

UPPER ST. CLAIR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Board Meeting—Regular Open Meeting—February 9, 2020 (at Upper St. Clair Library)

Board Members Present

Brad Sileo
Dave Speer
Ed Gaussa
Michele Fisher
Russ Ball
Amy Shegan
Erik Happ
Jake Ploeger
Mark DiSora
George Garces
Dan Sinclair
Pete Gialames (via phone)
John McShane (via phone)
Jesse Sweet

Board Members Absent

Additional Attendees

Approximately eleven 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.
- It was noted for the record that the minutes from the November 17, 2019 Regular Open Meeting had been approved by unanimous email vote.
- A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 7, 2020 Executive Meeting. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Team Updates

Varsity:

- Ed Gaussa stated that plans were complete for the Varsity team to take a bus to the game on February 11 in Erie. Russ Ball inquired whether it was mandatory for players to ride the bus. It was not.
- Michele Fisher stated that Senior Rec Night is coming up on February 20. Michele noted that the team has qualified for the playoffs already even though there are still four games left in the regular season.

JV1:

- Amy Shegan stated that there was nothing to report on the JV1 team. The team will participate in the opt-in postseason tournament.

JV2:

- George Garces stated that there was nothing to report on the JV2 team. The team will participate in the opt-in postseason tournament.

Middle School:

- Mark DiSora presented the report on the MS team.
- Mark noted that the team has one more game to play in the regular season, and that the team will participate in the opt-in postseason tournament.
- Mark said that he has emailed the team to encourage attendance at Senior Rec.

Academic All-Stars

- Brad Sileo stated that PIHL has begun the annual process of recognizing academic all-stars. High school team managers will send forms to the families. Amy Shegan volunteered to collect the forms.

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 to complete the season.
- Dave noted that the fundraiser this season brought in approximately \$4,500. This amount was less than typical because the fundraiser was not mandatory.
- Dave noted that the fiscal year ends on March 31, 2020, and that he will be sending all of the necessary materials to the CPA for the completion of the organization's taxes.

PIHL Report

- Dan Sinclair presented the PIHL report.
- Dan noted PIHL has released dates for playoffs/postseason.
 - For AAA Varsity, eight teams qualify. The first round of the playoffs will be held the week of March 2, with the top four seeds getting home games. The semifinals will be held on March 12 at RMU. The Penguins Cup Championship game will be held on March 17 at the UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex.
 - For both JV and Middle School, preliminary rounds will be held at various sites from March 9-20. The semifinals will be held at host sites on March 23 and 24. The JV and Middle School Championship games (all pools) will be held at Ice Castle on March 25 and 26.

Old Business

- Russ Ball provided an update on Senior Rec night (Feb. 20).
 - The on-ice recognition ceremony will be held at 6:30 p.m. before the 7:00 game.
 - All other USC teams, including Junior Panthers, have been invited to attend.
 - Additional reminders will be sent out to each team.
 - Varsity players will be wearing their 3rd jerseys; other players forming the “tunnel” will be asked to wear black jerseys.
 - Senior players will be asked to bring their banners (already handed out) and black jerseys to the rink for the event.
 - A variety of parents have volunteered to help with various elements of the planning.
 - JV2 has practice from 5:50 to 6:50, but may end early so that the players can participate in the Senior Rec event.
- Michele Fisher provided an update on the Annual Banquet. Michele said that the banquet committee will be meeting on February 10, and that the committee includes a representative from each team.
- Discussion was held regarding summer leagues at Mt. Lebanon.
 - Cormac McCarthy will manage the middle school team. So far, 18 players have committed, which means that there will only be one MS team.
 - Brad is still looking for a manager for the high school team, but that league does not start play until June.
- Ed Gausa provided an update on tryouts for 2020-21. Tentative dates and times are:
 - May 18: Goalies only
 - May 19: MS 5:30-6:40, High School 6:50-8:00
 - May 20: MS 5:30-6:40, High School 6:50-8:00
 - Discussion was held regarding whether to move MS tryouts to the fall, but there was not a strong sentiment to do so.
 - Discussion was held regarding the potential number of players at both the MS and HS levels, and how many teams the organization will field. It was agreed that no decisions can be made until registrations for tryout are completed.
 - The basic schedule to make determinations is:
 - Fees will be published in March
 - Registrations will be conducted in April
 - Tryouts will be held in May
 - Teams will be declared to PIHL in June.
- Discussion was held regarding fees for 2020-21. It was noted that fundraising will have to provide more funding to the organization for the 2020-21 season. Given the relative financial health of the organization, the consensus was that fees will not need to be raised. A final decision can be made in March.
- Lengthy discussion was held regarding two ongoing issues: (1) the Varsity team rule requiring players who miss a Varsity game for their amateur team to be benched for a subsequent Varsity game; and (2) a complaint raised by a parent regarding actions of the Varsity coach pertaining to All-Star team nominations. Several of the parents in attendance commented on both issues, as did several board members. Due to the volume of the comments, not all are included in these minutes. Examples of the comments included:

