

UPPER ST. CLAIR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Board Meeting—Regular Open Meeting—November 17, 2019 (at Upper St. Clair Library)

Board Members Present

Brad Sileo
Pete Gialames
Dave Speer
Ed Gausa
Amy Shegan
John McShane
Erik Happ
Jake Ploeger
Mark DiSora
George Garces
Dan Sinclair
Jesse Sweet

Board Members Absent

Michele Fisher
Russ Ball

Additional Attendees

Approximately eight members of the organization.

The open Board Meeting was called to order by President Brad Sileo at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Secretary's Report

- Jesse Sweet presented the report of the Secretary.
- A motion was made to approve the minutes from the October 6, 2019 Regular Open Board Meeting. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Team Updates

Varsity:

- Michele Fisher was absent. Brad Sileo and Ed Gausa presented the report on the Varsity team.
- PIHL Commissioner John Mucha informed Brad that USC is unofficially invited to attend USA Nationals, which will be held March 26-30 near Dallas, Texas. PIHL had been guaranteed one spot in the tournament, but a second spot was offered due to availability. Greater Latrobe was also invited.
- Brad stated that he would gather details and survey the Varsity families to gauge interest. Most expenses will need to be borne by the families themselves.
- If there is enough interest, the official invitation will be extended in January.
- It was noted that the pullovers recently given to the Varsity players were well-liked. The Board thanked John McShane for his work on that project.
- Ed reminded families that the Jamestown tournament is coming up shortly after Thanksgiving.

JV1:

- Amy Shegan stated that there was nothing to report on the JV1 team.

JV2:

- George Garces stated that there was nothing to report on the JV2 team.
- A parent of a player rostered on JV2 made a presentation to the Board:
 - The parent noted that his son had accepted a spot to play on the JV2 team.
 - The player participated in two preseason games and a small number of practices, but had to quit the team due to certain difficulties which were explained to the Board.
 - The parent noted the player's past dedication and commitment to USC Hockey.
 - The parent requested a refund of \$730, which represented money paid to the organization beyond the \$500 commitment fee. The parent also requested to be relieved of the obligation to pay the remainder of the 2019-20 season fees.
 - Dave Speer made a motion for the Board to discuss the request in executive session. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Middle School:

- Mark DiSora presented the report on the MS team.
- Mark noted that the team had participated in a SHIM food drive and fundraiser on October 17. Following the fundraiser, several players from the team helped to deliver food to SHIM.
- The MS team will participate in the Nutcracker Tournament over the holidays.

Treasurer's Report

- Dave Speer presented the Treasurer's report.
- Dave stated that the organization remains in good financial shape.
- The organization remains on track to dip into savings by 20-22k to complete the season.
- Dave noted that his is projecting about 12k in income from the fundraiser.

PIHL Report

- Dan Sinclair presented the PIHL report.
- Dan noted that the most recent PIHL meeting was conducted via conference call. Two items of note were discussed:
 - PIHL noted that under its weather policy, PIHL determines whether games will be cancelled. There are limited exceptions to this rule.
 - PIHL outlined the minimum number of regular season games that players must be dressed for to participate in the playoffs (subject to injury exceptions):
 - MS: 7
 - JV: 8
 - AAA Varsity: 10

Fundraiser's Report

- Jake Ploeger presented the Fundraiser's report.
- Jake has distributed the raffle tickets, and sales are underway. The drawing will be held on December 2 during the Seneca Valley game.

Old Business

- Russ Ball was absent, so no report was given on Senior Rec night.
- Team pictures were taken in the week prior to the meeting. The Board thanked Rona Daley and Lisa McQuade for coordinating. Bill Schmitt will continue to take pictures of seniors in advance of Senior Rec night and the annual banquet.
- Brad reported that the McFeeley family gave the go-ahead for a "McFeeley Strong" event. The event will be held in conjunction with the USC vs. Mt. Lebanon Varsity game on Dec. 9 at Ice Castle. New green McFeeley Strong t-shirts will be printed for USC and Mt. Lebanon players to wear. Additional shirts will be sold at the gate. A 50/50 raffle will be held. All proceeds will be donated to the trust set up for the McFeeley family.
- Brad reported that he is continuing to work with the USC Athletic Department on the SafeSport issue. The department assigned the organization an "administrative liaison." Brad remains in the role of Safesport Representative for the organization, but he is continuing to try to get someone from the athletic department to assume the role.
- Brad reported that he received three quotes on excess D&O coverage for the organization. He is also gathering information on coverage already provided through USA Hockey and MidAm. Information on the quotes was emailed to Board members. The issue is tabled for now, and Brad will make a recommendation at a later date after speaking with counsel for MidAm.

