

DRAFT MINUTES

RLEF LIMITED

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2020

Location	Online Meeting	Date	Saturday 12 September 2020
Chair	Maurice Watkins	Time	4pm-6pm (BST)
Members present	Full Members 9: Ralph Rimmer (England), Dave Fitzhenry (Ireland), Tiziano Franchini (Italy), Nayef Albert Abi Said (Lebanon), Jon Christie (Russia), Vladan Kikanovic (Serbia), Artur Martyrosian (Ukraine) Brian Juliff (Wales), Adrian Hall (Jamaica)		
	Affiliate Members 10: Lukas Hergott (Czech Republic), Bob Doughton (Germany), [] Camilleri (Malta), David Hunter, Karl-Fredrik Velle (Norway), Tony Palacios (Spain) Gurol Yaldiz (Turkey), Cody Cuxmann (USA), Thomas Hughes (Canada), George Stilianos (Greece), Keith Hogg (Scotland)		
	Observers 11: Rabie Masri (Palestine), Zsolt Lukacs (Hungary), Carol Manga (Cameroon), Dejev Dashi (Albania), Rodgers Mbanza (DR Congo), Yamina Abdesselem (Morocco), Richard Naylor (Denmark), Zakaria Zoubir (Belgium) Abbey Cole (Nigeria), Sebastian Johnson-Cadwell (Sweden), Jean Du Christ Rusiga (Burundi)		
Board Members present	Paul Nicholson (Independent), Graeme Thompson (RLEF/Scotland), Maurice Watkins (Independent Chair), Mahdi Choudhury (Independent), Alison O'Brien (RLEF/RFL)		
Others	Romeo Monteith (Americas Regional Director), Remond Safi (MEA Regional Director), Jovan Vujosevic (Europe Regional Director)		
Apologies	Marc Palanques (France) – Wales granted proxy vote, Colin Kleyweg (RLEF/Serbia), Netherlands		

Item	Agenda Item
1.0	<p>Roll call of voting representatives & apologies Maurice Watkins opened the meeting, welcoming all the delegates and recording the apologies.</p> <p>Mahdi Choudhury proceeded with the roll call and confirmed that the quorum was satisfied. There was a total of 51 counting votes from within the membership present. 26 votes would therefore be required to pass an ordinary resolution and 39 votes for any special resolution.</p> <p>MW noted the passing of, and paid tribute to, Simon Cooper who was fundamental to the inception and growth of Rugby League in Germany.</p> <p>MW stated that the latest Board Director conflict of interest register had been distributed prior to the meeting and that this will be updated on an annual basis and presented to the Council.</p>
2.0	<p>Minutes of 2019 Meeting The minutes of the 2019 Annual Council Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey were presented and unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Moved by Turkey, Seconded by Scotland and all subsequently approved.</p>
3.0	<p>Matters Arising from Last Meeting MW noted that matters arising from 2019 were:</p> <p>1) for Chris Thair (then GM) to follow up with Super League on nominal tariff to assist with funding of RLEF; and</p> <p>2) for further investigation into the development of administrators in the new RLEF Strategy.</p> <p>MW and MC stated that although significant work has been done in developing the framework strategy, given the departure of CT, the formal approval of the new strategy has not taken place as we look to appoint a new GM in the coming months and the board would therefore therefore look to follow up on the above matters upon their recruitment.</p>
4.0	<p>General Manager's Report MW introduced GT who had assumed the interim GM role.</p> <p>GT commented on 2019 congress in Turkey and the women's international that took place between Turkey and Italy during the weekend</p> <p>GT provided information on key internationals that took place during the year, including the qualifiers from RLEF member nations for the RLWC 2021 (Men's Women's and Wheelchair). GT also commented on the MEA Championships held in Lagos, Nigeria and the Americas 9s tournament that took place in Toronto, Canada.</p> <p>Further, GT commented on the Coach Education Programme and Match Officials Training that has taken place during the year.</p> <p>GT finished by thanking all Member Nations, volunteers and staff for their commitment.</p>

