

The Natick Comets Hockey Club

Board of Directors

Chase Arena

October 21, 2024

7:00 pm

Attendees: Jeff Schneller, Mike Balcom, Anthony Fireman, Sean Stevens, Jeff Aronis, Andrea Smith, Mike Byrum, Joe Marashio, Kristin Efstathiou, Alicia Dieg, Dave Mangan, Jessica Morency, Aaron Souza, Chris Boyer

MEETING MINUTES

I. **Call to Order**

Mr. Balcom called the meeting to order just after 7:00 pm.

II. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the September Board Meeting were approved.

III. **Financial Update**

Dave Mangan stated that the financial condition of the Club remains solid and consistent. There are no red flags at this point in time in the season.

IV. **Town Hall Summary/Output**

Mr. Fireman provided a report from the recent Town Hall. Mr. Fireman reported that key themes expressed were: transparency, decisions around refunds, the viability of the girls program and the importance of team managers. According to Mr. Fireman, the largest concern is with a perceived lack of transparency from the Comets Club. There was another Town Hall scheduled for later in October.

V. **Refund Policy for Departing Players**

Mr. Souza led a discussion regarding the Comets' Refund Policy. Recently, the Comets have had a number of players withdraw from the program seeking refunds. There was a robust discussion about the status of the current refund policy and how it should be applied. There was consensus that the current policy contains discretion and the Board felt that was appropriate to retain the discretion. Notwithstanding, it was further agreed that the Board or a subset of the Board should review the policy and determine whether to recommend changes to the Board.

Andrea Smith is going to review the Refund Policy and we will run an assessment of retention of players.

VI. Polar Plunge Update

Ms. Efstathiou provided an update on the Polar Plunge. Currently it is scheduled for November 30, 2024 at 10:00 am at Memorial Beach. Mr. Mangan has procured a lifeguard for the event. Mr. Mangan has also procured sponsors for the event. The committee is working on garnering the appropriate waivers for use by participants and procuring insurance. The intention is to make this a community event with volunteers from around town including high school players. The current plan is to have a \$25.00 registration fee, with the goal that individuals raise \$100 and teams pledge \$250. The Board approved \$600 to cover costs of the event, with the hope that the donations would cover the costs.

VII. Practice Schedule

Mr. Byrum provided a general update on the status of scheduling related events:

- That State Tournament Play in Games are ongoing and games for Comets' teams are expected in mid-November. Two Squirt and Pee wee teams have opted not to participate.
- Attendance at skills for the younger players has been excellent throughout the fall at approximately 75%. There was very positive feedback about the programs run by Coach Infanger and Coach Ihloff. There is general satisfaction with the program Solid State is running. There was some discussion of modifying or eliminating skills for the older players because of attendance.
- Ween Ice: Comets had open ice for Halloween but there currently no one interested in using it.
- Stick & Puck: Stick & Puck is going well as players come early and participation is good. The Board discussed opening it up to Learn to Play participants and advertising it to coaches to further bolster participation.
- Mr. Byrum is continuing to work with new scheduling software on a trial basis.

VIII. Coach Survey

Ms. Morency discussed the Coaches Survey she conducted. She received 9 responses. The Board agreed it would take time to gain traction. The results of the survey led to a discussion about the importance of team parents and the challenges faced by coaches picking tournaments.

IX. Jackets

Upon Mr. Aronis's motion, the Board approved \$1,500 to purchase coaches jackets for first year coaches. First year coaches qualify for the jackets after they complete the appropriate certification.

X. Girls Program

Mr. Marashio initiated a discussion regarding the state of the girls program. There was a consensus that the Comets need to address ways to increase and retain girls in the program as numbers are decreasing. The Board did not come to any definitive conclusions but did acknowledge that this was a topic that needed to be revisited.

XI. Try Hockey for Free

Mr. Schneller informed the Board that the next "Try Hockey for Free" program was going to take place on November 2nd. Mr. Schneller was going to ask High School players to participate as volunteers. The Board approved to provide \$50 off to any participant in the "Try Hockey for Free" program who then signs up for Learn to Play. The Board also approved \$100.00 in expenses for the Try Hockey for Free program.

XII. Next Meeting: November 18, 2024

XIII. Adjournment

Tate is a proud lifelong Natick Comet. He started with the Comets at age 5 and has been with them ever since. Tate has also been a member of the Natick Varsity team for four years and is a captain his senior year. Tate would like to thank all his coaches including Mark Reynolds, Tuna and Jack McCarthy for teaching him the game and instilling in him a passion for it. Tate loves playing for Natick and with his teammates, many of whom are also lifelong friends.

In addition to hockey, Tate is a member of the Varsity golf and lacrosse teams. One of Tate's other great joys is hanging out in Tara's office at school with his friends, many of whom are on the hockey team. Tate is looking forward to college next year. Finally, he would like to thank his family for their support, especially his younger brother Dom who keeps it fun.

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