

00:00;19;25 - 00:00;40;09

Stephen Gutowski

All right. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to another episode of the Weekly Reload Podcast. I'm your host, Stephen Gutowski. I'm also a CNN contributor and the founder of thereload.com, where you can head over and sign up for our free newsletter today. If you want to keep up to date with what's going on with Guns in America from a sober, serious perspective, that is, I think fairly unique in the landscape out there these days.

00:00;40;09 - 00:01;02;07

Stephen Gutowski

A lot of hot takes, not so much hard news, and that's what we focus on. But, this week we are talking about the NRA is back in the news. We've got, some really interesting developments that have just come out the end of 2024, and it seems like it marks the end of an era for the NRA and the possibility for maybe a new start for the organization.

00:01;02;07 - 00:01;10;13

Stephen Gutowski

And to do that, we have NRA board member Rocky Marshall on the show. This week. Welcome back to the show, Rocky, thanks for joining us.

00:01;10;20 - 00:01;20;19

Rocky Marshall

Hey, thank you, Stephen, it's great to see you again. And, I love your show. I mean, you're you're everywhere right now, and, you're doing really great. I love you back. Thank you.

00:01;20;21 - 00:01;26;23

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate you joining the show. And you're actually at the NRA board meeting, right? Down in Texas. Right.

00:01;26;23 - 00:01;38;02

Rocky Marshall

Now, I am. And this is the, the, board meeting that we scheduled. And, I'm down there right now working, and, it's been going pretty well. So that's where I'm at today. Yeah.

00:01;38;04 - 00:02;05;14

Stephen Gutowski

All right. And so, yeah, we'll we'll get some updates for you from you, on what exactly is happening at the meeting. But first, let's start with some of this news that we have obviously, last month, the, the judge in the New York civil trial, against the NRA, issued his final order. That sort of cemented some of the internal reforms that he's, wants to see implemented at the NRA, but also the fact that, you know, the NRA is not going to be dissolved.

00:02;05;14 - 00:02;47;19

Stephen Gutowski

It's not going to be under a government appointed, monitor. And, and then also we just got news, a few weeks after that, that the relationship between the NRA and its long time outside lawyer, Bill Brewer and the Brewer firm, is coming to an end. It's it's, the two are moving in separate ways, and, so it kind of puts, I think, a period on this era of the NRA to this, this six year long struggle, since corruption allegations were first made public against former CEO Wayne Lapierre.

00:02;47;21 - 00:03;00;23

Stephen Gutowski

And, you know, this this civil trial began, right? I mean, half a decade ago. Right. And so, you know, if you've been somebody who has been highly critical of Lapierre.

00:03:00:23 - 00:03:01:09

Rocky Marshall  
And.

00:03:01:11 - 00:03:19:29

Stephen Gutowski

Brewer, so I'm interested in your thoughts on this moment now that you, the NRA, has reached, you know, you're on the board. There's a number of reformers in leadership position now. What do you make of this period in time and and of this, new era potential for the NRA?

00:03:20:02 - 00:03:40:28

Rocky Marshall

Yeah, there's so much to talk about here. It's really an exciting time for us because this, this lawsuit with the New York AG has come to a close. The final order that was issued by the judge actually was very reasonable. And it's some things that we probably should have done anyway. So things like internal to internal audit and having some controls in place.

00:03:41:00 - 00:04:05:02

Rocky Marshall

So the NRA actually did really well with this lawsuit. And there was no punitive actions. There were just things that from a compliance standpoint or from a good governance standpoint, we had to implement. So it really was, in, in a lot of ways helpful. I think. I didn't I didn't appreciate how much money we had to spend to, to get to this point, fighting the New York AG's office.

00:04:05:02 - 00:04:26:14

Rocky Marshall

But, the result is a good one. And we're very optimistic about the future. There's a sense of relief. I mean, I'm interacting with all the directors now, this weekend as I'm, I'm in Fort Worth, and, there's a sense of that. So there were so thrilled it's behind us. So now we can focus on the core mission of the NRA, our programs, all the good things that we're working on.

00:04:26:14 - 00:04:35:19

Rocky Marshall

So there's a lot of optimism now that that that the lawsuits come to an end. And dealing with the Brewer law firm has come to an end. And, there's a lot of excitement about that for sure.

00:04:35:21 - 00:04:42:21

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. Because, yeah, I mean, there were obviously there were punishments for Wayne Lapierre there. The jury found him liable.

00:04:42:21 - 00:04:43:05

Rocky Marshall

For.

00:04:43:08 - 00:05:08:23

Stephen Gutowski

Some of this money that was misdirected under his watch. Same for the former NRA treasurer. What he Phillips. And, so, but but the organization itself, while it was found to have not done enough to protect whistleblowers, wasn't ordered to pay any sort of financial restitution. In fact, the money that Lapierre and Phillips are ordered to pay is meant to go to the NRA as an organization.

00:05:08:23 - 00:05:08:29

Stephen Gutowski

Right?

