

Greater Richmond Aquatic League

Annual Board of Directors Meeting

September 15, 2024, at Burkwood

Next Board Meeting Monday January 6th, 2024 at 7pm via Zoom

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 7:04pm

Roll Call:

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

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

- We are going to start the meeting with Matt Togna. He spearheaded some GRAL teams' efforts to raise money for Comfort Zone Camp through a swim-a-thons. He would like to provide an update on the effort. 20k total raised! Matt- manager@hungarycreek.org
- Thank you for a wonderful 2024 season! Thank you to all of you for your work during the year and your patience. Please pass on a huge thank you to the leadership at your individual pools. Thank you to the Exec Board for all their hard work through ribbon issues and a new contact entry system and a brand new website and even a brand new officials position.
- The biggest thank you of all needs to go to Christy Evanko, who has tirelessly served GRAL for well over a decade and then stayed on for one more season even after resigning. She has sacrificed countless hours of sleep, as well as quite a few brain cells to keep this league running. She always gave her best so that all the children would have a positive swimming experience each and every summer. We can't express the depths of our gratitude for her service. She will be sorely missed, and we wish her the best!
- Please remember that when we engage in discussions about various suggestions and ideas, you need to review them with your team to determine

your teams' feelings in preparation of potential votes at future meetings. When we head into monthly meetings beginning in January, It is up to you as Board members to bring up items for a vote. A motion needs to be made.

- 2025 schedule: As a league, we voted to move the schedule up by a week because schools are getting out earlier and starting earlier. We all assumed that cold water might be more of a factor if teams choose to start practice a week early. However, that did not seem to be a problem this year. After a record cold meet in 2023, we had an extremely hot meet 6 in 2024. There were people who felt that that we should cancel because the water was too warm and didn't match USA Swimming rules. But the USA Swimming rules are related to indoor pools that are more easily regulated. So this is just a reminder that there are no GRAL rules about when a team practices with regards to air or water temperature, whether hot or cold. Those decisions are made by the individual teams. And as always, if families are concerned with the weather, they are never required to participate. They are always free to make the decision that is best for their family. And finally, GRAL meets on a very tight deadline to make the season happen, especially at meet 6. So canceling is always a last resort.
- Bylaws require that the schedule be posted by February, but there are always requests for it earlier. Therefore, this year it will be posted on the website by October 1st.
- July meeting minutes: Federal club motion to approve. Bellcreek second. None opposed. Accepted into the record.

Secretary Report: Michelle Shores (Battlefield Green) secretary@gralva.com Contact form link is on the website. Please update you parent rep, board rep and coaches.

Treasurer Report: Cindy Anderson (Raintree) treasurer@gralva.com
\$74,212 balance. \$44,000 will be used for the upcoming budget and only \$2,000 remaining after all are paid.

VP of Officials Report: Roy Sabo (Milestone) officials@gralva.com
Will review training on all the trainings. Bellcreek thanked Roy for adding additional dates for training.

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

Computer Coordinator Report: Ralph Jones ralph@gralva.com- Thanked Christy for the training. Ralph asked for patience as he continues to learn the computer role.

VP of Equipment Report: Moira Sweazey (Hanover) equipment@gralva.com Thanked for everyone's help with the ribbon issues last season. The new year will bring lots of smooth sailing and no issues with the ribbon distribution.

VP of Champs Report: given by Kristin Brittle, Past President champs@gralva.com. The days went well and had lots of coaches thank her. Big thank you to Kristin for stepping

up and taking over the champs role. 540 kids that were 8 and under swimmers had to be organized and was very chaotic.

Old Business:

- None

New Business

- 2025 Exec Board: Good news is that there are not many positions to fill this year, but that means that next year for 2026 we will need quite a few individuals to be stepping up.
 - Returning President- Julie Zubris (RVDC): no vote required
 - Past President- Kristin Brittle: no vote required
 - Returning Secretary- Michelle Shores (Battlefield Green): no vote required
 - Treasurer- Cynthia Anderson (Raintree): no vote required
 - New VP of Officials- Tom Connolly (Pebble Creek) A USA official and educator as well. Federal club makes a motion, second hanover and milestone. Unanimous vote for approval.
 - Returning VP of Certification- Debi Knott (Wembly): no vote required
 - Returning VP of Equipment- Moira Sweazey (Hanover CC): no vote required
 - VP of Champs- Open, no one is willing, take it to your teams to see if anyone is willing to serve in that role. A pair is even better if there is more than one person interested. The job is intense for the 3 weeks prior to the champs meet. It is hard for someone that works fulltime in the summer. There is very little “work” throughout the year. The week of includes delivering shirts, trips to the printer, organizing supplies, going to swimrva for banner delivery.
- 2025 GRAL Meeting dates (tentative plan—dates likely to stick, but in person/virtual may change)
 - Monday, January 6th (virtual)
 - Monday, February 3rd (in-person because we collect dues)
 - Monday, March 3rd (virtual)
 - Monday, April 7th (virtual)
 - Monday, May 5th (TBD)
 - Monday, June 2nd (in-person because registration is collected and we hand out ribbons)
 - Monday, July 7th (in-person)
- 2025 Meet Dates (schedule will be posted on website by October 1st)
 - Meet 1 = Wednesday, June 4th
 - Meet 2 = Wednesday, June 11th
 - Meet 3 = Wednesday, June 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

