

The Natick Comets Hockey Club

Board of Directors

Chase Arena
7:00 pm

August, 25, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

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Attendees: Mike Balcom, Anthony Fireman, Dave Mangan, Ron Chin, Mike Byrum, Jeff Schneller, Andrea Smith, Teddy Efstathiou, Alicia Deig, Bob Klane, Smutko, Lauren Thomson, Meg Whalen, Amanda Potter, Bob Michaud, Chris Boyer, Andrew Ballow; Aaron Souza; Andrew Reid (by phone)

I. **Call to Order**

II. The Minutes of the June 2025 Meeting were approved. There was no meeting in July.

III. **Financial Update**

Mr. Mangan provided an update on the financial status of the Club. Mr. Mangan walked through a slide deck indicating prepared with Ms. Deig showing that because of decreased enrollment over the past couple of years, annualized revenue is down approximately \$72,000. With regard to enrollment, Mite level is remaining stagnant and the girls program is down. Mr. Mangan emphasized that the reduced enrollment and concomitant reduction in revenue is not a dire emergency presently but it is something the Board will have to pay attention to and respond to if the trend continues. The primary driver is players leaving after the Mite level. Attached are the slides that were discussed.

IV. **House League/LTP Update**

Mr. Chin gave an update on the Learn to Play program and House League options. The Learn to Play program will remain the same and there will be two House Leagues: one for younger players; the second for older. Mr. Chin is proposing that the Saturday sessions will consist of 4 teams with standings, status and operate with the structure of a league with playoffs. Trades will be permitted to even out the teams. The "season" will run for 8 weeks from October 4 to Thanksgiving. The younger players, aged 9-11 will be the first hour and

older players - second year peewees and bantams will be the second hour. The 16 week House League will begin after Thanksgiving. Pricing is to be determined.

V. Goalie Advisory Team Update

Mr. Smutko provided an update on the work of the Goalie Advisory Committee. Mr. Smutko reiterated that the Club does not have sufficient goalies and it is necessary to share goalies with the club programs. Particularly, the Comets have a lack of goalies at the 12U level. This is probably in other towns as kids are not choosing to play goalie. The Board discussed a variety of strategies offered by USA Hockey including the use of the “quick change” pads at 8U and splitting periods at 10U. There was consensus that we need to rotate 3-4 players as goalie at the 10U level, and supply sufficient quality gear. The Board also considered a number of tuition breaks for goalies. For 10U - 3 and 10U - 4 teams, the Board approved that if a player played at least 6 games in goalie he/she could pay 75% tuition and if a player plays goalie in at least 10 games he/she will pay 50% tuition. The tuition reduction was approved in the form of a credit. Mr. Smutko also discussed in-house goalie clinics and the availability of Stop-It clinics, which begin on September 2nd. Finally there was a suggestion of holding a goalie information night engaging the high school goalies to act as mentors for young goalies and a goalie parent discussion group.

VI. Skills Advisory Team Update

There was a discussion that the High School teams would begin their skills sessions, operated by Coach Infanger and Coach Ilhoff in mid-September. The skills programs would run for seven weeks and be open to Mite age through 12U.

VII. Girls Program Update

Mr. Ballow provided an update regarding the Girls Program. Mr. Ballow reported good coordination with the town and indicated that the dryland training was on schedule. Mr. Ballow also identified a number of opportunities with Hockey Think Tank, local Division III coaches and the 17-19 year old International Women’s team as all efforts to boost participation. Good

VIII. Coaching Clinic

Mr. Balcom and Mr. Efstathiou discussed an upcoming coaches clinic and the Board approved \$500 for pizza for the participants.

IX. Team / Individual Photos

Ms. Whalen updated the Board regarding her investigation of new photographers for team and individual photos. The intention is to go with a new photographer.

X. Town Select League

Mr. Balcom updated the Board on the Midget Town League. This program has evolved and been very successful. The coaches for this year will be Kurt Borgman and Pat Pendergrast.

XI. Board Debrief on Recent Past Actions

Mr. Michaud raised the issue that the Board should do a debrief on recent actions that have caused confusion and dissension among the members and the Board. Particularly, the debrief should focus on team placements and communication. There was a consensus among that Board that this should take place.

XII. 12U Refund Policy / Tournament Subsidy

Mr. Balcom led a discussion regarding the attrition at the 12U level and whether the Board should alter its refund policy to enable families to make decisions based on the teams. There was also discussion of subsidizing a second tournament as an enticement to families to stay with the Comets. The Board did not make a decision on these ideas.

XIII. Next Meeting: September 15, 2025

XIV. Adjournment