<p>5.0</p>	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>MC presented a 2019 financial report in his role as Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee. Noting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report covers the year until 31 December 2019. • Net Profit of £164,633 reported as compared to budget of £137,000. • The Accounts have been reviewed by Hays Macintyre and they have reported that nothing has come to their attention that causes them to believe that the financial statements have not been prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs as at 31 December 2019. • Total revenues of £515k were achieved in the year. • RFL Income was £53,717 as compared to budget of £53,000. RFL passes on annual IRL Grant to RLEF each year and the changes in exchange rates determines the precise figure receivable. • Income from Members fees was close to budget at £6k. Full Members were charged €500 for the year and Affiliate Members were charged €100 per year. Not all invoices raised and included as income for 2019 had been settled at the year end. • Affiliate Grant Expenditure was £2k higher than budgeted at £17k. • Administration costs were higher than budgeted albeit the staff and consultant costs elements were circa £2k lower than budget at £124k for the year. The adverse variances were on Congress expenditure and Audit and Accountancy costs. • Combined Bank balances were £233k at 31 December 2019. • The 2020 year has been a year of relatively low activity in terms of financial transactions. The Bank balance at the time of writing is £134k and so the cash flow position is satisfactory. <p>MC moved for the motion for the accounts to be passed. Approved by RFL, seconded by USA.</p> <p>MW commented that a decision from FARC had been taken not to have a full audit of 2019 accounts as this is not a legal obligation, Hays MacIntyre will independently review and prepare accounts as alternative and a full audit was proposed to be conducted every three years.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Further Resolutions</p> <p>6.1 <i>Resolution (iii): move to nominate an independent commission, made up of all members, to renew the RLEF Constitution (Proposed by FIRL, seconded by AERL and Germany RL)</i></p> <p>ITA presented comments on the resolution, referring to earlier correspondence on issues with the constitution and general governance issues, stating that transparency was key point to having a fair constitution and proposing a full review.</p> <p>MC commented on the board position stating that the board supported a full governance review (not just focused on the articles but wider governance and integrity items) and referred to the feedback from the earlier consultation session at the Congress where a governance review would be welcomed by Member Federations. MC commented that Member Federation would be integrally involved as part of any Working Group to review and comment on findings of a review, MC commented that a proposal had been put forward for the Sport Integrity Global Alliance to conduct an independent governance audit to ensure transparency and direct member federation feedback would be part of this audit process.</p>

PN provided further details of the SIGA proposal and proposed that the resolution as it was currently worded would be rejected and replaced with a proposal covering a much deeper governance review, reviewing the culture of the organisation as part of the SIGA review with the relevant accreditations.

Wales welcomed the proposal of SIGA providing a level of independence.

Germany commented that as part of the workshop there was some conversation on member consultation on what the consultation framework should look like.

Scotland commented that they fully supported the concept of SIGA becoming involved as part of the RLEF and there would be a need to work through what the process looked like.

Greece commented about the issue of RFL/FFR veto, commenting that the majority of players came from England and France and could understand the rationale re the veto rule in the articles, also commenting that the veto had never actually been used.

RFL stated that it was happy to review any recommendations from any SIGA review and recommendations.

BD commented that RLEF needs be self-sustainable and not overly reliant on RFL funding.

PN stated that a level of unity was required to move forward as a confederation.

MC underlined that the process would involve member consultation at all stages and that no changes could be affected without member feedback and approval.

MW called for a vote in terms of supporting the resolution proposed by ITA. Vote result For: 6 votes Against: 28 votes. As such the resolution was not passed.

MW moved to consider a revised resolution that "*the RLEF moves to initiate an independent governance and policy review, including a review of the articles of association building on and using member input and feedback at all stages.*" Vote result was For: 30 Against: 6. As such, the revised resolution was passed.

6.2 *Resolution (iv): In future all votes for RLEF board members appointed by the Council should be held in an open manner, by show of hands at the AGM at which the candidates are standing. (Proposed by FIRL, seconded by AERL and Germany RL)*

ITA commented that votes should not be done by email but physically raising hands at the meeting.

MC commented that the board position was that concept of a secret ballot is standard practice in any sport governing body process with independent oversight of the vote. By anonymising votes, this prevented voter intimidation, blackmailing etc.