- 2025 GRAL Divisions- calculation determination is laid out in the handbook. We need two divisions of 6 and two of 8. Using the standard deviation, find the most natural (and competitive) breaks for those divisions.
 - Division 1: Burkwood, Church Run, Canterbury, Wyndham,
 - Ashland, Raintree, Hungary Creek, Colonies
 - Division 2: Kings Charter, Fox Hall, Twin Hickory, Rocvillage Dolphin Club, Goochland, Atlee, AshCreek, Milestone,
 - Division 3: Chestnut Oaks, Pebble Creek, Dominion Club, Hanover, Old Church, Federal Club
 - Division 4: Wellesley, Mechanicsville, Bell Creek, Tuckahoe Village West, Wembly, Battlefield Green
- Church run wants to make a note that they ensure they are swimming at a certain club.
- Swim suits discussed by Canterbury and the use of swimshirt. Motion made to follow USA swimming rules for swimwear except the use of swim shirt. Motion no longer needed as a discussion was done regarding asking the parents if their child would wear a swimshirt on cold meet nights, then coaches should ask for the exemption ahead of time.
- We need a time standards committee for the off season; that is something that happens every other year. We were off cycle because of Covid but now we are back on track.
- Prices for 2025. Budgeted 8k for ribbons. Spent 9k and still ran up short. We are looking at 15k for the ribbon order for 2026. Therefore we have to increase our registration dues and CHAMPS registration dues. Currently Team dues are \$200 per team and \$7 per swimmer registration. We are talking about increasing the swimmer dues to \$10/person. The number of swimmers being resigtered is down every year. Carry over balance has been around 45k. There are no ribbon companies locally to decrease shipping costs. What is the budget carryover comfort? Can we decrease to \$34,000 instead of \$44,000. Can we step up dues \$1 per year over the course of a couple years? Cindy will look at the budget to see clarifications for what gets spent. By mid October there will be an update sent out on the budget.
- The league needs to be simplified. Software discussions are happening this fall to see how the league can all be on the same platform.
- Champs 2026 \$13,830 quote from Swim RVA; 2027 is \$14,245. At Swim RVA there is additional room for hospitality, kids can stay on deck around the pool, and there is space for clerk of course. NOVA at Regency quote of \$13750.00 for 2026. By then will have an additional mezzanine built, but overall less space inside. 1k seats for spectators. No way for swimmers to hang out with teams. The parking deck is where the clerk of course would have to be. If your team votes yes for NOVA, the team has to be automatically on the committee to problem solve the logistics of a new facility. Federal club makes motion to use Swim RVA over NOVA. All in favor is 18, 2 opposed—Burkwood and Canterbury. Abstained--Church Run Canterbury is concerned about the dates for Champs because it will conflict with a USA Swimming meet.
- Time Drops- if your team wants to implement that, the board had said teams could do that in 2026. It's the team's responsibility to run the meet well and to know how to

run the time drops software. Expectations have to be met on how they run the meets. Colonies and Dominion Club currently using. Atlee and Federal Club expressed concerns over the use of Time Drops at Dominion Club. Colonies has implemented it well and been very successful—every team that swam against them had a positive experience. Suggestion to not allow Time Drops in the league; Colonies will fight to continue to be able to use it.

Good of the league

- Ashland: current rule for GRAL swimming is 5-18 year olds. If a student turns 19 in their senior year, they can't swim. Ashland would like to change the rule that swimmers can swim until they graduate. Potential issues: the birthdate of the swimmer has to be manually changed and you have to "lie" to the system. Question of whether pool insurance will cover a 19 year old? CHAMPS insurance policy also needs to be checked to see if would cover a swimmer who is 19. Discussion placed on hold until Ashland checks with their insurance company
- Old Church: protocol was not followed when a transgender swimmer was part of the league this summer. Pebble Creek coach told the other coaches, which was not protocol. Then Old Church coach sent an email to all families and a family quite the league. The whole situation was supposed to be private, so both coaches did not follow protocol. The only time an exemption is needed is if a child is not wearing the swimsuit does not match their GRAL gender.

Motion to adjourn by Federal club second by Hanover

Adjourned at 2038

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Shores, GRAL Secretary