

**FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

OCTOBER 31, 2019  
10:30 AM

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
201 Westcott Building  
Tallahassee, FL

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Members Present: Ed Burr, Dr. James Clark, Bob Davis, Dr. Pam Perrewé and President John Thrasher

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

*President John Thrasher, Chair*

Chair Thrasher welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Vicki Cupp conducted the roll call and confirmed a quorum.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The June 27, 2019 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were provided.

**IV. FSUAA BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

*Mr. David Coburn, Director of Athletics*

David Coburn began his remarks by sharing information from a 10:00 am press release that FSU and Alabama will play a home-and-home football series in 2025 and 2026.

After reviewing the initial set of FSUAA bylaws, it was revealed that a few minor adjustments needed to be made. Mr. Coburn reviewed those items with the Board so that they may be taken to the Board of Trustees meeting for approval on November 1.

Mr. Burr asked for clarification on a primary revision that allows non-voting members to be officers of the corporation, permitting the Director of Athletics to serve as CEO. Mr. Coburn confirmed this and that the revision will also allow the CFO, Secretary, and other non-voting members to serve as officers in the corporation.

*Mr. Davis moved that the modifications to the bylaws be submitted to the Board of Trustees, and Dr. Clark seconded the motion. After no request for discussion, it was approved unanimously.*

## **V. AUDITORS REPORT OF FSUAA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

*Mr. Ross Cobb, Senior Associate Athletics Director & CFO*

Mr. Ross Cobb, recently hired as CFO of FSU Athletics, introduced himself to the Board.

Over the past several months, Mr. Cobb and his staff have been working closely with the firm of Thomas Howell Ferguson P.A., to prepare the FY19 financial statements. Jeff Barbacci, CPA and Managing Shareholder of the Assurance Services Department, was then introduced and summarized the results of the report.

Mr. Barbacci reported that the results of the audit were good. The Board was provided two documents for review: the financial statements themselves, and the disclosure of required communications regarding the audit process.

Two reports were issued by Thomas Howell Ferguson as a result of their audit:

1) an opinion itself on the financial statements which is “unmodified,” the highest level of assurance that can be provided; 2) a report on internal control over financial reporting and compliance, which resulted in no matters which merited the attention of the FSUAA Board or of management. The controls followed are the same as for the athletics department. While an understanding was gained of the FSUAA, the firm did not rely on activities of the Association at this point for the receipt of contributions, payment of expenditures, and contract commitments. At the fiscal year end on June 30, 2019, the FSUAA had roughly \$4.4 million in unrestricted net assets.

Chair Thrasher opened the floor to allow questions for Mr. Barbacci, and asked if he had any recommendations for ways to conduct business differently. The response was that any suggestions would have been identified in the report, and there were none at this time.

*Chair Burr moved to approve the audit as reported, and Mr. Davis seconded the motion. Being no further discussion or objections, the audit was unanimously approved.*

**VI. REPORT OF THE SEPTEMBER ATHLETICS BOARD MEETING**

*Dr. Pam Perrewé, Faculty Athletics Representative & Chair of the Athletics Board*

The Athletics Board met on September 18, 2019. Athletics Director David Coburn introduced incoming FSU Police Chief Terri Brown, and CFO Ross Cobb. Staff promotions within the athletics department and current administrators/oversights for each sport were also announced. Incoming Athletics Board members were introduced, including two student-athlete representatives, Brooke Bollinger (women’s soccer), and Paxton Rhoads (men’s swimming).

Current athletics topics that were shared with the Athletics Board. One item was the status of the ACC Network and at least two newly-hired announcers with previous ties to FSU athletics. With regard to academics, the ACC leads Power 5 conferences with thirteen of the top 75 schools in the country, including Florida State University. The Big 10 has nine universities on this list, and the SEC has four.

David Coburn also shared with the Athletics Board the nature of the FSUAA, the importance of its structure, and the role it will play. Currently the Athletics Board has three working committees: Academics, Finance, and Equity and Welfare. The academics committee Chair reported to the Board in September, with an analysis of student-athlete academics services (SAAS) staff development and training initiatives.

With the implementation of the FSUAA, the Athletics Board Bylaws will be modified since the Board structure is affected due to an overlap of duties. These changes will be discussed and shared with the Athletics Board at the next meeting on November 6.

With the ACC being mentioned by Dr. Perrewé, President Thrasher added that a committee within the ACC Council of Presidents is being formed to work on a review of the ACC bylaws. This committee will also formulate the transition plan as the current Commissioner, John Swofford, prepares to retire.

**VII. REPORT OF SEPTEMBER SBI BOARD MEETINGS**

*Mr. Bob Davis, Chair of Seminole Boosters, Inc.*

The Seminole Boosters, Inc. Board of Directors met over the summer to amend their bylaws. These bylaws were approved and sent to the Board of Trustees who subsequently approved the modifications.

The Seminole Boosters Board meetings were held on September 19 and 20, 2019. The Investment & Real Estate Committee, Executive Committee and Full Board met over these two days.

A motion was passed to explore refinancing options for College Town I and II, and a motion was also approved to convert the financing for College Town III from a construction loan to permanent financing. This had already been approved by the Board of Trustees and The Board of Governors and just needed to be executed.

Seminole Boosters, Inc. CFO J.P. Sinclair reported that SBI is on pace to meet budget projections; however, this is heavily dependent on real estate. A large portion of this portfolio consists of donor gifts.