00:05:09:05 - 00:05:34:15

Rocky Marshall

That's well, that's correct. And so they you know, I had no punitive financial penalties or anything like that. We have received, the full payment from Wayne Lapierre on the money that he was assessed at, during the trial. So it's almost \$5 million. Oh, really? Yeah, we've received that. And I and the New York AG's actually been tasked with collecting those monies because they were the plaintiffs in the case.

00:05:34:17 - 00:05:44:16

Rocky Marshall

And so we're still waiting to receive, the moneys from the Phillips, order and also from Josh Powell. So, but the Wayne Lapierre moneys have been received.

00:05:44:18 - 00:05:58:11

Stephen Gutowski

That's Josh powers, the former chief of staff. Right. For Lapierre also ordered pay, I think \$100,000. That's the settlement with the AG. But but, you're saying that the wop here, money has already changed hands, you see? Sent it over the internet?

00:05:58:15 - 00:06:11:01

Rocky Marshall

That's correct. We have received that. And it was paid directly to us, even though the New York AG was asked to collect it, it was actually sent directly to us. We've received that. And so that part has been resolved with that. Wayne Lapierre.

00:06:11:03 - 00:06:33:10

Stephen Gutowski

Interesting, because I know there was some controversy over this at the end of the trial, where, the Brewer firm representing the NRA at the time was saying, you know, they wanted more flexibility in being able to create a settlement, perhaps with Wayne Lapierre. There was some concern, I know among reformers that the number might get pared down.

00:06:33:12 - 00:06:55:28

Stephen Gutowski

And Brewer's jurors concern seemed to be that the AG might stretch out that process of of collecting the repayment, because she's shown, obviously, some political animus towards the NRA and her friend, put it lightly, I guess, but, but it sounds like this is that particular part of this is now completely resolved in full payment.

00:06:56:00 - 00:07:14:13

Rocky Marshall

That's correct. It's completely resolved. And there was a lot of things at the end of the trial there that actually Wayne Lapierre, his lawyer, was trying to, have the court move the negotiations for settlement to the NRA as opposed to being handled by the New York AG. And it was right. It was it was correct to leave it with the New York AG.

00:07:14:13 - 00:07:31:20

Rocky Marshall

They were the plaintiff. They brought the lawsuit. And so they were tasked with that. And but we've gotten full payment. We're excited about that. We can kind of close the chapter on that whole story, and all the things that went on there. And I'm glad that part is over. I mean, this has been a long, a long haul for just.

00:07:31:22 - 00:07:32:23

Rocky Marshall

Yeah.

00:07:32;25 - 00:07:54;04

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah, certainly. You know, and speaking of which, I guess there there are still some, I know there are some reformers who would like to see, some of the legal expenses that the NRA paid, potentially in support of Wayne Lapiere to be called back as well. And have you heard anything about that? Is there any discussion of doing that at this board meeting?

00:07:54;11 - 00:08;11;19

Rocky Marshall

You know, I think I have heard talk of of, looking at additional expenses that may have been, expended on behalf of Wayne Lapiere, in defense of, this lawsuit. Nothing's been decided on that, to my knowledge, that, you know.

00:08;11;26 - 00:08;20;25

Stephen Gutowski

We know for sure that he that the NRA paid for his legal bills or what is the what are the facts that we know publicly at this point on.

00:08;20;25 - 00:08;42;06

Rocky Marshall

That? Yeah. So the you know, you you'll remember that a lot of these legal issues started in late 2018, 2019. So it's really been almost five, six years that there's this has been going on. And as the CEO of the organization, the NRA was in fact paying his legal expenses. That was at that point, he was not proven guilty.

00:08;42;08 - 00:09;02;10

Rocky Marshall

And they were, you know, trying to get to the bottom of that. So we did pay for those legal expenses all the way until the end of the January trial, which was phase one of that trial. And once he was proven to be actually found guilty, NRA stopped all payments to cover any legal expenses and also any salaries and all those kinds of things.

00:09;02;10 - 00:09;05;04

Rocky Marshall

So, but we did cover the during this, I would.

00:09;05;04 - 00:09;22;25

Stephen Gutowski

Imagine that's it's a lot of money then that probably, went towards paying his legal bills. Is that and so that I guess is what people, at least some portion of the board wants to try to claw back. Do you think that's a realistic possibility here on the ground there in Texas?

00:09;23;02 - 00:09;43;01

Rocky Marshall

Well, you know, I, I don't know exactly what that number might be, but as you can imagine, when you're anytime you're talking about legal expenses, they're always going to they're always going to be high. And so there's going to be significant money associated with, with, defending Wayne. I haven't heard any, action taken on that matter. Other than I've heard the discussions.

00:09;43;01 - 00;10;02;02

Rocky Marshall

I mean, I've thought about that myself. You know, that there's additional expenses other than just this penalty that was paid. So. But that's something that the board needs to look at and see. Is it appropriate? What? You know, what's the ramifications? How do you do that? What's the process and that none of that has been decided. That's that's something that I'm sure will be discussed at some point.

00;10;02;02 - 00;10;04;08

Rocky Marshall  
Yeah.

00;10;04;11 - 00;10;24;29

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. You know obviously I think this is one of those things where there's still a lot of baggage from this, this last six years. Right, including these, potential fights over previous, legal bills that, that, you know, you may see internal division still around. You know, how much, how much effort do you expect to be, put towards that?

