

Greater Richmond Aquatic League

Board of Directors Meeting

May 5, 2025 at the Federal Club

Next meeting: Monday, June2, 2025 at 7pm—Wembly

The Greater Richmond Aquatic League (GRAL) is an organization of swimmers, coaches, and parents whose aim is to promote and participate in the sport of summer swimming. GRAL provides an opportunity for young people to compete against others of similar ability in an atmosphere of fair play, good sportsmanship, and safety.

Meeting called to order at 7:07pm

Roll Call

- **Present:** Ashland, Atlee, Battlefield Green, Canterbury, Church Run, Colonies, Dominion Club, Federal Club, Fox Hall, Goochland, Hanover, Hungary Creek, Kings Charter, Mechanicsville, Milestone, Old Church, Pebble Creek, Raintree, Rockville Dolphin Club, Tuckahoe Village West, Twin Hickory, Wellesley, Wembly, Wyndham
- **Absent:** Ashcreek, Bell Creek, Burkwood, Chestnut Oaks

President's Report: Julie Zubris (Rockville) President@gralva.com

- GRAL has tried very hard to be communicating well to you all. Your responsibility as the board member is to take information from these meetings back to your teams. The ideal is that each team has one person—you—to be the liaison with your team. For the most part, exec board members should not be receiving an excessive number of emails from people on your teams, such as coaches, computer reps, parents, etc.
- At the end of 2025 we will need several new Exec Board members: President, Secretary, Treasurer, VP of Training & Certification, and VP of Equipment and Technology. We have someone in place for President and possibly have a VP of T&C, but the other positions are open. Ask your teams for anyone interested. You don't have to be GRAL board rep to take on one of the positions.
- There are still a few teams advertising for coach openings on the website—TDC, Raintree, Wembly. Can they be taken down? Yes.. will be removed.
- The website is an issue. The new website is up and running (gral.swimtopia.com). We are trying to get our old domain (gralva.com) so that people can still use the same old website address to get to the new swimtopia

website. It is much more complicated than it should be. We dropped our domain from Wix and then need to wait until it becomes available to buy it on something like go daddy so then it can be transferred over to Cloudflare, which is what is needed to work with SwimTopia. However, until Wix releases the domain we cannot do anything. Moira is checking every day to see if the domain is available.

- 19 teams have sent in their logos to be included on the website. If you have not done so yet, please send in your logos to president to be included on the bio page of the website. Your logo is included, as well as your address and website, and if you want a contact person and/or email, that's fine too. If your team bio is on the website, please double check the address. They were pulled off the old GRAL website, but a couple of them have been wrong. We want to make sure all the information on the website is accurate.
- We are still waiting on the Wix website to decommission the GRALVA.com website so that we can switch it over to the swimtopia site. There is a long process to this and we have to wait in order to do it correctly.
- SwimTopia (ST):
 - Trainings for coaches (meet entries) and computer reps (Meet Maestro) have been scheduled. Coaches are required to view training unless they have been a coach for 5 years. If this is the case email officials@gralva.com and president@gralva.com
 - **COACHES TRAINING: Meet Entries**
Monday, May 12, 7:00-8:00pm ET
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84910240249?pwd=wmdkg41uz4T16Ym18qG31bArs3PtJy.1>
Coaches are required to view the training before the coaches meeting on 5/31. Board reps, it is your responsibility to ensure that this happens.
 - **COMPUTER REPS TRAINING: Meet Maestro**
Monday, May 19, 7:00-9:00pm ET
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84910240249?pwd=wmdkg41uz4T16Ym18qG31bArs3PtJy.1>
 - Coaches and computer reps are strongly encouraged to attend live if possible, as Tracy from SwimTopia will be answering questions throughout the presentation. However, the webinar will also be recorded for those unable to attend and will be sent out after the training. Teams will have access to test meets that were previously set up on each team's site. This information has been sent out to computer reps and coaches directly as long as they are assigned to their role in ST. Parent reps were also included in the email with this information.
 - **In order to participate in the training, individuals must have an account in SwimTopia and also be granted privileges for Swim Meets. The permissions that are granted to each role occur at the TEAM level (not league). Therefore, you need to make sure that the computer rep and coaches role on your team site has "Manage" rights to "Swim Meets." You can find this under Manage**

Team>Roles>Computer Representative (or Coach). Click on the role, scroll to the bottom and under "Administrative Permissions" click on "some administrative permissions." Click the button under manage for swim meets. You can set any other permissions your team desires, but this is what is required for the league.

- The email that went to you, parent reps, and computer reps also included info about duplicate athletes on your roster. You need to make sure to merge any duplicate athletes before you will have times in the system. The email included details on how to fix this, and it's also on the website under Resources>Computer Reps.
- Team contacts need to be assigned in SwimTopia at the team level. GRAL has shared the roles of board rep, parent rep, coach, officials coordinator, computer rep, and Champs coordinator to each team. Teams must assign an individual from their team to each role. Email communications going forward will be sent using this system, so if your team does not have an individual assigned to a role, your team will not receive any communications from the league sent to that role.
- Discussion about a "ref" role to be created. Julie will send an email reminding you all to assign your refs to the shared role in ST.
- Exemptions: There are 3 different types. Each exemption has its own form under the Forms tab on the website. The coach is the one who fills out the form for the special needs and relay exemptions. They need to be resubmitted every year. Swimmer cannot compete until it is approved, so do it as soon as possible (a week is optimum lead time). Coaches should always tell ref beforehand if there are any exemptions and it is often included in the parent rep letter.
 - Employee exemptions: If you have a new swimmer to your team that is moving from another GRAL team, and they are members through employment then you are required to submit an Employee Exemption form online. This does NOT apply to an employee who has been a member and has swum with your team in previous years. As we start the season, please remember to submit employee exemptions as early as possible; they are required before the 1st meet. The form will be posted online soon.
 - Special Needs exemption: examples include accommodations for someone with a hearing issue (for the start), a child unable to swim a 50 once they are 8 due to some type of physical issue, a swimmer missing a limb, a swimmer needing an outside lane, etc. This also includes requests for different clothing than the typical USA swimming approved bathing suit (wants to wear swim shirt, etc.).
 - Relay exemption: If a team does not have enough boys or girls on their roster in a certain age group to have a legal relay, they can request an exemption for kids to swim up in age or have a relay of all the same gender. This is not based on swimmers who will be in attendance at a meet; it is based on the roster.

