

HINSDALE CENTRAL HOCKEY CLUB
BOARD MEETING
Willowbrook Ice Arena
April 17, 2025
MINUTES

In Attendance:

Jay Scharkey, Don Draudt, Jim Hamman, Julie Rzeppa, Jennifer Tallard, Kelly Staver, Louise Crabb, Garrett Ryan, Rick Joutras, Coach Brooks

President Update:

Jay opened the meeting by presenting a series of strategic concepts and goals for the upcoming 2025–2026 hockey season. He emphasized the importance of reflecting on the past season, which had a disappointing win/loss record, and stressed the need to restore the program to a higher competitive and public profile.

He expressed concern about the current difficulty in filling the spring roster, which may negatively impact fall recruitment. This also raises concerns about the club's ability to field two teams in the future, as well as the financial implications tied to team size. Jay noted that the club anticipates graduating 14 to 15 seniors by the end of the 2025–2026 season, and it remains uncertain whether enough new players will join to offset these departures.

Jay reaffirmed the club's commitment to Willowbrook Ice Arena, where HCHC currently serves as the anchor tenant under a 10-year contract that includes ice time during the fall, winter, spring, and summer seasons. This contract is set to expire in two years, and Jay expressed the club's desire to remain independent and continue operating as a standalone organization.

He proposed doing more to attract students and fans to home games, suggesting that creating a more engaging pre-game experience could improve attendance. He also proposed recommendations to help improve ice quality; such as a resurfacing cut midway through the second period or having JV or high school players serve as an ice crew to clean the surface between periods.

Finally, Jay confirmed the formation of the Coaches Committee, which will include himself, Don Draudt, Julie Rzeppa, and Rick Joutras.

Hockey Director Update:

Coach Brooks noted that due to an eligibility extension for players in the CSDHL 18U league, there will likely be increased movement of 16U players to high school teams. This trend could benefit HCHC by potentially increasing the number of available players.

He reported no current issues (so far) within the Nequa Spring League, though participation this spring has been low, and the team has yet to have a full roster at either practices or games.

He proposed reinstating the Spring and Fall Showcases as a way to help offset seasonal expenses. Each showcase is expected to generate approximately \$10,000 in net revenue. Coach Brooks will be responsible for securing ice time for the proposed JV Showcase on September 5, 2025, and the Varsity Showcase on September 12, 2025 (or vice versa). He will also contact other schools to invite participation.

"Just Lift" off-ice workouts are scheduled to begin on June 1 at 11:30 a.m., with a signup link and PayPal payment option to be distributed shortly.

Coach Brooks will also be running his summer camp from July 21 to July 25. The camp will run five hours per day. In addition, he will be hosting his annual 3v3 Tournament, which will be held at either Franklin Park or Jet Ice, as it will not be hosted at Willowbrook this year.

Social Media & Recruitment Update:

Kelly has been in contact with Karen Prusso, the Business Educator and Internship Coordinator at Hinsdale Central, to establish a social media internship program for the club. Two students will be selected to participate. Interns will receive academic credit for completing 60 to 70 hours of work, provided they meet the expectations outlined in the internship packet prepared by Kelly.

Responsibilities for the interns will include creating promotional and recruitment videos, conducting player interviews, and managing the club's Instagram and TikTok accounts. Applications will open in mid-May, and candidates will be interviewed by Kelly and another board member.

Additionally, members of the HCHC Choir will have the opportunity to sing the national anthem before select games.

The board also discussed setting up a Dropbox or SmugMug account to store and archive video footage.

Registrar Update:

Positive feedback from families regarding the new Crossbar registration platform.

Treasurer Update:

Don shared financial projections with new board members. For the spring season, the budget typically assumes 34 skaters and 2 goalies, while the fall season estimates 36 skaters and 4 goalies. In comparison, last year's team included 44 skaters. Don will present a proposed budget at the next meeting in May.

Apparel Update:

The board discussed tweaking the current dress code for home games. If players are required to wear suits, Julie will include garment bags to the player pack. Another change in team apparel will be switching from hooded sweatshirts to zip-up jackets paired with joggers. Additionally, the board

discussed the possibility of reintroducing the white team jersey. Julie and Coach Brooks to inquire about pricing for white jersey.

Secretary's Update:

Louise will be responsible for exporting the club's targeted and current email lists from Mailchimp to the Crossbar system. Waiting on green light from Jay.

Event's Update:

Jen confirmed that trailers have been secured for the upcoming Homecoming Parade. The board also discussed allowing JV players to use the Airstream trailer during their home games when the Varsity team does not have a scheduled home game.

Fundraising Update:

Rick met with Brad to review potential fundraising initiatives. The board agreed to continue with the sale of parking spots, which remains part of the current agreement. Other fundraising ideas were discussed, including selling branded apparel for-profit, hosting a "Split the Pot" contest or "Puck Toss" during games, and partnering with food trucks that provide a percentage of profits back to the club. Rick also plans to contact HCHS lacrosse sponsors to explore potential interest in supporting the hockey club.

IL West League Update:

Garrett will reach out to Kenny to receive a league update. He will also ensure that injury tracking is included as an agenda item in the next IL West meeting. Jennifer Tallard will stay informed on any league developments.

May Board Meeting:

May 21, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at Willowbrook Ice Arena.