One of Mr. Davis's goals as Chair is to create a joint financial forecast of Athletics and Seminole Boosters. Working with David Coburn, J.P. Sinclair, and Ross Cobb, this is an ongoing project and the FSUAA Board will be updated at a future meeting.

SBI also received an unmodified audit report and capital campaign gifts are trending upward. Of concern is the amount of unrestricted funds, with a direct correlation between the annual fund and ticket sales, which are affected by the performance of the football team.

#### **VIII. SBI CEO SEARCH/TRANSITION**

*Mr. Bob Davis, Chair of Seminole Boosters, Inc.*

Andy Miller has announced his retirement as President and CEO of Seminole Boosters, Inc., as of December 31, 2020. He will remain as a consultant for a year after retirement. Mr. Davis has started working on a timeline for this transition, with a search committee of eleven individuals to be formed, and a decision pending as to whether a national recruiting firm will be utilized. A conference call to begin the process will occur over the next few weeks. The goal is to have the new President and CEO on board by September 1, 2020, in order to experience the entire football season alongside Andy Miller, with the official start date as January 1, 2021.

#### **IX. UNCONQUERED CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

*Mr. Greg Hulen, Executive Vice President, Seminole Boosters, Inc.*

Since publicly announcing the Unconquered Campaign at the beginning of the 2018 football season, the \$100M, five-year campaign has received over \$83M to date in pledges, including a total of 20 commitments of \$1M or more. Over \$11M has been given toward these pledges.

Two targeted projects are already in progress: The Seminole Legacy Golf Club and the softball shade structure, both to be completed by the spring of 2020.

The largest project in the Unconquered Campaign is the investment in football operations with \$37.7M received in commitments, and \$5.6M collected to date. The goal is to receive \$40M in commitments by December 31, 2019.

Other contributions have been received for unrestricted athletics priorities, master plan improvements to Dick Howser Stadium, planned gift commitments, and academic endowments.

#### **X. LEGENDS ENGAGEMENT**

*Andy Miller, President & CEO of Seminole Boosters, Inc.*

Mr. Miller reported that we are experiencing historic drops in the renewal rates of football season tickets. In 2019, a low mark was set of just above 70% after a decade of achieving 80-85% in renewals. Donors are still willing to give money, but are not buying season tickets and revenue is being lost. Over the last decade, the season ticket base has been reduced from 47,000 to 25,000. Reductions in concession revenues and royalties are also affecting the ability of Seminole Boosters to properly fund the annual contribution to athletics.

The main factors affecting attendance are: a stable, winning program that is heading in the right direction; attractive scheduling and kick times; overexposure of television; travel and hotel costs; and the stadium experience. To address many of these issues, a grand plan for the stadium needs to be developed and prioritized.

The Legends Group, founded by Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys, and the Steinbrenner Family, was identified to take us into the future by providing a positive stadium experience. Andy Miller and David Coburn recently traveled to meet with the Legends Group in Tampa, and agreed to move forward with a feasibility study to identify possible new revenue streams to fund stadium upgrades, develop financial plans, recommend design options, and provide premium services, with the company possibly underwriting some of the risk. The study has already begun, with a site visit scheduled for November and a report available for review by leadership during the first quarter of 2020.

**XI. FSUAA STRATEGIC PLAN**

*Mr. Jim Curry, Senior Associate Athletics Director*

With the creation of the FSUAA, there is a need to develop a strategic plan covering both the Seminole Boosters and Athletics organizations. Much has changed with the University, conference, legislation, and national landscape since our last strategic plan was developed. The goal is to ensure that we engage the appropriate stakeholders in its creation and then be intentional in how we follow-up and assess our progress.

Phase One of the process will entail establishing the mission, vision, values and goals and then bringing those forward for consideration, review and final approval. Phase Two will hone in on our key initiatives and set a roadmap for accomplishing the plan.

Board member discussion after Mr. Curry's presentation focused on utilizing the ideas and expertise of various groups and organizations on campus, as well as suggestions to keeping the Plan flexible enough to update and modify goals along the process.

Mr. Curry stated that a facilitator is being identified who understands the University, has a general knowledge of athletics, and can assist in moderating the discussions, keeping student-athletes at the core of what we want to accomplish. A recommendation was made to possibly consult with the facilitator of the university's strategic plan for input as the FSUAA planning process begins.

Updates will be provided at future FSUAA Board meetings.

**XII. OPEN FORUM FOR BOARD MEMBERS**

Chair Thrasher began the open forum by expressing satisfaction in the substantive nature of the two FSUAA meetings that have been held since its formation.

President Thrasher then acknowledged that there are two bills that have been introduced in the Florida Legislature dealing with the name, image and likeness issue. The governor has come out in support of the concept and the president of the senate has voiced some concerns. The University will be working with them towards the best interests of our student-athletes, providing whatever information and input is possible. FSU will work in educating the sponsors with some of our concerns and other aspects of the issue. Updates on this legislation will follow as soon as the session begins in January.

FSUAA Board Member and Board of Trustees Chair, Ed Burr, was congratulated on his upcoming induction into the FSU College of Business Hall of Fame.

As a final item, Athletics Director David Coburn recommended the following format for future FSUAA meetings: 1) Action items; 2) Athletics Director's Report (to include a financial update); 3) Seminole Boosters Report; 4) Athletics Board Report (if applicable); Board of Trustees Report; Strategic Plan Update (as a routine item until implementation begins). Any additional suggestions should be forwarded to David.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chair Thrasher adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.

DRAFT