

Combat Sports Authority of Maine

Minutes of March 2, 2026 Meeting

1. Welcome/Role Call

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm with all seated Authority members present. In addition to Darci Kent, John Leavit, Jon Pinnet, Nick Gully, and Steve Wallace, AAG Randy Dow was also present.

2. Secretary's Report: Approval of minutes

Minutes from the February 2nd regular meeting & minutes from the February 18th special meeting were presented to the Authority for approval. John Leavitt made a motion to accept; Nick Gully seconded. The motion was passed unanimously without edit.

3. Treasurer's Report: Approval of Treasurer's Report

Steve presented the Treasurer's update as a written report. This is a change from verbal reports previously submitted. Highlights of the treasurer's update included account balances, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and a questionable invoice of concern from the State of Maine indicating the Authority's fair share payment for AAG services was \$50,979.50. This estimate represented a two-fold increase over previous year's invoice. Steve requested clarification from the Sate as to the actual breakdown of said amount, to include any other add on fees. Darcie made a motion to accept the report as presented; Jon P. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously without editing.

4. Updates from AAG/Complaint Officer: Required actions: pending suspension and complaints.

Note: to capture the true essence of the conversation, items below are direct quotes taken from Artificial Intelligence summary transcript. Conversational word choice speaking phrases are from the transcript and should not be interpreted as grammar or typing errors.

AAG gave the following update: I believe three complaints that no, no initial emergency action was taken. Those will continue to be processed through the ordinary course, working with the complaint officer to get the notices out to folks so they can file their timely response and proceed to the normal process of a back and forth. And once the documents are in, they'll come back before the board for presentation. At that point, the board will decide what action, if any, is necessary, whether any violations, if any, exist, and what to do about them. As far as the one complaint with the board had voted. Immediate action. I understand that the next, the next possible fight has been postponed, or about or promotion has been postponed, as I indicated last time, Emergency, emergency or immediate suspensions terminate, by law within 30 days. And so at this point, given that, I think that's going to run out before the next event. If the board wanted to reconsider an immediate suspension and to take that fourth one and put it into the normal queue, we have a three they certainly could do that. And if not, we need to continue to proceed in the immediate status and identify more detail if the board wants to go that way before getting too deep into it, before deciding to go to Executive Session, probably need to consider whether the board has any interest in revisiting the decision to issue an immediate suspension in light of the change of date of the next event.

Steve indicated: one of the things that found out, you know, obviously Chris and I just changed hands as the Chair digging into this a little bit deeper. I think one of the things that I didn't understand when we had that vote was the financial implication that could have been involved. The last time CSAM looked at

putting a suspension on a fighter, it cost just about \$10,000 and it ended up going nowhere. And when you look at it, I think if everyone would have had that information at the last meeting, it may or may not have changed the way people viewed it. So along with this immediate suspension, does it need to be immediate suspension when you add the financial implication, would that have changed your vote? And so what I am going to ask is, Is there a motion from anybody to revisit that one particular case? Because if there is then we will most likely go into you said executive session to talk about that. Steve looked to the AAG for guidance on next steps.

AAG indicated: if the board feels they want more guidance, we certainly can. I always try to avoid going into executive session unless we have to. We don't want to leave the board feeling uninformed on important issues. So I think whether we go there (i.e. Executive Session) will be kind of a function of whether and to what extent board members want to revisit that decision. They want to revisit that decision, and they pretty clearly want to go that way. Then I don't think we need to go in executive session. If we want to revisit the decision and the board feels they need further advice on pros and cons or other implications. Happy to do it. We just need to go in executive session to provide legal advice, and we'll do the appropriate motion under state statute, etcetera. So it's really how the board you know, how the board wants to proceed, and what level of direction.

Steve indicated: Alright, board, we've got a decision to make. It's felt that we didn't have all of the information that we might have needed to make a decision, and if we would have had all the information, would have board members made a different decision, and we're only talking about the fighter with a suspension. So is there a stomach for the board to go back and revisit that decision? John L. made a motion to revisit; Darcie second the motion.

John L. indicated. I mean, just like the original vote, it was iffy on that. We went from zero to full enforcement. We're going from empty threats. We're going to do this, we're going to do this, and then we didn't. We never did anything, right? So whenever we filed this, so we're going to file charges. When do we never did it, and then we can't, in fairness to all involved, right? That we need to have better communication to okay, we're going to do this. We're going to a step process, if things happen or or whatever, whatever the guidelines are, everyone should know before we implement them. Is my opinion.

Nick asked the question: So with the immediate suspension, he gets suspended for 30 days. We have to do what I'll call a trial or whatnot. If we don't do the immediate suspension, he still can get suspended later. Correct is, from what I understand, correct.