00;10;24;29 - 00;10;44;15

Stephen Gutowski

And how much is do you want to see people move past it and just try to, focus on writing the organization? What are your feelings? Unless you always have been a prominent, member of the reform sort of coalition. And so. Right. Where are you seeing things now that you're at this point where the broader firm is left?

00;10;44;15 - 00;10;52;11

Stephen Gutowski

The the trial is settled, but not every, you know, wrongdoing has been corrected necessarily. Right. What are your thoughts.

00;10;52;13 - 00;11;25;14

Rocky Marshall

Yeah. So, you know, as a fiduciary. So every director is a fiduciary of the organization. So you you have certain responsibilities that you must follow. And one of which is actually the New York law states that if, their expenses incurred or money is expended, on an employee of an organization, of a charity, and they're, and they're, they're, mis, applied incorrectly in the like, for example, in this case, you must make every reasonable effort to reclaim those expenses.

00;11;25;14 - 00;11;46;26

Rocky Marshall

So it's really not a matter of in this particular issue. It's not a matter of, well, do we want to do it or we don't want to do it, the losses that we must. So, I think when, when this issue comes up, that's the first thing that the lawyer is going to look at it. We have a legal obligation, not only as a as a fiduciary, but also that's what's stated in the New York law.

00;11;46;26 - 00;12;02;22

Rocky Marshall

So this issue is going to be discussed. I know it's going to come up and we're going to have to follow the law. And I can I can, I can email you the, the law that, that states that, that particular issue. But, it's, it's in the statute. So we're going to have to pursue that. Yeah.

00;12;02;24 - 00;12;24;00

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. And there, there are going to be a couple of other things are going to have to, sort of tie up loose ends of this, this final order. There's still stuff that you guys have to do, like picking a consultant, that the court then has to approve. It's not court appointed like a monitor, but it's there's a consultant who's going to essentially help with internal controls.

00;12;24;02 - 00;12;42;06

Stephen Gutowski

You know, you have a number of, changes that have to get enacted to comply with this order, right, that also deal with, you know, internal controls and internal auditing, and oversight, so, you know, that I imagine it's still going to take a little bit of time is that that's part of what you're doing here at this board meeting.

00;12;42;09 - 00;12;42;19

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah.

00;12;42;23 - 00;13;04;09

Rocky Marshall

I mean, yeah, there's actually there are some things that the court actually, specifically stated that you need to do the following one one was to hire a consultant to help with, internal internal controls and internal compliance. A lot of those things are now being, drafted and included in bylaws and also and resolutions that have to be passed by the entire board.

00;13;04;09 - 00;13;22;20

Rocky Marshall

So I know the lawyers and those groups, the committees that work on those issues, are digging into that. And I believe they're trying to get all of those issues buttoned up by the end of this meeting, this weekend. And so that we're in total compliance with the court order, which was just issued, you know, in October 31st.

00;13;22;20 - 00;13;26;23

Rocky Marshall

So, but that work is being done right now.

00;13;26;26 - 00;13;31;15

Stephen Gutowski

And you think that's the main focus of this meeting, or are there other priorities as well?

00;13;31;18 - 00;13;52;05

Rocky Marshall

You know, that's probably the the biggest thing. I mean, there are some cleanup things for sure. I mean, the board will meet, actually on Saturday, the this week is all committee meetings. So, all the committees and all, you know, different programs, all those things are happening this week. But on Saturday, there will be the, the board meeting and there's still some cleanup.

00;13;52;05 - 00;14;09;12

Rocky Marshall

I'm sure there's some things that are going to come up that have to do with this trial that, or kind of what I would consider housekeeping kind of items. And, those things will be debated and discussed and voted on. And, and again, I'm very optimistic about where we're headed and really excited about the future of the NRA.

00;14;09;14 - 00;14;16;02

Rocky Marshall

And, we're on a good path. We're actually on a good path to, to carry out the mission for the members.

00;14;16;04 - 00;14;36;11

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. And when when do you expect to see, maybe some progress. That's that's, you know, reportable and quantifiable new memberships coming in, you know, the balancing of the budget, those sort of things that you can actually share with the public with the membership and show, you know, progress being made.

00;14;36;14 - 00;14;56;15

Rocky Marshall

Well, actually, I got I sat in on, some of those meetings today and, I will tell you, there's so much going on. It's it's really kind of exciting. We have a lot of, a lot of new, management, members and on some of those key, areas, things like advancements and island and of course, we have a new CEO with Doug Hamlin.

00;14;56;17 - 00;15;16;29

Rocky Marshall

And, and so I get to hear reports from all those various departments, and it's exciting to see the work that they're doing,

seeing how they're doing outreach and also, engaging with all of the clubs and, and associations with the NRA that have been strained over the last, you know, several years now. They're actually engaged with all those groups.

00;15;16;29 - 00;15;35;14

Rocky Marshall

And so I see nothing but optimism and a lot of enthusiasm. And I will tell you something else that has really impressed me is the way the the directors are working together. And, and you and I have shared stories about, the way the board has functioned over the last six years. And it's sometimes it was hostile.

