated Board members. I extend my sincere gratitude to Matt Halajian, who served as my Vice President and right-hand this past year, providing invaluable support. I'd also like to thank Dante Pinns, Helena Fehr, and Nick Duprey, who consistently stepped up in times of need, often with little to no warning.

This past year presented its challenges. As a Provincial Sports Organization, we operate under clear directives from Water Polo Canada (our NSO), ViaSport (our core funder), and BC Gaming. Early in my term, I quickly learned the strict and thorough reporting requirements that must be completed throughout the season to maintain our ViaSport Designated Organization status and receive funding.

One of my first significant lessons came in December when we received a letter outlining items we needed to fulfill to retain our designation and funding, which was being withheld. Naturally, I was concerned, and we immediately sprang into action. Our Board rallied, working diligently to ensure our organization remained in good standing and began implementing the standards required by ViaSport.

To gather information from our stakeholders, we held two summits this season and distributed a survey. This valuable feedback helped us refine our Mission and Vision statements and develop our Strategic Plan, which was a required item we previously lacked. We acknowledge that it's not a perfect plan, but with Michelle's leadership and guidance, we are continuously making improvements.

Another key ViaSport requirement is the submission of yearly financials that have undergone a third-party Review Engagement, essentially an audit by an independent and qualified accounting firm. In March, we engaged an accounting firm to conduct a review of our 2023-24 financials, marking our first submission of reviewed financials. Failing to do so would result in the loss of our grants. I'm pleased to report that through this exercise, we have significantly improved our processes and oversight. Our 2024-25 Financials Review Engagement will be completed in a few weeks. We have also developed a sound budget with accurate numbers. We are happy to confirm that our financials are up-to-date and accessible for review at any time. This rapid progress is largely thanks to the excellent work of Lisa, our bookkeeper, and Mary, our invaluable volunteer.

Our Board is committed to upholding the standards set by ViaSport, WPC, and Gaming, and we pledge to provide leadership in this area to our community.

In addition to improving our organizational standards, we also worked diligently to deliver programming to our community. I'm delighted to report that this past season, we offered more programs than ever before.

We provided a National Development Centre (NDC) for 14U, 16U, and 18U athletes, complete with regular practices and testing submitted to WPC. We also successfully hosted two well-attended and organized 12U Jamborees, and I'm very grateful to Coach Haley for her support and leadership in this. We conducted three referee clinics, and I want to thank Gaelan and Mike for helping us provide these to our community. We trained several new referees and plan to train more this season. When WPC canceled their scheduled Rise Program in March, we decided to utilize the pool time ourselves, which proved to be a great success and something we will replicate and enhance.

Thanks to Surrey and their excellent pool time, we were able to host a proper 14U & 16U Provincials Championship. Twenty teams participated in this event, and our plan is to further improve and expand it this season.

Our Team BC Program, offered this year, was very well received. For the first time, we had to make cuts, and we sent five and a half teams (19U team was combined with Alberta) to the Provincial National Championships in Montreal in July. This represented the largest number of athletes and teams we have ever had participate.

We also organized a Serbia training trip, an incredible opportunity for BC athletes to train in Europe and receive coaching from some of the world's best. **29** athletes participated in the training trip. Thank you to Coach Branko for organizing this invaluable experience for our athletes. I also want to thank Branko for his leadership in coaching, and Taylor, Georgy, Hayley, and Kirstin for their unwavering support and hard work throughout the season.

We recognize that there is still much work to be done and always room for improvement. We worked exceptionally hard this past season, and like many of you, we are also volunteers. The year has passed quickly, and there is still significant work to be accomplished in my second term.

Standards, Good Governance, and Policy will be the central theme for our Board as we move into the next season.

Having been a part of this community for so long, I regard many of you as family. It has been a true honor to work with all of you and to serve this amazing community this past year. I eagerly anticipate this upcoming season and the many incredible things that will unfold.

Sincerely,
Laura
Laura Marquez
President, Water Polo West Association
president@waterpolowest.ca

Executive Director's Report

It's a pleasure to be part of Water Polo West. I've really been enjoying meeting members of this passionate community. And I appreciate how I've been welcomed in and the patience I've been granted as I navigate this organization and sport.

Coming in right at the beginning of a fiscal year meant I was able to work on closing out the previous fiscal year, allowing me to gain a good understanding of the accounting processes that have been used and where we needed to beef up our protocol. Mostly that meant establishing accountability processes to ensure that funds are always accounted for.

Hand in hand with getting the financials in order, was the BC Gaming Grant application. Because we now have up to date books and a solid projected budget, we were able to apply for more than two times what WPW applied for last year. We hope to hear back on this soon. I want to thank Lisa, our bookkeeper, and Mary, our operations specialist, for all their extra time in getting our financials up to date. It was no small task. Additionally, we submitted an application to the viaSport Provincial Sport Development Fund. We received \$15,000.

Financials were a satisfying achievement but it has been much more interesting to get up to speed on what has been happening in the sport. Attending most of the National Provincial Championships was an important part of that. In the ED role, I was able to lead the evening coaches' meetings and establish a dynamic of open dialogue amongst the five coaches.

One of the outcomes the Board was looking for with my initial contract, was to establish an understanding of the time needed for the role of ED. I started with a 50% FTE (17-20 hours/week) but that quickly proved to be inadequate. Moving forward, the role should operate at 80-100% FTE (30-40 hours/week). I believe this to be a realistic amount of time to manage the basic needs of the organization while building out systems to allow for seamless growth and succession. This brings me to my upcoming areas of focus.

- Professionalizing processes – from coach and athlete selection to budgeting – creating transparency and accountability.
- Communication – updating the website and making it a useful resource for participants, regular newsletters, and more consistent social media. I would also like to work on improving communication between WPW and clubs – and vice versa.
- Coach and Officials training are both important to the sustainability of the sport. I'm already actively working on this, and it will be ongoing.
- Team culture and safe sport – This is an area where we need to be proactive. The landscape of sport in Canada has changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Expectations are changing fast and we need to keep up.
- Water Polo West will be in the next cohort of the viaSport Operational Enhancement Initiative. The program aims to strengthen capacity, improve sustainability, and to modernize existing governance structures and operations.

I'm looking forward to these initiatives coming together to support the greater mission of WPW: To grow the sport of water polo in British Columbia.

Thank you,
Michelle