**Minutes**

Mesabi East Youth Hockey Board

*Special Meeting Wednesday, August 18th, 2021*

In Attendance

**President**: Angie Gnerer

**Vice President**: Jay Norberg

**Secretary:** Chris Peterson

**Treasurer:** Emily House

**Ace Coordinator:** Lindsey Sova

**Registrar:** Leah Nielsen

**Tournament Coordinator:** vacant

**Hockey Hut Manager:** Jill Eckman

**Volunteer Coordinator:**

**Hut Co-Manager:** vacant

**Fundraising Coordinator:**

**Apparel Coordinator:** Angie Gnerer

**Equipment Manager:** Carrie Berndt

**Scheduler:**

**Website Manager:**

**4x4 Coordinator:** Tony House

**Other attendees:**

Dan Rabideaux, Jim James and Evan, Kristine Norberg, Kim Wolner, Jake Mackey, Jason, Adelia Kidstrand, Michelle Oman, Andrea Conklin and Mush, Jeff Jacobson, Misty Klemke, Jim and Patty Luke

Meeting was called to order by President Angie Gnerer at 5:15p.m.

In March-April, Rock Ridge approved combining of HS program and combining with ME schools.

Subcommittees had been formed to come up with ideas on how to consolidate Virginia, EG and ME but wasn’t able to come to an agreement. MN Hockey stepped in to mediate for an acceptable agreement. Dan brought to EG Rec Board and Virginia a proposal that allows for the addition of JR Gold that mirrors a high school team and formalizing the girls program.

We will form a joint Operating Committee (OC) to work out the details. The OC will consist of the Rock Ridge High Schools Boy’s Head Coach, Girl’s Head Coach, VAHA youth hockey director, MEYHA President, EG Rec Director. There are specific criteria that needs to be met in order for MN hockey to give its blessing. The OC will oversee the Jr Gold and Girl’s Program. We must establish a co-op with Rock Ridge similar to the high school program. This arrangement is intended to exist for 3 years.

We need to formalize the girl’s program and allow them to operate as Rock Ridge with ME as co-op for the 2021-2022 season.

OC would oversee disciplines and coaching of Jr. Gold.

Dan talked with Ben Johnson and he advised they have 56 athletes signed up right now for high school and as many as 81 showed up in Duluth for practices. We would have enough for a Jr. Gold team.

* Home arena needs to be established and ME has offered. Each player will register with his home association. For example, ME will register with ME but will operate as Rock Ridge.
* Recommended we buy jerseys and split 3 ways.
* Annual operating fees tournament costs and district fees will be charged to each association based on number of kids from each association.
* If any kids outside the area want to play, they need to waive in if they don’t have option for Jr. Gold at their association.
* JR gold schedule. Tryouts for high school are November 10, the following week the rosters are somewhat formalized. There’s a 10-week window before post season starts. They play 24 games, home and away against 12 teams. There are 6 non out state metro teams which will create its own division and will have its own state bound team. This will limit travel to keep expense down. There’s a 2 games series in cities and metro and 4 non divisional games. A 24 game schedule is guaranteed.
* Questioned if girls can play on JR Gold. It’s youth, so yes.
* If a high school age child doesn’t make the high school team, he would have to re-register through the youth program.

For girls, each player will register with their association. Annual operating costs will be based on the kids playing.

For Bantams and Peewees, both ME and EG groups might show enough to have their own teams. If we are working toward developing to the high school level, we should allow to have the bantam kids play together as a group, per the request of the high school coach. We ran out of time so it wasn’t able to happen for this year.

* Virginia will continue to field their own teams.
* EGME will continue to field Bantam and PW teams. This will expire at the end of 2022.
* After this year, we will play together Virginia, EG, ME. Play together or play on our own.
* Going forward Virginia and EG plan to officially dissolve their association and form one Rock Ridge program. They would look to co-op with ME.

For the younger kids, MN Hockey want them to skate locally and not be part of the co-op. He says we don’t need to worry squirts numbers until MEA weekend. Registration is Aug 25. Eveleth sent us their numbers. Look like ME Squirts will be short to field a team. Dan gave us deadline of October 15.

Will masks be implemented? Dan says it’ll be up to the facility. MN Hockey has no plans to implement masks. Questioned if there will be any covid restrictions. MN Hockey and USA hockey have no restrictions. It’ll be up to the facility or associations. He’s been asked by USA hockey to put forward support for people to be vaccinated.

Would ME dissolve and join representation? He said it’d be something to enter into a conversation with Rock Ridge. School does not have to allow ME or MT Iron Buhl to continue to participate. He doesn’t know if that’s indefinite.

Jay asks if everyone dissolved, will Rock Ridge allow ME to co-op? Dan says yes, because it would mirror high school. Allow youth to partner as well for continuity. We should try to mirror the youth program to the high school program.

Jim James says for High School cooperative agreements they request a minimum of 2 years for sections and schedules. We have Rock Ridge hockey programs as co-op for girl’s and boy’s hockey. This is good for two years. If there’s not a request to dissolve it, then it remains in place for another 2 years. There have been co-ops that have went less because they didn’t have enough players. Girl’s hockey has always been co-op because there’s never been enough players. Boys always has larger numbers. It’ll be different because we have more kids and they’ll need to compete. Kids will need to work to get better. There are tons of co-ops around the state. He thinks we should explore Ely and Silver Bay.

Dan already heard from Virginia and EG and they did agree to the proposal. It’s just waiting on ME. Dan gave April 1 for new agreement for Virginia and EG.

A couple people asked why we weren’t having PW and Bantams combined with Rock Ridge. We tried all summer and had a committee and tried to come up with agreements and we couldn’t make the deadline and couldn’t come to an agreement.

Jay made motion to approve proposal, Angie seconded. 5-0 passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.