00;15;35;17 - 00;15;58;17

Rocky Marshall

But I will tell you, having haven't been in several meetings, I'm on a couple of committees, that, I'm seeing a high level of cooperation. I'm seeing a lot of communication with, the directors among themselves. And as you know, I've been a big critic of a lot of things, and I feel nothing but being engaged with these, with these directors and, they're working together and they're working together for the members.

00;15;58;17 - 00;16;13;26

Rocky Marshall

And we all are very focused on, what we're trying to accomplish. And, so it's it's a total, totally different environment than it was, let's say, five years ago when I was on the board. And it's very exciting to be part of this right now.

00;16;13;28 - 00;16;36;20

Stephen Gutowski

So you've already seen a marked difference, even perhaps from the last board meeting that that I was at, where it was, there were sort of a marathon, you know, board went into the early morning hours. There was sort of, a lot of procedure on maneuvering to prevent the dissolution of the, the special litigation committee that ever that ever saw the contract.

00;16;36;22 - 00;16;52;29

Stephen Gutowski

You know, there was there's a lot of that kind of stuff going on and a lot of clearly still internal, a division that existed maybe not as severe as, you know, like you mentioned five years ago when you first, had your stint on the board. But, are you seeing even an improvement over that last board meeting?

00;16;52;29 - 00;17;15;25

Rocky Marshall

I am, for sure. I mean, it's really shocking to me, you know? I mean, having having experienced the way things have had been, and, and so I, I actually literally talked to every director and, and, and I'm looking forward to visiting them and, and, the old days of, of of the Partizan, Partizan work, among the directors really is gone.

00;17;15;25 - 00;17;38;11

Rocky Marshall

And so very much a cooperative, environment. And the majority of the board, I mean, there's some things that you're never going to have a 76 people agree on anything. So there's some nuance of of disagreement. But generally speaking, we're all moving in the same direction. And some of these issues that have plagued us over the course of, of these last couple of years will be dealt with and be resolved.

00;17;38;14 - 00;17;49;19

Rocky Marshall

And I'm looking for a favorable outcome and a lot of that stuff. And, and I think the board's in a good spot. I mean, it's really in a good spot. And, it's it's really a good, exciting time for sure.

00;17;49;22 - 00;18;10;28

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. And so what do you what are some of the key areas of reform that you think people should watch for as you

move, you know, forward into this kind of fresh start that the NRA has been given here? You know what? What are the big reform items that you want to see enacted? And and you should people should take as a sign that changes is really happening.

00;18;11;00 - 00;18;35;07

Rocky Marshall

Well, so there's a lot of things, you know, we are, revamping, ILO and so some of the legal, the legislative work that's being done, that's totally we have a brand new ILO director, John Comerford is heading that effort. And so, I would say in a lot of ways, the NRA has kind of got lost, with Iowa over the last several years.

00;18;35;09 - 00;18;52;21

Rocky Marshall

And so there's a total refocus of what I was involved in and being engaged with Congress and, and some of the legislative activities. But that's true all down the line. So all the pro and when I hear from members all the times is, why don't you guys, get focused on the programs? And that's exactly what's happening.

00;18;52;21 - 00;19;14;27

Rocky Marshall

So we're hiring new staff again, revamped those areas that before had been depleted because expenses were running too high. The budgets are coming in exactly what they they are going to be. In the past, as you and I have talked about, the NRA has a pattern of over forecasting their budget and then missing it wildly.

00;19;14;29 - 00;19;41;23

Rocky Marshall

Well, that those days are gone. I mean, we're going to budget our money, spend it correctly and any, any expenses that are, not necessary, that don't help our mission and they don't support the programs. We're not going to be doing those things. So there is, you know, everything's very tight. Every committee chairman that I talked to, they are very focused on making sure their committee functions well, and they're doing that work very, very good.

00;19;41;23 - 00;20;05;10

Rocky Marshall

And I couldn't say that before. I mean, there's, you know, when I was on the board in 2021, I couldn't say that at all. And now it's it's impressive. I'm impressed with the directors. I'm impressed with the committee chairman. And, there's a lot of work coming out. So, you'll see the NRA much more engaged. We're talking about a whole new set of programs on how to to, recruit, new members to the NRA.

00;20;05;12 - 00;20;26;04

Rocky Marshall

And how exactly how we're going to do that, with direct contacts and, and using the clubs and associations, to, to contact, potential members for us. And so and I'm actually, as a director, engage with a lot of clubs and associations because I'm working on the, the election for the new directors, coming up in April.

00;20;26;04 - 00;20;45;12

Rocky Marshall

So, actually, the ballot will hit, this month in the in the magazine. And they'll the new directors will be seated in April. So there's there's a lot of work being done, and, you can just feel it. You can feel it with the directors. You can feel it with the staff. There's a lot of optimism, a lot of enthusiasm, and everybody's pulling together.

