

The Natick Comets Hockey Club

Board of Directors

Chase Arena

September 16, 2024

7:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: John Smutko, Michael Byrum, Mike Balcom, Kristian Efstathiou, Andrea Mitchell, Meg Whalen, Jeff Schneller, Sean Stevens, Lauren Thomson, Anthony Fireman, Aaron Souza, Glenn Soucy

Non-Board Member: Jessica Morency

I. Call to Order

Mr. Balcom called the meeting to order just after 7pm

II. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Mr. Smutko made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Byrum. Mr. Schneller asked for typographical errors to be corrected but vote could continue. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Update

Mr. Mangan stated that the financial condition of the Club remained solid. Solid State Skills invoices came in so expenses are a bit higher but it was planned for.

IV. New Board Member

Mr. Balcom introduced Jessica Morency, a mite parent who is interested in the Team Manager/Parent Coordinator role. Mr Balcom made a motion for Jessica Morency to be placed on the board in that role. Ms. Whalen seconded the motion. There was some discussion about events, fundraising, and parent coordinator to work together. All groups agreed. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Photography Proposals

Ms. Efstathiou provided information about various proposals she has received for player/team pictures. The board weighed the pros/cons of the various proposals. A

request was made to have pictures done before the holidays so they could be used as gifts for families. Mr. Byrum raised an issue about trying to schedule photos in November that may disrupt the schedule a bit and asked that whoever we work with sticks to our schedule. Ms. Efstathiou was going to review the schedule with the vendors and report back via email for a vote. It was agreed that the vote to accept a proposal would be done over email in the coming week.

VI. Moving to USA Hockey Age Group Names

Mr. Schneller made a motion to change the youth hockey names to be in-line with USA Hockey age group names. There was some discussion about confusion with the VHL league divisions. Motion was amended to use both names for a period of time and then phase out the old name. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Avario Scheduling Software

Mr. Byrum provided an overview of scheduling software that will help ease the burden on the scheduler and future schedulers. He received a proposal from Avario for use of the software for this season for \$1500 and following seasons for \$2250. The company can also do all the scheduling for the Comets if desired for \$4250. Mr. Byrum made a motion to purchase the software for the 2024-25 season at a cost of \$1500. Mr. Mangan reminded the board that this is an unplanned expense against the finances but felt it is worth the investment to test the software. Mr. Mangan did a rough calculation that the cost of the software is about \$5 per player for next season and this could be accounted for in a tuition increase for the 2025-26 if desired. Mr. Schneller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Outstanding Goalie Issues

Mr. Schneller provided an update of the current goalie situation. Mr. Smutko provided information on how he is calling backups and the chaos it entails. A discussion was had on how we can get more goalies and provide additional goalie training during practice. Solid State can provide goalie coaches for \$40 a practice. Discussion found that it may be a waste of money if no goalies show up to that practice. Goalie Committee led by

Mr. Smutko would evaluate how to increase training. Mr. Fireman asked about sending an email out to the Comets community explaining the situation and asking for goalie.. Board agreed and Mr. Fireman will distribute a draft to the board before sending the email.

IX. Practice and Game Attendance

Mr. Schneller raised an issue about lack of attendance of players at practices and games at particular age levels. Board discussed briefly but no immediate actions. Board agreed it is something to keep an eye on and to make a plan to be communicated before next season's tryouts.

X. General Updates

Mr. Schneller provided a quick update on the following:

A. VHL

Goalie rostering and schedule issues were discussed.

B. Crossbar

Crossbar and VHL relationship not on good terms. Setting up a discussion with the various associations in the VHL may be worthwhile just to open lines of communication between programs. No immediate action to take.

C. Skills

Solid State started with LTP. First day looked to go well via LiveBarn. Second day looked to be a bit messier but still early. Discussion around offering a Learn to Skate program of 20-30 minutes in addition to the Learn to Play. No immediate action needed - watch LTP over this first session.

Solid State started U14/U18 skills. Attendance was better with U14. Focused on edge work and kids don't like that. Again still too early to tell.

XI. Town Hall Follow-up

Mr. Fireman provided an update of the town-hall meeting that was held. He said that the notes were sent out to the board. The highlights were transparency, growing the girls program, using a suggestion box at the rink for families to provide feedback.

Board agreed to read through the detailed notes to determine what actions need to be taken. Mr. Fireman stated the next town hall meeting will be October 15th.

XII. Facebook Gear Swap

Mr. Fireman asked about a facebook gear swap page. Mr. Schneller said it could be possible but would need to look into it.

XIII. Update Website

Mr. Souza asked about updating the website in particular including all the past board meeting minutes on the site for reference. Mr. Schneller agreed to get them on the site.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Byrym made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm. Ms. Thomson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

.

Next Meeting: October 21, 2024