MINNESOTA HOCKEY – DISTRICT 16
Fall 2026 MEETING AGENDA
Walker Community Center
Walker, MN
Monday, September 14, 2026 - 4:00 pm.

I. Call to Order

II. **Roll Call:** (voice & sign-in)

Bagley	Bemidji	Crookston	East Grand Forks	Hallock	
Lake of the Woods	Red Lake Falls	Roseau	Thief River Falls	Walker	Warroad

III. Agenda Additions – none.

IV. Approve Spring minutes – Lake of the Woods motions, Roseau seconds. Motion carries.

V. Team Assignments:

Bantam AA Bemidji East Grand Forks	**Peewee AA** Bemidji East Grand Forks Roseau	**Jr. Gold / Girls 15UB** Bemidji (Jr. Gold B) Thief River Falls (15UB)	**Girls 10UA** Bemidji Thief River Falls? Warroad
Bantam A Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	**Peewee A** Crookston East Grand Forks Hallock Red Lake Falls Thief River Falls Warroad	**Squirt A** Bemidji Crookston East Grand Forks Lake of the Woods Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	**Girls 10UB** Bemidji Crookston East Grand Forks Roseau
Bantam B1/B Bagley Bemidji Crookston East Grand Forks Hallock Lake of the Woods Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	**Peewee B1/B** Bagley Bemidji East Grand Forks Lake of the Woods Thief River Falls Warroad	**Squirt B1/B** Bagley Bemidji Blue Bemidji White East Grand Forks Hallock Red Lake Falls Thief River Falls Warroad	**Girls 12UA** Bemidji East Grand Forks Roseau Warroad
Bantam B2/C Bemidji Walker	**Peewee B2/C** Bemidji Crookston Hallock East Grand Forks Green East Grand Forks White Roseau Walker	**Squirt B2/C** Bemidji Red Bemidji White Crookston East Grand Forks Roseau Walker	**Girls 12UB** Bemidji Lake of the Woods Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad

Lots of discussion on pushing teams as high as possible. Elliott suggested Warroad move to Bantam AA, East Grand Forks and Bemidji to Bantam A. Kids will not get better without seeing top competition in his opinion. Elliott - Couple of things, Mites and 8U, if you're planning on playing games outside of your own community, you need to send Elliott your schedule, and he needs to know full ice or cross ice. Need to have the schedule before you play any games. If you plan on leaving the district, let Elliott know, or if you are hosting teams from outside the district, get permission from Elliott. Need a travel permit to leave the U.S. and play games. Teams must get approval through Elliott, otherwise, teams will be sanctioned by MN and USA Hockey. District 15 has the idea that we should take our top 4 squirt A teams against their top 4 Squirt A teams, and our bottom 4 Squirt A teams against their bottom 4 Squirt A teams. Elliott is thinking no to this proposal, but Elliott doesn't want to make final decision, send him an email or voice your association's thoughts now. Dragich – what you're essentially doing is making an A tournament and a B tournament, you can guess where it came from in District 15, initially not in favor of it either, detracts from what we're trying to do in encouraging teams to play at a higher level. To try to do that and separate them, we're not doing any good. Combining with D15 the last couple of years for 10U because of so little teams has worked well, more competition. D11 and D12 came over last year because of shortage of teams. Elliott – might happen again this year minus Cloquet. Makes a better tournament than having only 2-3 teams, but they must come here, we're not going to send our families across the state at this age level. We will have

Peewee and Bantam Northern District tournaments, 11, 12, 15, and 16. Dragich – the reasoning on that is the state tries to make the AA level more of a metro deal and are trying to limit the number of northern teams that qualify for regions, so we are trying to send the best representatives out of the north, to allow 5 or 6 teams at each level to move on to regionals, it's been a work in progress for a couple of years, this will be the first year there will be a playoff for it.

