

Hartwell Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Monday, February 13, 2012, 7:00 PM
Location – GHS Room B104**

Attendees: Mary Kay Brophy, Matt Tierinni, Joan Norman, Sandy Gardner, Jim Wadleigh, Dave Baker, Erik Barbieri, Betty Davis, Andy Pinkowski, Mike Newhouse

Not Attending : N/A

Guests: N/A

Meeting was initiated at 7:00 PM.

Administration

January meeting minutes were approved with a minor change by Mary Kay Brophy regarding the Magnet School Scoreboard.

Magnet School Field/Lights

Hartwell is on the docket for the next Town Council meeting which is scheduled for February 29th. At that time we will present the proposal and be available for a Q&A session. There may be some additional complexity associated to the fact that the school will support multiple towns but Mary Kay indicated that Richard Johnson didn't think it would be a big issue. The plan is to use sod rather than seeding so that the field is playable in fall 2012. Mary Kay would like as many board members as possible attend the Town Council meeting.

President's Report

There was good turnout at the Welles Village recruitment night. John Briody was there with the locker room items along with Sandy Gardner from the Board. Mary Kay felt that the ABC house would do a large group registration as well.

UConn Men's soccer Clinic & Scrimmage is scheduled for April 21st at Addison Park. The plan is to do a boys clinic (for 11v11 players) and potentially include something for the coaches. Like last year there would be an opportunity for ball signing and chit chat with players after the clinic. This is a good opportunity for Hartwell to get some balls signed for future promotions as well. Mary Kay will reach out to Ray Purtell to make sure the fields look good by then although they should be fine since it's actually later than we did it last year. Steve Petrov has offered to orchestrate Hartwell's effort to sell logo wear/snacks as well as collect donations for the locker room.

Mary Kay has also reached out to the UConn Women's coach (Len Tsantiris) to try to do something similar for the girls. The coach indicated there was a scrimmage at OSP set up and that we could potentially leverage that event. Mary Kay needs to work with Rick/Dave to nail down details.

Hartwell Day at Dick's Sporting Goods at Buckland Hills Mall will be March 25th. **Any** purchase will be 15% off with the promotion and if you visit the Hartwell Table you can get coupons for an additional 10% off soccer stuff. Last time the table was manned by some Hartwell Board members (Sandy, Mary Kay) and they felt it was a great day. People had questions that they answered (e.g. ball size, etc.) and Mary Kay would like to have the same presence this time and asked the Board Members to consider attending. Dick's will be getting the Hartwell flyer to GHSC soon and Betty Davis will post it on the website and provide a communication so that people can use this to stock up on spring needs.

Mary Kay provided an update on the CJSA weekend. She did not attend all the events but did provide the update that Dave, from Avon, did not get elected as Vice President. The incumbent, Mark Glass, was re-elected again by a large margin (~3K to 1K). GHSC voted for Dave as did some of the other larger clubs. Mary Kay said that many of the clubs such as Farmington were disappointed that CJSA is not making a change. On a positive note Mary Kay felt that the election process was better run this year than in the past and thinks that Dave (from Avon) would potentially try again for a CJSA board position in the future. Matt Tierinni suggested Hartwell begin working with other clubs to initiate change well in advance of the next election.

Mike Newhouse expressed concern about the CT Cup and the fact that Glastonbury teams were playing each other in round 1. Jim Wadleigh stated that this did occur in 2010 and GHSC voiced concern to CJSA and it has not happened since. Although with such a large club – it's possible it could happen in the future.

Travel Report

Mike Newhouse provided an update on Travel. There is no official transition plan but he and Jim Wadleigh are working closely on issues. Jim is handling much of the administrative stuff and Mike is spending a lot of time with Erik working on spring and fall plans.

Mike has a rough draft of the spring travel practice schedule. In the schedule coaches don't select their practice time – they have been slotted into day/times already. There are some open slots so if a coach needs to switch there is room, but this should be the exception and they will need a decent reason. The schedule was created in a manner that supports the training schedule developed by Erik and Mike. There are 3 coaches that coach multiple teams so their needs will be taken into consideration to avoid conflicts. The next step, as suggested by Jim, was to have Doug Werner review the schedule and then have him send it out to coaches. The goal is to do the schedule early and then communicate it so that LAX coaches can work around it. Last year we were slower to release the schedule and had to work around LAX in some instances.

The board discussed adding tournament registration fees into the travel registration fees. Based on prior analysis, the registration fee would need to be increased about \$25-\$30 per player to properly cover the tournament registration fees. The benefit is that we can pre-register the Hartwell teams early and open the tournament up to outside teams earlier (we charge less for Hartwell teams). It's also less work for the managers/coaches who sometimes have to front the money in the winter until spring dues are collected. It also makes it mandatory for Hartwell teams to register. The downside is explaining the perceived higher costs. The board voted and approved the motion to add tournament fees into the registration costs next season (all in favor except Matt who opposed). The increase amount will be determined at a later date.