00;20;45;14 - 00;21;06;29

Stephen Gutowski

Interesting. Because. Yeah. And look, it is a really big deep hole that you guys have to, to dig yourselves out of. At this point, you've lost, what, 9 million and a half or so members, the peak in 2018. You know, the, the, the, the associated downfall and revenue with that loss of membership has been huge.



00;21;07;01 - 00;21;37;06

Stephen Gutowski

You've had to sell off assets, at an unprecedented rate. You know, these are shrunk programs, right? Just so much stuff that's gone on, reduce spending in the elections. Trump, in fact, canceled his last rally with the NRA before the in October. Before the election, he had gone through with, three different island directors since the first Trump, administration.

00;21;37;08 - 00;21;52;18

Stephen Gutowski

I don't know. It's obviously a lot has gone wrong. And, I suppose that presents an opportunity for, for, you guys to recover, but it's going to be a, a hard, a hard path to regain trust of donors, especially trusted members. Right.

00;21;52;25 - 00;22;09;10

Rocky Marshall

Well, yeah. And I think, I think a lot of things that held the NRA back. True. Was this New York AG case. I mean, it just was in the headlines. I mean, I wrote about it. You wrote about it. I mean, it was it was kind of everywhere. And so a lot of energy focus and obviously the resources were going to the case.

00;22;09;10 - 00;22;27;18

Rocky Marshall

And, you know, it's been reported that we spent millions of dollars on this lawsuit. And we did, you know, and it took money away from other for the things. Well, that that chapter has come to a close. Thankfully. And and now all of our resources, all our efforts are pushed towards the future and how we're how we're growing the NRA.

00;22;27;18 - 00;22;50;23

Rocky Marshall

I mean, there's more there are more gun owners in America today than at any point in history. And, and, the Second Amendment is, is really sweeping, the country. I mean, you can see some things that are going to happen with the new administration, about the, concealed carry being, allowed in states or, you know, that if you've already been have a concealed license, you can travel to the next state and that license still in effect.

00;22;50;23 - 00;23;08;23

Rocky Marshall

So there's a lot of things that are going to happen that will be supportive of us because of this new president, President Trump. And, that will do nothing but bolster the NRA. And we want to be the voice in the face of all the all these activities with the Second Amendment, movement. And we're the largest organization out there that can do that.

00;23;08;24 - 00;23;14;09

Rocky Marshall

Nobody can do what the NRA does. That's why, this work is so important.

00;23;14;12 - 00;23;34;09

Stephen Gutowski

Do you foresee a change at all in the NRA policy positions? It's, rhetoric or anything like that. You know, there's there's part of this new era of the NRA. Are we going to see different, you know, attitude on gun control bills and what do you what do you see that in that area of this?

00;23;34;14 - 00;23;58;22

Rocky Marshall

Well, you know, having having kind of, I would say new blood in the organization, leading the organization, especially with Doug Hamlin, CEO and with John Comfort at Ila. They have new ideas and these guys work really hard. And so, I expect to see a total, total refocus of the things that we're doing, in the legislative theater area, for sure.

00;23;58;22 - 00;24;18;14

Rocky Marshall

And, we'll see how effective we are in the future. That really depends on the members. Do we need the members to support us in this work? And that's one of the reason we we try to recruit members, because when we recruit you as a member, you're helping to fund our activities to protect your rights. And, and so you'll see a lot of things change in that regard.

00;24;18;17 - 00;24;38;11

Rocky Marshall

With Doug on board, Doug is a he's a former marine, a, a really likable guy. No nonsense. And he gets things done. And so, I know that he has wide support with all the directors and, and, I talked to him all the time. We're going to you're going to see a lot of good things coming out of the NRA coming forward, for sure.

00;24;38;14 - 00;24;55;19

Stephen Gutowski

But does any of that pertain to like, different stances on, you know, gun partly. You mentioned the concealed carry reciprocity Act. Right. You know, is that, those sorts of positions you don't expect the NRA to to, you know, significantly change its approach to gun politics?

00;24;55;22 - 00;25;16;14

Rocky Marshall

Oh, you know, I don't know about that. I mean, I, I've, I've been only slightly involved in some of those discussions. That's really not my expertise. I, as you know, I love is kind of a separate, division of the NRA. But I can see that as we're bringing in new directors, on to the board that have that expertise.

00;25;16;17 - 00;25;33;20

Rocky Marshall

With that comes a whole new set of strategies and opportunities, the things that we should be doing that we haven't done. And, and, and you can look backwards and see that, you know, there's some case law that we should have been involved in or leading and we were not. And, I can see that changing radically. And I've already seen it.

00;25;33;20 - 00;25;56;04

Rocky Marshall

I was in meetings today and, we were talking about some of the case law that we've gotten involved in, in California, and that was brought up. And, and so there's a lot of things that with, with new people in place, and, and underdogs, leadership and, and by a board of directors that are working together to support him, you're going to see a very aggressive, a very active organization, every day in every way.

00;25;56;06 - 00;26;09;24

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. And keeping in mind, again, that, as you just mentioned, you're just one board member. You don't, necessarily have, total say on all these things that you mentioned, you know, Doug Mills and, or sorry, Doug Hammer, that hammer.

00;26;09;27 - 00;26;10;13

Rocky Marshall

Right.