VI. **Fall MN Hockey** – Elliott – I did not travel because of my own health issues. Dragich – big topics, player waivers, mostly in the metro area, people are running rampant on where they are playing. The District 8 Director has already had over 100 player waivers come across his desk this fall, Elliott gets maybe 20 a year by comparison, it's crazy what goes on with kids jumping associations left and right. MN Hockey made the rule of determining by squirt level where they play based on either home residency or where you attend school, you could get a free waiver as a one-time choice at that Squirt age. But that rule hasn't worked like they thought it would or hope, now looking at backing that up to mites instead. If they decide to change their mind later, the answer is supposed to be a hard no, especially if they choose the association of school attendance. People are going wherever they want, making up addresses, lying about addresses, so MN Hockey trying to get a handle on it. Suggestion from the legal people was to let them do whatever they want, and no one wants to let them run rampant, but it is an issue that is not getting any better and they're trying to get a handle on the right way to go. Talked a lot about the new Development league that USA Hockey is starting a year from now, for HS age through Bantam age players, USA Hockey's initial plans could put a serious dent in HS Hockey, so the boys HS Coaches association, MN Hockey, and the MN Wild are working diligently on a plan to allow MN players to play in that development league while still playing a before and after schedule, part of the development league, but not fully part of the league, so that it does not disrupt high school hockey as we have it in the state. A lot going on, the biggest change if everything happens the way they are proposing will be on the bantam age players at the 15U teams would be part of the development leagues, which would result in them missing part of the bantam season, but the high school coaches think the bantam age players would move up and play HS Hockey but would take them away from bantams. 15U/17U would be billeted in the MSP area. The HS group that is working on it is trying to do the best thing for MN Hockey, trying to get a good handle on it so it works as best as possible. Upcoming January meeting – let Elliott know if you want to go

VIII. **District - Region - State Hosts**

Districts Feb 19-21, 2027

BA: Warroad BB1 & BB2: Walker PWA: Crookston PWB1: Bagley
PWB2: Roseau Girls 12UA: East Grand Forks Girls 12UB: Lake of the Woods

Districts (continued) Feb 26-28, 2027

Bantam AA: Moorhead Peewee AA - Bemidji
SA: Thief River Falls SB site 1: Warroad SB site 2: Crookston Girls 10U A & B: Roseau

Regions – March 5-7, 2027

Bantam A: Walker Bantam B: Bemidji Bantam AA: Roseau

State – Mar 19-21, 2027, none

IX. **Committee Reports**

1. Stats - John or Mark D – Elliott, make sure your people understand that they need to be running the penalty box correctly. Need to understand how important it is to do it correctly, if not, you will be subject to a fine.
2. District Web Page – John or Mark D. – let Dragich know if you want something listed on the website. Dragich – MN Hockey has its own association run tournament page listing. Severson – related to the website, you all should have gotten an email from me, I'll resend that today or tomorrow, we want to get a fresh list of your direct contacts, it can be anybody, a lot of times we do have information available to all, we've been working on 3-4 different lists, we don't have a good central spot, please fill out that quick little form so we have an accurate working contact list for general communications. Elliott – add your bantam, peewee, squirt, and girls head coaches to the list so I can get after them easier. Severson – and all of you should have access to that list as well, it is public information, we want to be able to get a hold of everybody.
3. Coach-in-Chief (CEP) – Jay Hardwick – not present.

4.a ACE Coordinator – Jude – not present. Mike Klema from Roseau will be assisting him this year.

4.b Goalie Coordinator – Kevin Ackley – not present. We do have a goalie coordinator now.

5. Referees – Ron Laturi – still have referees.
6. Advanced HP Boys 15's & 14's – Jude Boulianne Tier 1 & 2 (prospects)
7. Advanced HP Girls 15's – still have the advanced awards for a while. Roseau – one thing people have asked now, we combine with D11,12,15,16 to be more competitive, we have some girls that are 14 that are playing up, what is the purpose of having girls playing up if they're trying to be competitive? Elliott – send me an email on it, will discuss it with Jude, possibly change it if other districts are in favor of it.
8. Awards – Mark D. – no update.
9. Tournaments – Mark Dragich – only thing is for everybody's invitational tournaments, everything is online, everything must be done at least 21 days prior to the tournament. If you are holding a tournament,

once you apply, I see it, I approve it, I send it on to Rhonda Madsen for final approval, you have to post that letter of approval at all arenas you play tournament games at, along with the tournament rules. You also must pay the GameSheet fees as part of the application to host the tournament; it is now an upfront cost now instead of getting invoiced later. If you were sending a tournament in for $200 a tournament last year, it is now likely $400 a tournament. TRF – what happens if you send it in for 8 teams and only use 4? Dragich – they said they are refunding it or overcharging when that happens.