- Regarding the Team Rule issue:
 - It was noted that the Board had formed a committee to review the rule, and that the high school coaches have already agreed to review the rule and its effectiveness following the season. The Varsity coach is not inclined to make any rule changes during the season, but he is aware of the concerns raised by the parents.
 - Several parents stated that the rule is not fair because it only affects players who miss games due to conflicts with their amateur hockey team. It was noted that players have missed games for other events (i.e. participation in school plays) and have not been benched.
 - Certain parents stated that the rule is most likely to affect AAA players, that those players are the better players on the Varsity team, and that benching those players could lead to losses.
 - It was noted that the Varsity team did not lose any games in which players were benched for violating the rule.
 - Certain parents commented that the players are already committed to the team, and they don't need this rule in place to force such a commitment.
 - Comments were made that the Coach "selectively" enforced the rule by deciding which games would be used for players to be benched.
 - It was noted that even if the rule didn't exist, the Coach has the authority to dress whichever rostered players he wants.
 - Certain parents noted that the rule is intended to show the players that they need to be committed to the team, but that the Coach has missed 50% of the team's practices in December in January. (Additional discussion was held regarding the reasons for these missed practices and the communication about them. It was also noted that there has not been a problem with the Coach missing practices prior to December.)
 - Certain parents felt that the Board should dictate to the Coach that the rule be rescinded.
 - A board member stated that the board taking action to dictate a rule involving which players are dressed could set a dangerous precedent.
 - Discussion was held regarding Bylaws provisions pertaining to attendance at games, as well as Board authority regarding team rules.
 - Russ Ball made a motion that the Varsity rule requiring players who miss a Varsity game for their amateur team to be benched for a subsequent Varsity game should be eliminated, effective immediately. Jake Ploeger seconded the motion. The motion failed with a vote tally of: 2 Yes, 10 No, and 2 Abstentions.
- Regarding the All-Star Team selection issue:
 - Following the publication of All-Star rosters by PIHL, Russ Ball raised a question about the process for nominations and selections of All-Star players. Discussion was held regarding the facts surrounding the Varsity coach's nomination form, as well as a subsequent email that the Varsity coach said he sent to PIHL to attempt to nominate additional players as alternates in the event that nominated players were unavailable.

- Questions were raised about whether the aforementioned email was sent. The Varsity coach said that he had deleted the email after sending it.
- PIHL confirmed to Brad Sileo that the Varsity coach did send the aforementioned email. PIHL did not provide a copy of the email.
- It was noted that the process involving nominations of All-Star players is intended to be confidential.
- No motions were made and no further actions were taken regarding this issue.

New Business

- Brad stated that the Annual Meeting will be held on April 14 in the USC High School cafeteria.
- Brad noted that he and Jesse Sweet will work on some minor changes to the Bylaws. Those proposed changes will be discussed at the next board meeting.
- An inquiry was made as to whether the organization can create an email address for the Varsity coach using the uschockey.org domain. Brad said that he would look into it.
- Ann Shiry thanked the entire organization (but highlighted the Sileos and Daleys) for the ongoing community service/outreach efforts. It was noted that during a recent event, the players made 300 bagged lunches for a shelter that helps feed the hungry and homeless.

The next Board meeting will be held on at a time and date to be determined in March 2020.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jesse Sweet, Secretary