AAG indicated: The making the immediate suspension go away. It doesn't change. Doesn't change the regular process. The regular process for anyone with a complaint or a violation that comes in is a complaint is received, it's processed, response is requested, possibly a reply, and at that point, it's brought back to the board, and at that board, the board evaluates, makes a preliminary finding and a vote of whether there's a violation, what penalty they want to instill, and at that point, it's typically would be set for a hearing with an office of a consent agreement to potentially an offering from the hearing. So the fact that the board votes to reconsider or never voted to up or down on a temporary suspension has no impact on the permanent going forward process of the regular disciplinary process, so going changing their mind, the board changing its mind, the Commission changing its mind on the temporary suspension in no way impacts moving forward in a regular violation process, that process can move forward.

Darcie asked the question: How Much Does their violation process cost?

AAG answered: The issue for all this, and the issue for all these things, has to do with the fact that at the end of this, if there is a hearing, the regular violation process can lead to a hearing. If there's no off ramp that everyone agrees to, you're going to end up with that same cost factor. The real cost factor

comes in with the hearing officer has to run the whole thing at the end. So it becomes a more immediate and somewhat unavoidable cost with a temporary suspension, because we need to get into a hearing fast, and it must happen in a regular process. Any violation this board hears on any case can eventually end up in a hearing, at which point a very significant cost will be increased incurred. And again, I don't have any knowledge on that. I don't I'm not the financial person, as we've already discussed, but I do know from practical standpoint, it's that hearing at the end, which is where the financial impact comes in. And so the benefit of a regular process is it provides a longer process, more deliberation and potential agreements are off ramps so that you can avoid the need for a full on hearing at the end.

John P asked the question: can we just deny a license in June, when they come up, and not allow it for a certain amount of time, citing unsportsmanlike conduct as a reason, and negate all of this money spending?

AAG answered: you're still going to end up at the same place. Anytime you've got a licensure or actually in this a certification requirement like this, you have a couple of options. You have a complaint process, which can lead to discipline, and you have a someone who seeks to recertify or re license themselves, and at that point, there can be a potential to not license, or to give a probationary license, or otherwise impose terms at that point in time, but the person's still going to be entitled to have a public hearing if they want it. He went on to further explain if we take action, and the licensed person being disciplined wants object, it comes back to the commission because that's a matter of the burden of proof, but that's not going to change the fact that a hearing is going to happen if someone wants their day in court and they are unwilling to agree to whatever penalty, no matter how small is imposed, even if it's just a warning, this board imposes a warning, and the person doesn't agree that they accept the warning, we end up in a hearing situation, and the boarding court is a significant cost, and obviously that is financial implications on the board, which, again, I don't understand, but I know they exist, and has potential financial implications on the continuance of this board, and the existence of professional sports in the state of Maine. And so those are all the issues that you folks understand better than I. But as far as the process, anytime, anytime someone's rights are impacted by this board, they are entitled to if they want to their day in court, which is a hearing at the end of a process, and anytime someone wants a political hearing at day in court, a significant expense will be involved.

Darcie asked: If we had more specific, I guess, rules and consequences and our laws and bylaws and all of that, would we avoid all of this?

AAG answered: if we had very clear like, hey, rule that says, Don't step on the black square. And if someone steps on the black square and you, you know, say that's a violation, and you discipline with them with a warning, they can decide they can take that all the way to hearing in front of the hearing officer and make you incur that cost. This is due process.

Steve indicated: And I think what Darcie just said, and I've heard it from other commissioners, is, is, you know, we went straight to a suspension. And quite honestly, when you look at the where you go, that is the top, that's when something, somebody did something that is an egregious violation, there's warnings, there's verbal reprimands, there's written reprimands, there's other steps. I don't know if any of you have ever read the book, The Art of War by Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu says, the first time there's a communication error, it is on the leadership. The second time there's a communication error, it's going to be on the folks that were given a direction. We have not set down equal standards as a commission. We should do something about this?

Steve and Darcie made back and forth comments about why writing policies matters and used the example of having caffeine in the locker rooms. For example, Steve indicated ABC training states you can't bring caffeine into a locker room, but that is not in unified ABC rule. Darcie indicated it's in the training, as she has taken it twice. Steve indicated she is correct, he knows it is in the training, but it is

not a written rule. It is up to the individual state commissions to put in writing what they allow. They agreed that needed to be worked on.

Upon completion of discussion, Steve brought this topic to a vote with the following results: Darcie – abstain; Nick wanted clarification on the vote and asked if we're voting on to not suspend or suspend. Steve clarified the vote was to reconsider what we did. Nick then voted yes; Jon P. voted yes; and Steve voted yes. The motion to reconsider passed 4-0 with 1 abstention.

Steve asked the AAG for guidance on how to proceed.

The AAG answered: You've reopened the thing. The board has decided to revisit this. They can revisit it, and we just stick with the 30 day suspension. They can revisit it, and they can decide they no longer want to proceed with an immediate suspension either, for based upon the economic reasons you stated, based upon the fact that there's not a fight within 30 days, and it doesn't really it's going to expire after 30 days, or for whatever reason, in which case, this will proceed back through the normal complaint process described before, along with the other, I believe, three complaints that we're dealing with out of the same focus facts like I said, it'll proceed. All four of those could end up in a hearings someday, or all four could end up in a paper resolution which involved no hearings. Can't tell you where it's going to go. Can only tell you that's the option at this point, keep it as an immediate suspension. There will need to be a hearing and quickly, or decide to not have an immediate suspension and simply go forward with the regular complaint process for that same process.

