



Inclusion and Community Impact Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: August 12, 2025 8:00 pm EST/5:00 pm PT

Attendees: Jenny Withycombe, Malcolm Doldron, Cara Stawicki, Myrna Gotrell and June Marshall

USRowing Board Member Liaison: Stephen Ciraolo

Guest: Will Bott, USRowing Director of United We Row Programs

Call to Order – 8:05 pm

- I. **Call to Order:** 8:05 pm EST/ 5:05 pm PT
 - A. Approval of Prior Minutes – Minutes were not taken during the July 2025 meeting.
- II. **New Business:**
 - A. Guest Speaker - Will Bott, United We Row Grants
 - Mr. Bott provided a summary with respect to the grants that were awarded last year, as well as the process and procedures of awarding the grants for both 2024-2025.
 - Mr. Bott stated that there were over 100 applicants for the grant, of the 100, 30 were the strongest. The total funds requested by the 30 strongest were between \$300,000 - \$350,000, however the budget amount for the grant awards were \$70,000. In 2024, 9 organizations were selected and the organizations participate in quarterly community calls to support each other.
 - Goal is to award grants to a diverse group serving different populations - youth and cancer survivors.
 - There are two opportunities for data collection – the first in November (4-5 months after funding received) and the second in May in order to obtain quantitative metrics, such as quotes from athletes and see the impact of the grant. Second part of data collection is individualized and Mr. Bott meets with all 9 organizations separately.
 - Mr. Bott indicated that the most important takeaway in his mind was that the organizations believed that there is value to be a member of the co-hort.
 - Mr. Bott stated that the awardees were a diverse group from all across the country serving many different types of people. He believed that overall 2024 was a successful year, however there was one of the 9 organizations that did not succeed because the program disbanded.
 - In 2024, each of the 9 organizations were given between \$10,000 - \$7,500.

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- A. Reflecting BEFORE we make decisions

- Ms. Withycombe inquired whether any of the grants went towards diversity efforts, Mr. Bott stated that he did not know.
- Mr. Bott then explained the 2025 grant awardees. There were 16 new awardees and there is no bearing if they were awarded a grant in 2024. The 9 organizations from last year either did not apply or their applications did not get selected.
 - 136 applicants – nearly 1 in 10 rowing clubs – 10% of entire organizational members. This year there were 2 stages – based on feedback of intensity of the application from last year.
 - There was \$442,000 in requested funding and there was only a total of \$80,000 available to award.
 - Mr. Bott stated that there were clubs from across the country including Wakefield High School in northern Virginia that identifies and trains middle school students that feed into the high school and Rochester Institute of Technology that is developing lighting technology for deaf rowers. There has not been any data collected at this time.
- Mr. Bott explained the selection process for initially is to review two goals: (1) alignment – how well does the program align with USRowing goals and does it set foundation of developing competitive rowers and (2) impact – how would the program impact athletes and boathouse and community and could USRowing be impacted in a positive way.
 - Focused on the top 48 clubs then assessed the need; strong representation among leadership, sustainability/clear vision for growth, leadership and professionalism; explained scoring methods. The scores were totaled for stage 2 applications
 - Ms. Gotrell, who was a member of the selection committee, stated that it was a time consuming process and suggested that the application process should be changed to a different part of the rowing season. Mr. Bott acknowledged that issue and stated a February launch, earlier in the year than May or June would be better.
 - Mr. Bott stated that he would like to get a corporate sponsor for United We Row grants. Committee members stated that they could help in those discussions.

B. Racial Incident at Regatta – Ms. Gotrell recounted a racial incident that occurred at the Overpeck Summer Sprints where a young African-American rower was called the N-word by a competitor in another boat on the water before a race was to begin. Discussion ensued and suggestions were made by committee members regarding next steps.

C. Board Committee Updates – Due to time constraints, Board Committee updates were not provided.

III. **Adjourn:** 9:57 pm EST/6:57 pm PST