00;26;10;15 - 00;26;42;27

Stephen Gutowski

And John, kind of referred to the the current director of, the Institute for Legislative Action. These two guys are in roles that where it's, there's been some uncertainty or, like, suggestions that these are not permanent roles. You know, you've had, for instance, I think Charles Cotton, and Bob Barr had had mentioned that, Hammond was not necessarily that they could go out and seek other candidates for for his role as as EVP and CEO.

00;26;42;29 - 00;27;08;25

Stephen Gutowski

I think comfort is there on an interim basis right now is my understanding. Do you have anything on, you know, the future of these guys? Hammond was obviously involved with, animal cruelty incident in college. That became a story shortly before the election, right? Yeah. We're. What is the do we have any any news at this point on, you know, the the permanence of those two guys in those two roles yet both.

00;27;08;25 - 00;27;43;14

Rocky Marshall

But yeah. So John Comerford has been announced as the permanent, director of Ireland. So that has been done, I think, since that announcement out this past week. And those two guys are in those positions permanently until we decide otherwise going forward. And there's no effort to find another either director or another CEO. And so everything, all the work we're doing is, is about how do we help these guys get their work done, how do we give them goals and metrics that are critically important to the organization that we can measure their performance again.

00;27;43;19 - 00;28;04;00

Rocky Marshall

And so and I'm actually involved in that particular, committee on helping set that future for, our CEO and, and it's all, it's all support. And I heard Bob Barr who's the president at the, of the NRA, he made that statement at one of the committee meetings. You know, that everything we're we're doing is to support Doug as the CEO.

00;28;04;00 - 00;28;27;22

Rocky Marshall

And that's a big statement. And, of course, Bill, Boston Bird and Mark Lam, the vice president, are 100% support, Doug, as, as we all do. And, they're going to be there. They're going to be the face of the NRA. Those are the people you're going to be interacting with. And, and you'll see more. I mean, I know Doug will be a chat show coming up, and, it'll be a good time to talk with him if you're if you're going to that shot show and, great guy.

00;28;27;22 - 00;28;31;14

Rocky Marshall

And we've got good leadership and we just 100% support our leaders for sure.

00;28;31;16 - 00;28;50;29

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. So there's there is a permanence to this current NRA leadership, right? This is I guess that's another way that sort of marks a fresh start here is. Yeah, you're through some of these things. The trial is ended. The Brewer firm is no longer going to be associated with the NRA. And now. And neither is Wayne Lapierre.

00;28;51;05 - 00;29;16;04

Stephen Gutowski

And now you have, Doug Hamlin and John Comerford as the as the, guys going forward to lead the, the organization. And it's and it's tough, you know, it's it's lobbying arm as well. So. Right. That's that's good. Do it now and to establish something for people to understand where, where the NRA is at now and, and sort of how the it has a different look moving ahead.

00;29;16;04 - 00;29;17;29

Stephen Gutowski

Obviously Hamlin has been there for a little while.

00;29;18;03 - 00;29;21;26

Rocky Marshall

Right. He was in publications and has he's got some experience there for sure.

00;29;21;28 - 00;29;27;23

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. And also he was you guys picked him back in the last annual meeting.

00;29;27;26 - 00;29;30;17

Rocky Marshall

Yeah. That's correct.

00;29;30;19 - 00;29;45;16

Stephen Gutowski

Okay. And so what, what what should, what do you see coming out of the meeting, besides what we've already discussed here? Is there anything else that you're focused on? As far as priorities to do right away?

00;29;45;18 - 00;30;03;22

Rocky Marshall

Yeah. I think what you I mean, I feel like this meeting is kind of housekeeping. It's really kind of fixing some things that should have been fixed and corrected and cleaned up. And so that the annual meeting is, you know, is coming up in April. And so I think that'll be obviously a big, a big meeting because of we have new directors being elected.

00;30;03;22 - 00;30;21;28

Rocky Marshall

There'll be a new officers elected and all those things. But this is kind of housekeeping. And these are things that should have been done maybe even years ago. And we're dealing with a lot of those, those type of issues. So, I think come Sunday and Monday you'll see some, some good things coming out of those things that will hit the hit the board on Saturday that they'll vote on.

00;30;21;28 - 00;30;43;01

Rocky Marshall

And again, it's kind of housekeeping in it. And I really think in a lot of ways we're putting the organization back into what I would consider the normal operation, as opposed to we were really in distressed mode, for the last 4 or 5 years chasing this one lawsuit. And, now that the organization is actually functioning correctly.

00;30;43;01 - 00;31;04;06

Rocky Marshall

So, I don't think there's anything big coming out other than the brewing separation from brewers a big deal. I know a lot of members were unhappy with that law firm as our lawyer in these cases, as was I. And, I've made that well known as far back as 2021 that I did not, agree with this choice, but, that's behind us.

00;31;04;06 - 00;31;09;09

Rocky Marshall

And, that's that that's that's a big deal, that it really is a big deal.

00;31;09;11 - 00;31;12;25

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. Certainly. And and you know, you mentioned the election there.

00;31;13;00 - 00;31;13;24

Rocky Marshall

Yeah.