- April meeting minutes: Milestone made motion to approve, Pebble creek seconded. None opposed; accepted into the record.

Secretary Report: Michelle Shores (Battlefield Green) secretary@gralva.com

- Certificate of Insurance is due in May. Please work on getting that emailed to me as soon as you can. Ensure that it has GRAL listed as an additional insurer.

Treasurer Report: Cindy Anderson (Raintree) treasurer@gralva.com

Current balance is \$26944 with ending balance going to be under \$14,000. Insurance and taxes just paid. Registration money due at next meeting.

VP of Officials Report: Tom Connolly (Pebble Creek) officials@gralva.com

- S&T training are 5/18, 6/1, 6/8 at 5:30pm at Burkwood. Also if you would like to pay \$35 and take the USA swim officials training, it is a great course. The training videos are live. If you see errors related to swimtopia, etc. reach out to Tom.
- Virtual Ref Roundtables for returning refs are scheduled for 5/22 and 5/28 at 7pm. In person referee training for new refs is scheduled for 5/18 or 6/1 at 7pm at Burkwood.

VP of Training and Certification: Debi Knott (Wembly) training@gralva.com

- The current officials list is posted on the new swimtopia site under >Resources >Officials. If you see an error, please email training@gralva.com.

VP of Equipment (and technology) Report: Moira Sweazey (Hanover)

equipment@gralva.com

- Medals were ordered, but were much more expensive than anticipated. The price went up and we need more than the number ordered last year. Order had to be placed immediately due to tariffs. Price went from \$1.96 to \$2.45 each medal.
- We will not be getting boxes anymore—they also went up in price and were going to cost \$3,500. Plus, many of them arrive broken. We will be using bags that can still have a label adhered to it. The cases went from .75 to .83 (\$3500 total)
- DQ cards are out of stock at swim outlet.
- Next year will need \$15-20k minimum for medals and ribbons. We need a committee in the off season to review the medals/placings/manufacturers to determine the most fiscally responsible way forward.

Computer Coordinator Report: Ralph Jones ralph@gralva.com.

- Ralph received files from ST for relay audits which will help him greatly!
- Worried about an internet glitch while swimming? Just keep entering your data.
- The new ST is still better than the old system and we will have growing pains this year.
- Julie and Mark and others working on a "manual" for computer reps.

VP of Champs Report: open position champs@gralva.com

- Champs is scheduled for July 19-20, 2025 at SwimRVA. 12 and unders will be Saturday, 13 and over on Sunday.
- Heather and Sarah introduced themselves. WELCOME!!
- They will provide more info and requests at the next meeting for CHAMPS.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Len Everett scholarship applications will be due by midnight June 20th; the form shuts off, so don't wait until the last minute. Recommendations are due July 1st. This is a \$500 scholarship for a high school graduating senior who will be attending college, university, or trade school. We offer up to eight scholarships per year. The form will go live on the website soon. Please share this info with your families. Last year we received over 30 applications—only application that are complete and on time will be considered.
- 2025 GRAL Meeting dates—we need locations for July and annual meetings
 - Monday, June 2nd (in-person—registration is collected and we hand out ribbons) **Wembly**
 - Monday, July 7th (in-person) **Need location**
- 2025 Meet Dates
 - Meet 1 = Wednesday, June 4th
 - Meet 2 = Wednesday, June 11th
 - Meet 3 = Wednesday, June 18th **teams need to let us know if it not on the 18th
 - Meet 4 = Wednesday, June 25th
 - Meet 5 = Wednesday, July 2nd
 - Meet 6 = Tuesday, July 8th (must be on Tuesday because of the tight timeline for Champs)
 - Champs = Saturday, July 19th and Sunday, July 20th
- Other important dates for the season
 - Online registration form due from teams by 11:59pm Friday May 23 (that is Memorial Day weekend, so plan accordingly). This will be a simpler form than in years past.
 - Registration paid at June Board meeting (6/2) \$9.40 a swimmer this year (same \$7 as last year, with an additional \$2.40 per swimmer for SwimTopia). The form will likely change, but will still need to attest that all swimmers are members in good standing.
 - Coaches test due by 11:59pm Friday May 30th.
 - Coaches meeting Saturday, 5/31 at 9am—in person at Atlee. Coaches will need to have viewed the SwimTopia training by this date as well.

Good of the League – Kings Charter asked if others were seeing a decrease in registration because their team was at half of what they usually have registered. A lot of teams agreed. The discussion of the early season was then discussed and how families are probably trying to get through school and May activities.

If a swimmer decides to not swim will they receive the \$10 refund? Per GRAL, we think no, but we will double check.

Adjourned at 2025

Submitted by Michelle Shores, secretary