Jamaica supported the concept of a secret vote. Lebanon proposed that there should be a secret vote which involved further independence where votes could remain secret (as opposed to independent director involvement). Scotland commented that secret ballot is best practice.

MW called for a vote in terms of supporting the resolution proposed by ITA. Vote result For: 7 votes Against: 38 votes. As such the resolution was not passed.

6.3 *Resolution (v): move to increase domestic quota player ratio in RLEF designated events (Proposed by SRL, seconded by RLN and GRLA)*

Serbia commented on the resolution stating that they wished for nations to encourage domestic development.

	<p>GT commented on behalf of the board stating that domestic quota numbers had been widely discussed. The current DQ numbers had been consulted on in 2019 but commented that the board did not have a strong view other than to encourage and promote domestic player activity.</p> <p>Germany commented it is fully supportive of playing domestic players but highlighted that nations should be able to put out the very best teams for RLWC qualification (with an option that non qualification matches could have a differing numbers).</p> <p>Greece confirmed that the long term focus should be encouraging home grown players so supported the proposal.</p> <p>MW called for a vote in terms of supporting the resolution proposed by Serbia. Vote result For: 39 votes Against: 2 votes. As such the resolution was carried.</p> <p>6.4 <i>Resolution (vi): move to change company name to European Rugby League (Proposed by RLEF board of directors)</i></p> <p>PN commented on behalf of the board that the genesis of the idea coming from IRL who had recently changed its own name and requested RLEF to change to ERL. Board stated that it had reviewed and felt it made sense from a simplicity perspective but felt it was important to put in front of membership before approving any changes,</p> <p>Germany commented that the comments made were English language centric and that “federation” was an important term within Europe. This was supported by ITA.</p> <p>An amended proposal was made to rename formally to <i>European Rugby League Federation</i> so that Member Federations could use this official terminology where necessary with <i>European Rugby League</i> being used for brand purposes.</p> <p>MW then moved to change the resolution to read “<i>move to change company name to European Rugby League Federation</i>” Vote result For: 45 votes Against: 0 votes. As such the resolution was carried.</p>
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>Result of Independent Director Elections</p> <p>Resolution (ii): move to confirm election of Independent Directors.</p> <p>MW commented that the RLEF recently held an election of two directors from within the membership. It was confirmed that Graeme Thompson is returned for a further two-year term and joined by Wales federation nominee Brian Juliff. Both serve until 2022.</p> <p>Noting that a vote from a full member counted as 4 votes for each candidate they voted for and a vote from an affiliate member counted as 1 vote for each candidate voted for). The results were as follows:</p> <p>Graeme Thompson – 31 votes Brian Juliff – 26 votes Colin Kleyweg – 23 votes Orazio d'arro - 2 votes</p> <p>9 full and 5 affiliate members voted which represents c.70% of the total membership who were eligible to vote.</p>

<p>7.2</p>	<p>MW thanked all members for their nominations and support of this important process of ensuring member representation on the RLEF Board and thanked Colin Kleyweg for his efforts as part of the board.</p> <p><i>Resolution (vii): move to confirm re-election of Independent Director. Proposed by RLEF Board.</i></p> <p>MW moved for Mahdi Choudhury to serve a second two-year term as an independent director until Congress meeting of September 2022.</p> <p>All approved and motion carried.</p>
<p>8.0</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Germany thanked all members for their kind words with Simon Cooper and confirmed there would be a memorial service in due course when circumstances allowed.</p> <p>ITA questioned why the other resolutions that were proposed by ITA had not been brought forward. MC responded that the board felt that these were requests for information as opposed to resolutions which the board had responded to by separate correspondence, If there were formal issues with the information provided then members were encouraged to make formal complaints as per the prescribed processes.</p> <p>With regard to the final financial breakdown of the EU project, MW and PN stated that a full financial breakdown would be provided for those who wished to receive it once the EU had approved the report.</p>
<p>9.0</p>	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>MW reported that the Congress would be held in Italy next year, travel permitting</p> <p>The meeting ended at 1800hrs.</p>