00;31;13;26 - 00;31;33;13

Stephen Gutowski

And so there'll be before that annual meeting happens, you'll have the board elections where entering members will vote on who the directors are, at least for one third of the board is up at a time. Right. One is there any, any plan to change the form of the board or the way elections are carried out or anything like that?

00:31;33;16 - 00:31;37;28

Stephen Gutowski

Have you guys discussed those kinds of structural changes at the NRA?

00:31;38;03 - 00:32;00;04

Rocky Marshall

Well, there is there is a committee that was formed due to, just koans order, which was to take a look at the, board structure and also look at is this appropriate, is the size appropriate? Is the the way you instruct or is that appropriate? And there's actually a committee doing work on that. And they started it's sort of as you can imagine, that's this is a big task.

00:32;00;04 - 00:32;20;29

Rocky Marshall

This is not a small project. And they've started that work. I think they're scheduled to come up with a final plan by April of 2026. So they have a year to try to restructure. And look at what what is the board actually involved with. So that's that's something that, that is, that is coming down the line. And we do have the election coming up.

00:32;20;29 - 00:32;45;03

Rocky Marshall

And that's a big, big, big deal. So, that'll be and for those in our members listening to this, this, podcast, the ballot will hit the NRA magazine on the week of January 27th. So the ballots going to be there. And as a reformer, I'm involved. Yeah. As you know, I've been working with other directors. We have, 28 candidates that we are supporting and promoting.

00:32;45;06 - 00:33;03;05

Rocky Marshall

And, would love for the the NRA members out there to take a look at them. And, if you'd like to review them, you can go to elect a new intracom. And you can see all of our candidates that we're working with. And, please consider them as you get your ballot and please vote. I mean, we need you to vote.

00:33;03;05 - 00:33;06;25

Rocky Marshall

So, help us with this election. That'd be fantastic.

00:33;06;28 - 00:33;31;02

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. And, you know, your campaign last time around seemed to have a really significant impact on not just the board, but even the judge as well. And glad, even though it was only four of you on that, that, initial campaign platform, it did seem to convince a lot of the board members to, elect a reformer slate for the most part at the last, annual meeting.

00:33;31;02 - 00:33;59;25

Stephen Gutowski

And then also, the judge seemed very impressed by the internal, movement to, to, you know, fix some of the issues the NRA has had and perhaps is the reason why, you know, he decided not to go with the government overseer or any of the more, more dramatic, I guess, solutions that the AG had had requested. So, you know, this time around, what what are you running on and how many people do you have?

00:34;00;03 - 00:34;18;28

Rocky Marshall

Okay, so we have 28 candidates and, 13 of those. We got through the actually 11. We have 11 that made it through the petition process. So that that was in 150 year. That has never happened. As you know, when I ran on the last election cycle, we had four of us that went through the petition process, which is really difficult.

00:34:19:00 - 00:34:44:29

Rocky Marshall

It's really difficult to gather those that many signatures and get on the ballot. So we have, we have 11 went through the petition process that are on the ballot. But the total group, some of those are our current directors. We have about 28 people total that we are, supporting and that we really need. We've gone out and recruited, directors that really can our people, our potential, the directors that can help us, with all the changes that we're trying to make.

00:34:44:29 - 00:35:01:28

Rocky Marshall

And so I'm, I'm really asking for those of you that have seen any of anything that I've written or comments you know, you and I have worked on, we really need you to vote. We need you to take a hard look at these directors and, go to our website, elect a new intracom. And you'll see a lot of material there.

00:35:01:28 - 00:35:17:07

Rocky Marshall

Not only the candidates, but you'll see. What are they stand for? What are some of the changes they're trying to, promote? And, this is a really exciting time. I can't wait for this election to come up. And it's happening now. January 27th. The ballots will be in the magazine. Please vote.

00:35:17:08 - 00:35:28:09

Stephen Gutowski

And what are what are some of the broad, principles that you guys are running on or some of the any specific reforms you want to see implemented if if you get all 28 of those guys, guys and gals on the board?

00:35:28:16 - 00:35:53:20

Rocky Marshall

Yeah. You know, there's some obvious things that we that we should have done. And and now we're in a position that we really can. And one of those is transparency. You know, I mean, we should be the members own the organization, not not the NRA directors, not anybody else. It's the members. This this is theirs. And so, as you know, I'm all about the transparency and sharing anything and everything that we're doing.

00:35:53:23 - 00:36:12:11

Rocky Marshall

And so a lot of the things we're doing, I mean, we're going to be putting a lot of things on our website so that members can look at those things and in real time as opposed to before, I think the NRA was not very good about communicating. You know, they didn't communicate well with the directors. They did not communicate well with the members.

00:36:12:14 - 00:36:42:09

Rocky Marshall

And consequently, the members were upset. They didn't know what the what the NRA was working on and why. And, and a lot of people felt like we weren't focusing on programs, which is critical to the NRA. And so those kind of programs are going to be pushed and focused on. But the transparency is critical and holding everyone accountable, for the monies that come in from the members that we spend that correctly and wisely and I'm actually on the, on the audit committee, which, reviews a lot of those expenses.