10. Risk Manager – Mark Elliott – if you have a serious injury, let us two know about it. If the person (including someone attending the game) must go to a hospital, then you should send us a brief description of what happened.

11. Girls – Mark Elliott (Need) – Dragich – one thing on the Girls side, I've been coming to these meetings for 19 years as "Girls – Mark Elliott (Need)." We've never had anyone step up and be a girl's coordinator. Being a liaison for girls' teams in our district and keeping them up on things going on, if you know someone in your association who would be interested, please mention it to them. Tim Morris is the GHS role for attending MN Hockey meetings. His plea to places is to avoid co-oping girls' programs at all costs because they don't build the sport, they do the opposite and they continue to lose teams year over year. There are people working and trying to make an effort to try to start growing programs again. I asked Brooke Byrnes at MN Hockey about having some type of girls' clinic or weekend in our district with MN Frost players to get some excitement for players. Girls' numbers took off years ago and are going in the other direction now. Hopefully we can get it to grow again. Anyone who might be interested in working with the girls' programs, contact Mark Elliott. Elliott – girls state committee meets once or twice a year, attended religiously until he realized the rest of the state didn't care about what we do up here and that we do it differently here. First year was 1994 that we started girls' hockey and fortunately for Roseau and Warroad, they did not get their way, as they have gone on to be very strong, but Dick Johnson was ready to throw me out of a second-floor window in Crookston, but luckily, I was stronger than him. Realized this summer that even though I thought I was invincible, I'm probably going to die one of these years, so want to make sure things are moving forward.

12. Retention-Recruitment – Keith S – stepped down from State Recruitment chair role but staying on as District Recruitment Chair. Brought meeting minutes from previous meetings. A page or two for associations that talk about key dates coming up for recruiting, please let me know if you have any questions about getting grants. Take advantage of these programs, it is very easy to get some kind of money, very few associations in D16 apply for them. A couple of other things to be aware of, but strongly recommend having a dedicated recruitment person, having a person on the board dedicated to recruitment and retention, which (retention) is just as important as recruitment. As we get into this covid year of kids entering hockey, data suggests kids were born, so really take a hard look at other sports and what they are doing to recruit players. Be aware of them and understand your competition, to try to do better at recruitment and pulling in those kids. Finding ways to have financial assistance programs, it is recommended to try to find ways to have financial assistance programs or a motivator that doesn't feel like you're writing out a big check day one. A lot of the other contents on other paper, reach out with anything.

X. **Old business**

1. Mark Elliott 2030 Harding Ct SW, Bemidji, MN 56601 (Cell) 218-766-4433 (Work) 218-759-9411
2. Locker Room Monitors – make sure you have them because it could be costly.
3. Waivers – if you have a kid with a Roseau address that wants to play in Warroad, make sure you get a waiver form or check with me to see if they need one. Unless it is a mandatory waiver, you do not have to accept them. I know Bemidji and Bagley there are kids that go back and forth, as an example.
4. GameSheet – Elliott - still operating the same way, we're going to get a preliminary bill, they do not have our district loaded yet onto GameSheet, but everything should be same as always except for tournament games being billed up front now. Initial bill will come to the district and see that it gets paid if I have enough money. LOW – question about the email about updates needed. Severson – yes, update the IOS system and app and you should be fine.
5. New office address for Mark 258 Anne St NW Bemidji

New Business

1. Potential Fines for games not played, incorrect GameSheet entries, coaches and fans getting kicked out. Elliott - Not big on fines, but if you screw up terribly and you aren't sorry about it, you will get fined. Make sure to get affiliate agreements done and sent to Mark Elliott, Dragich will email tomorrow. Minutes from your board meetings need to be posted online, otherwise, you need to mail Mark a copy of them as soon as they are done so he can stay on top of them. **Elliott – $750 district dues per association, due by December 1st or else your teams cannot play any more games.**

2. **Winter meeting** to be held in Thief River Falls on February 15th at 4:00pm.

IX. **Adjournment – Lake of the Woods motions, seconded by East Grand Forks. Motion carries.**

Meeting is adjourned at 5:41 pm.