Steve indicated: Do we want a motion to to revisit the suspension, or to keep the suspension? If we're voting to keep the suspension, then we're voting to saying that, with all the financial implications, what the other things that we've discussed, we're still saying we want an immediate suspension, which then goes through the hearing process that the AG has talked about, and potentially puts us at a large financial expense. If we vote not to suspend, what that means is it will still go through the complaint process. We could end up there at the end of the day. What we're just saying, it's not immediate. It doesn't need to be done within 30 days. So therefore we don't have the same sense of urgency that gives us a chance to talk and figure out, you know, how do we make this into to something that benefits everybody?

Jon P asked how we should word that in a motion. Steve indicated he would just say, " I make a motion to not suspend."

John P made a motion to not suspend. John L. made a second. Steve clarified, "A yes vote means that we will not suspend and it will go through the regular process. A No vote means that we want to put another option on the table, which could mean still mean immediate suspension. So, yes, normal process, no, stay the course. So let's start off the voting with Darcy, and I do believe you're going to have to abstain on that one also, to which Darcie agreed. Nick voted, yes; John P, yes; John L, yes, and Steve, yes. The motion passed 4-0-1.

At the end of the vote, Steve made a final clarification, "So with that, just to make sure that everybody understands, we have taken the immediate suspension off the table. It is no longer there, and this goes through the regular complaint process that the other three will go through, and it will show up in front of us at a certain time again, correct? (Steve looked at AAG, to which he nodded in affirmation).

5. Old Business.

- a. Action - Review of special meeting decisions
Accomplished above; no further action required.

- b. FYI - NEF change of date
April fights have been moved to May; time and place remain the same. Card and event updates will be given at the next meeting.

6. New business

- a. Action - Need to elect Secretary/Treasurer
John L. volunteers to be Treasurer. Darcie makes a motion to nominate John L. as the CSAM Treasurer through June 30, 2026. Jon P. seconds the motion. The motion passed unanimously. With John L. stepping into the Treasurer role, Nick Gulliver volunteered to accept the CSAM Complaint Officer through June 30th. John L. made the motion to nominate Nick G. as the CSAM Complaint Officer through June 30th. Jon P. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. After further discussion, including talking about the use of virtual minutes with the AAG, the Secretary's position was left vacant. Authority members will share responsibility until a solution is found.
- b. Action - Recognition/Gift for Commissioners who have left Authority after serving full terms
There was no agreement on this item and this item left open for Authority members to discuss at a future date.
- c. FYI - Authority email addresses
The Authority voted to make generic state email addresses. Steve volunteered to take for action based on unanimous vote.
- d. FYI - Authority administrative responsibilities/cross training
Steve reviewed Title 8 Chapter 20 requirements for the Authority to have an Annual Plan and ensure applicable rules and regulations are in place to ensure the safety and integrity of combat sports in Maine. Discussion followed and Darcie pulling together Inspector Training was highlighted as something that should be an on-going item in any plan. Medicals, locker room protocols, and importance of succession planning was highlighted. No Action required, but Steve indicated he'd request feedback and items for monthly agenda items prior to each meeting.
- e. FYI - Information Access (passwords, documents, forms)
Steve indicated he was pulling together all the accounts and passwords – special thanks to the work Chris G. did after Billy's passing. That being said, it is a challenge changing everything over due to dual authentication measures, retention of records, destruction of sensitive items, etc. Steve indicated it would be a work in progress.
- f. FYI - Retention of paperwork (HIPPA, audits, secure place?)
Still a work in progress finding out what the authority actually needs to keep as it relates to bout records and other information. Steve found out Chris did secure shred on all forms related to sensitive fighter/corner information on a regular basis. Steve will continue with this practice unless another standard is mandated or adopted by the Authority.
- g. FYI - Commissioner Code of Conduct
Steve requested the AAG look into applicable codes of conduct and professionalism expect of State of Maine appointees to boards and commissions. The AAG said he would look into it.

7. Updates from board/Public comment.

- *Roberta Gonzales Dow thanks the board for the training (Inspector Training organized by Darcie) and expresses appreciation for the opportunity to serve as an inspector.*
 - *Keegan raises concerns about the authority's ability to enforce regulations and the financial implications of disciplinary actions.*
 - *The board discusses the need for clear policies and the importance of working with promoters and fighters to ensure compliance.*
8. Next regularly scheduled meeting: Monday, April 6, 2026
Announcement was made concerning the next posted meeting date.
9. Adjourn
A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:14 pm by John L. The motion was seconded by Nick. All Authority members present concurred and the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Minutes compiled using written notes and Artificial Intelligence summary transcripts from March 2nd meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Wallace