00:36:42:09 - 00:36:54:06

Rocky Marshall

So I have a I get a chance to see that firsthand and, and make sure that our money is being spent correctly. And it is I'm here to tell you it is. And, we're in a really good spot in that regard.

00:36:54:08 - 00:37:14:21

Stephen Gutowski

I certainly will, at the reload, continue to report, on all these things and, do our best to bring transparency, as well. And full disclosure, I suppose for people who don't know, I currently am an NRA member. I try I usually honestly try not to

carry a membership I have in the past, before I started reporting on the NRA.

00:37:14;23 - 00:37:36;13

Stephen Gutowski

But, you know, I prefer not to, but, you know, sometimes, like board meetings, you have to be an NRA member to, attend, those. So, sometimes it's worth the potential conflict of, you know, appearance of a conflict of interest. I am not a voting member. Just so people know, voting members different. You have to be a lifetime member or or a five year consecutive member.

00:37:36;15 - 00:37:57;15

Stephen Gutowski

So I don't actually have, personal input into these elections. But just to be completely clear with everyone. Right. But I am currently an honorary member, and I have been an NRA certified firearms instructor for a very long time now. It's a little I consider that a little bit different, because it's really just a certification that you get, different than being part of the organization.

00:37:57;15 - 00:38:14;16

Stephen Gutowski

But, you know, just for people so they understand where I'm, you know, where I'm coming from on these things. And, to try and not trying to hide any of that stuff from anybody, but, but yes, just felt like is a good idea to disclose it. Okay. We try to be transparent here at the reload as well.

00:38:14;18 - 00:38:41;05

Stephen Gutowski

But we will, of course. We have in the past published internal documents when we can and when we think it's valuable information for, for the public and NRA members to understand and, you know, and I'm certainly, as reporter, excited for any new era of transparency at the organization. I, I'm certainly agree with you that it is the members organization, and they deserve to know when it's happening inside of it.

00:38:41;07 - 00:39:04;22

Stephen Gutowski

And that a lot of the secrecy before I think, was intentional and helped lead to the corruption that, occurred. So, you know, it is an important step. Transparency. Oversight is a very important step to, preventing that sort of thing. And the the misuse of funds, especially in an organization like the NRA, has always been my point of view on this.

00:39:04;24 - 00:39:31;26

Stephen Gutowski

You know, while, it would be bad for this to happen at every town or similar organization, that is funded by a large donor like, in large part by mega-donors donors like Michael Bloomberg. You know, to me, it just feels worse to happen at the NRA because it is legitimately funded in large part by small donations from people who do not make a lot of money and who genuinely believe in the mission of the NRA.

00:39:31;26 - 00:40:03;01

Stephen Gutowski

And, you know, it does feel worse from those people's, you know, hard earned money is misused, right? And the ways that it has been, in the past, the NRA. So, that has always been part of my motivation in reporting on this, just to be transparent and and upfront with everyone. But, you know, if people want to follow what you're doing at the NRA and also this, campaign you've got going on for these board members, where can they do that?

00:40:03;03 - 00:40:22;06

Rocky Marshall

Okay. So go go to elect a new nra.com. There's a lot of things we have posted out there, but there's also for anyone that would like to be a life member, there's a link that you can get a, I think it's a 50% discount to, join the NRA at a life member level, which would allow you to vote in this election.

00:40:22;09 - 00:40:42;10

Rocky Marshall

So if you see that link and you want to join, I'm encouraging everyone to now please join the NRA. We're here to fight for you. And, the directors are doing that. And it's really exciting to watch and to be a part of this. And and it wasn't that long ago, I was hoping that we would get to this day when we can actually be in a better place, and we're in a fantastic spot.

00:40:42;10 - 00:41:03;16

Rocky Marshall

So please join. We need your we need you to be a member of that as a as a voice. We can tell our country and our legislators this is what's important to us. And, and the Second amendment is a is an important right that we all have. And we're going to stand and support that and make sure that it becomes something that our kids and our grandkids get to have as well.

00:41:03;16 - 00:41:21;06

Rocky Marshall

And you can't be taken from us. So, we need your help, though. Please join if you haven't renewed in a while, renew your membership and get engaged. Vote in this election. We need you there. And, it's going to be fun. This is going to be next week. Next year is going forward is going to be really exciting.

00:41:21;08 - 00:41:45;26

Stephen Gutowski

All right, well, look, I appreciate you taking some time, out of attending the board meeting to discuss all this with us. And, you know, hopefully we can have you back on in the future to get an update on how things are going. Some of those internal numbers and marks of progress. I think that would be a good idea to to check in every so often and see how things are, over that to interact.

00:41:45;26 - 00:41:53;00

Stephen Gutowski

But, yeah. Appreciate you doing this. And I'll let you get back to, the rest of your committee meetings and your board meeting and all that.

00:41:53;05 - 00:41:56;16

Rocky Marshall

Okay, Steven, thanks for having me on. I really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

00:41:56;18 - 00:42:00;13

Stephen Gutowski

All right. That's all we've got for you guys this week. We will see you again real soon.