Natick Comets Board Meeting – July 20, 2026

In attendance: Drew Ballow, Russ Webber, Andrea Smith, Elitza Miterva, Aaron Souza, Sean Verner, Bob Michaud, Keith Dukat, Teddy Efstathiou, Andrew Reid, Alicia Deig, Scott Kleekamp, Scott Lauer, Kristian Efstathiou (virtually)

Not present: Bean Clark, Lauren Thomson

Approval of June 15, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes: the minutes from the June 15, 2026 board meeting were approved.

Equipment Manager Nomination: a motion was made to nominate Keith Dukat as the equipment manager, which was approved. Russ will assist Keith in transitioning, determining equipment needs, and keeping record of equipment being distributed/returned.

Audit Update: Andrea presented on the status of the ongoing audits. Fines associated with the 2023-24 audit are close to $9000. Once final number is known, the CPA will submit a letter requesting waiver. The 2024-25 audit has been completed on time. There will be more scrutiny on the budget/financial reporting for the 2025-26 budget, with accounts to be reconciled every month. A motion was made to hire a bookkeeper (external to the org) to assist – the bookkeeper was referred by the CPA, who trusts her work. The motion was approved.

Natick HS Golf Tournament: a motion was made to sponsor a hole at the Natick HS Golf Tournament. The sponsorship cost is $250. A motion was made and approved approving this outlay.

Fundraising/Events Update: Kate presented on fundraising efforts and upcoming events. Fundraising outreach is progressing and $6400 has been raised thus far. There was some discussion of additional revenue sources, including looking into sponsorships from local businesses (some other towns do this) as well as hosting a tournament. Natick Days is coming up on Sept. 19 – Board members and other volunteers will be needed. Kristian will be posting a signup on Google Drive. There is a need for tents/tarps in case of rain. Per Teddy, all garbage/unwanted equipment can be left for trash pickup.

Budget: Scott K. gave a budget update. Negotiations between Comets and FMC are ongoing, but FMC is not being as understanding about reduced ice needs. FMC wants Comets to buy more undesirable ice time – if not, rates may be more exorbitant. Bottom line: the budget may still break even, but the worst case would be a $20,000 deficit. If there is a deficit scenario, the only potential place to cut back would be the Babson ice. The budget also assumes an IRS fine, which may or may not be waived. One cost saving area is forfeits, which incur league fines. There was discussion about outreach to coaches and team managers regarding raising awareness on this and incentivizing teams to play all their games. A motion was made to allot $1000 to the equipment manager and $1000 to LTP/Meteors program , which passed.

Junior Redhawk Clinics: Scott K. noted that the Jr. Redhawk clinics run by the HS players are scheduled for late August but numbers are extremely low. There is a need for promotion and outreach to the Redhawk players. Kate has contact info for captain families and will follow up.

Goalie Shortage: goalie shortage will be a problem. At the squirt level, there is 1 FT goalie for 3 teams. This could result in forfeitures. There was discussion about incentives (gift cards) for goalies and coaches to strategizes about goalie development/contingency planning.

LTP/Meteors: the Board voted to approve Lauren's LTP/Meteors program.

Bylaw Update: Elitza provided a bylaw review update. A proposal will be distributed to reduce the board size to 5-7 voting members. All others would be non-voting operational members. Expected that this proposal can be voted on at the August meetings, but the current Board structure would be left in place until annual meeting, which would be in January.

Coaching: Teddy confirmed that coaches meetings have been scheduled for 8/7 and 8/14. Alicia will be following up with coaches on back end registrations (USA Hockey, Safe Sport, CORI).

Girls Development Program: Sean provided an update on the girls program. He is still getting a sense for the numbers but is hoping to set up some scrimmages with neighboring towns. Scott K. noted that the girls program could present opportunities for non town players to have some involvement.

Alternates: a motion was made to revise the handbook to allow the VP of player development (Aaron) to assign alternates. This will give Aaron more flexibility over rosters, especially as some teams have low numbers to start. The alternate rate would 60% of regular tuition. Any alternates would be evaluated to ensure appropriate placement. The motion was approved.

Withdrawal Request: Alicia notified the Board that a refund request had been submitted on behalf of a 10U player. The Board voted to approve the request.

Late Placements: Aaron raised the issue of players who were unable to tryout due to conflict/injury. A motion was made to allow the VP of player development (Aaron) to evaluate and place players who did not attend tryouts in advance of the season beginning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14pm.