MEETING MINUTES

AHAI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING

Date:	September 8, 2026,
Time:	6:30 PM
Meeting called to order by:	Surrette

IN ATTENDANCE

AHAI Board of Directors: Bolger, Dunne, Surrette, Rancourt, Johnson, Krausfeldt, Weinberg, Cavallini, Jauch, Tuminaro, McGing, Locallo, Allord, Crowley, Rosenberg

Approved August 2026 minutes

Treasure Report

Financial updates showing an overall 2.1% decline in players and a significant IT system development expense have impacted the fiscal year.

Registrar report

Registrar training sessions scheduled for August 5th and 12th at 2PM, with separate sessions planned for different categories including adults, disabled, Tier 1 and Tier 2 youth, and girls, with high school registration to be handled separately.

AHAI Registrar proposed a housekeeping change to AHAI rules to update game count requirements, increasing youth and girls players from 10 to 12 games while keeping high school players at 5 games, and matching the USAH rules.

- board approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Growth and retention: AHAI Committee Monthly Update

Committee members participated in the AHAI Committee Training on August 5, 2026. During the meeting, we discussed the Committee's direction for the first year and the importance of getting information that can be used to create long term growth rather than focusing only on individual events.

The Committee's work will focus on four areas: Attracting new players, retaining current players, supporting clubs, using registration and retention data to make better decisions

We have identified 41 youth hockey organizations that we will be contacting directly as part of a statewide project to gather information that we can use to develop a meaningful growth plan. Each committee member will each be assigned 4 or 5 clubs that they will work with to get information about

- What they are currently doing to attract and retain players
- Whether they operate feeder or introductory programs
- What has been successful
- What has not worked
- Barriers affecting growth and retention
- Resources or assistance AHAI could provide

Ultimately, the information we get from the club interviews will be used to develop an "AHAI Growth Toolkit."

Try Hockey for Free – October 3, 2026-There are about 650 kids signed up at the 25 rinks as of 9/1. We are almost done distributing marketing materials (yard signs and posters) to the rinks to help them in their effort to get "new" families to sign up. Next steps will be to secure volunteers for every location and to organize and distribute giveaways and event materials to each location.

We are asking the Board to sign up to volunteer at one of the Try Hockey for Free sites on October 3.

Next Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

OLD BUSINESS: AHAI COMMITTEE MONTHLY UPDATE

IT Project:

August marked an important transition for the AHAI digital platform as users began actively using the new systems.

With the Board Portal and Registrar Portal now in production, much of the month's work focused on refining functionality based on real-world use, preparing Member Organization leadership to use the new tools, and addressing data

and workflow issues as the 2026–27 season got underway

Committee reports:

R&E:

Summary of cases and determinations:
-Issued a 30 day suspension to Coach/ ongoing
-Two pending matters to begin investigating2

- Tampering/Recruiting Case

-Safesport referred a case back to us regarding a coach being arrested for under age drinking

High School Committee

Found out that the United Center cannot host State Championships

Finalizing State Playoff dates and locations should be set soon.

All State Game Scheduled for February 1st at West Meadows

Talked about the USA hockey denial of the 2 ref 1 linesman decision. $ man will now be used for Varsity

Goalie pool update: As of 8/24 only 1 team needs a goalie, and it looks like we'll be able to find one.

Tier 3

Meeting is being scheduled for late September. NWHL tiering round gets started in early October. I was able to meet with both NWHL and NS league leadership.

Leadership from NWHL and NS did meet to discuss the future of both leagues. Discussion was based around the direction of each league and specifically how 14u NS teams could be integrated into NWHL this year, due to lack of teams at 14u level in NS. We also discussed the theory and set up of both leagues, looking for common ground to work together in the future.

Continue to meet with NWHL and NS to lay ground work for future of both leagues

Meet with CSDHL to discuss Blue division and future of lower level teams and how it works with NWHL

Continue to work with Tier 2 committee and CSDHL on the player movement rule

Continue to have open and regular communication with Tier 2 committee.

Tier II

Held first Presidents meeting at Darien (Tier II, Tier III and Girls invited). See attached meeting minutes from the meeting. We prepared and circulated a club presidents contact list.

Committee projects: Organization recertification, processing inbound waivers, requests for import rule exceptions, supporting the Registrar if/as unique roster requests are made which impact Tier II, and preparing for October Tier II Presidents meeting.

Presidents Meeting – August 10, 2026

Club/League Attendees: (Bulldogs HC, St. Jude, Franklin Park, Wilmette, Niles, Sabres, Glenview Stars, DuPage Blackbears, Huskies, Renegades, CSDHL, Ice Dogs, Blues, Express.

AHAI Attendees: John Dunne, Melissa Surrette, Keri Zschach, Bob Veller and Catie Locallo

Explained AHAI's growth initiative, outreach to clubs, and Try Hockey for Free on 10/3/26).

Congrats to All National Eligible Girls Teams & Upcoming Tryouts

Reminded clubs about the process. 2 hearing dates held so far; another on 8/11/26; expect at least one more to be scheduled. So far, less applications than in prior years.

Inbound Waivers for Out-of-State Players (Tier II, Tier II Girls and Tier III)

a. USA Hockey Rule Change (January 2026)
b. An Interstate Transfer Waiver is an approval which allows a player who resides in one
   state/Affiliate to play in another state/Affiliate for a specific club.
c. *Process for Tier II and Tier III Youth Players*: Non-Illinois resident parents/players will need to follow their Home Affiliates process for consideration and action on an Interstate Transfer Waiver. If/when the Home Affiliate approves/signs the wavier, the parent/player should provide the approved waiver document to the designee (hockey director, registrar, etc.) at the Illinois club where the player is trying out. The club designee must then email the approved waiver document to .

Provided summary and reminded clubs to check registrations and inform families impacted by this rule of need for waiver. If no waiver, player will be redlined on roster until there is a waiver. Any club can email or call me and I will let them know if we have an approved waiver for an impacted player registered for tryouts.

Reintroducing Rule 22.1.13 PARENTS/SPECTATORS

- A game will be stopped by on-ice officials when the parents/spectators displaying inappropriate or disruptive behavior interfere with other parents/spectators or the game. The on-ice officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing parents/spectators from the parents'/spectators' viewing and game area.
- Once removed, play will resume. Lost time will not be replaced. Violators will incur a minimum mandatory 5-game suspension from that team's games and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body.

State Tournament Format

Discussed pilot options at the end of the document.
Additional option proposed: Double elimination for Nationals-Eligible Teams (winner side and loser side) and then a 3-game series for the championship.

Next meeting

Monday August 3, 6:30PM
Motion to adjourn was made at 8:00PM and approved