New Business

- Ed Gaussa reported that coaching feedback surveys will be circulated to high school players shortly after Thanksgiving. The surveys will be essentially the same as the ones from last season. After the surveys are completed, Ed and Brad will tabulate the results to discuss with the Board and the coaches. Discussion was held regarding various ways to distribute the surveys to the players.
- Association member Frank Buonomo attended the meeting to discuss a letter he had written to the Board.
 - The letter referenced a team rule for the Varsity team which states that a player who misses a Varsity game due to a practice or game for the player's amateur team will be benched for the subsequent Varsity game. The letter stated a belief that the rule was discriminatory and that it implicated Bylaw 10 of the USA Hockey rules.¹

¹ This bullet point is merely a summary description of the letter. It should not be relied on as a verbatim account of the letter, the USA Hockey rules, or any responses to either.

- Brad first noted that the Board had formed a committee to review the letter. The committee members are Brad Sileo, Ed Gaussa, Dan Sinclair, Pete Gialames and Jesse Sweet.
- Brad stated that the Board had conducted a conference call to discuss the contents of the letter prior to the committee meeting.
- Brad stated that the committee met and determined that the rule at issue was not discriminatory, and that no further action was required.
- Frank stated that:
 - He was not attempting to conduct a negative public campaign.
 - He believes that the rule does not make USC Hockey a better organization.
 - He believes that the rule discriminates against players who play amateur hockey because there are no similar benchings for players who miss games due to reasons such as participating in school events (i.e. band, plays, etc.) or playing other sports (i.e. football).
 - The rule is not applied to JV players even though it is written as though it should.
- Brad responded to several of these issues:
 - Brad noted that the committee had determined that the rule is not discriminatory, and that players who play amateur hockey are not considered a protected class.
 - The inclusion of JV in the written rule was a clerical error. The JV coaches do not use the same rule for certain reasons, including the fact that PIHL now schedules many JV games for Friday nights.
 - Brad noted that the Varsity rule was explained to the players prior to the season, and that it was emphasized as being important due to the team moving up to AAA. Given that AAA games are held Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, it was felt that the rule was reasonable and did not restrict players from playing for their amateur teams.
- It was noted that the rule was in place for the 2018-19 season as well. To date, the rule has resulted in one player being benched for one game.
- Ed Gaussa noted that he has spoken to Varsity Head Coach Justin Becinski about the rule and the fact that some parents have voiced concerns. Ed reported that Coach Becinski said that he will evaluate the rule and its effectiveness after the season.
- Parents from three other families of Varsity players attended the meeting and raised concerns that the rule is not consistently applied.
- Ed stated that he would have another conversation with Coach Becinski about the specific concern that the rule only applies to players who miss Varsity games due to amateur hockey.
- Brad reported that the organization made a \$100 donation to the True Grit scholarship fund at Erie Cathedral Prep, which was set up after the death of one of its players earlier in the season.

AT THIS POINT DURING THE MEETING, ERIK HAPP MADE A MOTION THAT THE BOARD MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION. AMY SHEGAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED BY A VOTE OF 10 YES AND 1 ABSTENTION.

AN EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD TO DISCUSS THE REQUEST MADE BY THE JV2 PARENT (SEE ABOVE).

FOLLOWING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION, THE REGULAR OPEN BOARD MEETING WAS RECONVENED.

JV2 (continued):

- Jake Ploeger made a motion to refund the family discussed above \$730 and to reduce the family's balance owed to the organization to \$0. Erik Happ seconded the motion. Jesse Sweet noted that the motion was made for the purpose of addressing a unique situation involving certain serious and personal reasons. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regular open Board meeting will be held on February 9, 2020. An executive session will be held prior to that meeting at a date and time to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jesse Sweet, Secretary