We need an overall effort to look at Travel Costs to make sure that travel costs are being recovered appropriately (or if they are not – that we are covering them in other ways we are comfortable with).

Communications Update

Betty provided an update on the H.S. Girls Soccer Championship Gift. GHSC is buying a dry-fit long sleeve shirt for the team. It will be Royal Blue with Gray. Coach Joe F. is gathering sizing info and the logo has been designed and they will be ordered in the next 2 weeks. The plan is to have Hartwell girls present each player with a shirt. Erik suggested we purchase something for the H.S. girls to give back to the Hartwell girls (e.g. small soccer ball). We need to determine which Hartwell girls will be given the opportunity to participate and will look to coaches for selection of candidates. This event will be publicized in the **Citizen** and in the **Sports Desk** (new town sports paper). Mike Newhouse said that he would like to get some of the players, such as Liza Otto, to come to one of his practices in the future. He thinks it would be a good connect for some of the younger players.

Betty is working on putting together a communication plan around the tournament, registration and other events. She wants to track **all** communications so that we can reuse the information in future years. Betty would like to see Hartwell push more stories and clips to the website and get more traffic to the website. An example of this is the clip (*Make THE Difference*) that Erik just put out there. Betty indicated that she thinks the site needs more “stickiness” and she needs content from Board Members for this to happen. Erik indicated he had a lot of ideas for content and will be providing content.

Betty also said she would be adding pictures to the website and would like to do pictures of some of the teams utilizing indoor gym space and coaches attending clinics. Someone suggested we have pictures of the progression of the Magnet School fields as it is being developed. Betty will handle the photography of these things and post them to the website. Erik would like to make sure we do a lot of PR when the magnet school field opens and we have a ribbon cutting with a large check presented by Hartwell.

Mike Newhouse would like to know if we are considering social media for Hartwell (e.g. Facebook). We would need to make sure that (1) we controlled content (2) we had someone responsible for doing this. We could create a page that people could “like” or be a fan of but not post info. It is something we can consider when we have the resources to manage it.

Betty Davis has a great team website on the Hartwell League Athletics system. She has pictures and articles. Many of the managers don't take advantage of the website in this way. It was suggested that we have a “Managers” meeting (separate from Coach meeting) in the late summer to show managers how to take advantage of the website to manage the team. This could include teaching them how to add the practices, etc. and also give them info that is currently provided at the Coach meeting. The coach meeting could then focus on coach info exclusively. Currently the info is geared toward coaches and managers.

DOC Update

Erik has gone to most of the coach clinics and thinks the content has been good. The attendance has been hit or miss but they have had up to 21 participants. He said that the games are getting really good and he thinks this is attracting more coaches to the clinics. Erik has also attended many meetings with Mary Kay for rec and travel. He attended the Coach Forum at Hannafin's (Jan 24th) which went OK. There weren't many new faces. He has received a lot of feedback “on the street” from people everywhere he goes and is getting his hands around Hartwell's needs.

Erik believes we need to focus on player development as a priority and training is the key. The Travel training model he likes is the one that Avon uses. In this model the trainer comes 1x week and comes to 1-2 games over the course of the season. The trainer builds a relationship with the coach and players over time. The trainer is not a “soccer god” but rather a 2nd set of eyes for the age group and coach. Their job is to help the coach and players – not just evaluate them. In order to do this they need to be together a lot and build a relationship. In this model the trainer would provide info prior to training, attend training, attend games, and discuss the results – was it successful, what worked, etc. They could also be part of the player evaluation process across a single age group.

Erik feels that travel needs the most work right now. The training he is proposing will cost more than what we have provided in past. Erik would like to discuss this training model at a travel coach forum. Andy feels that there could be a wide range of reaction to this proposal. Some coaches would welcome it and some would prefer to live on an island. It was pointed out that last fall we laid the ground work for this model but the training didn’t work out the way we wanted so it won’t be completely new to most coaches. Erik felt that bringing someone from Oakwood to discuss this model would potentially bring credibility to this when it is presented to the coaches. Erik wanted to point out that in this model the trainer would **not** be running the practice.

Sandy had some concern that we actually receive feedback from the trainers. In the past we have tried this model but were unsuccessful in actually getting our hands on decent feedback. Erik indicated it would be required from any trainer. Also it was brought up that we need to be cognizant of some perceptions that people have of some of the Oakwood trainers so we need to make sure the age groups are matched up appropriately.

Erik noted that we need additional funds to roll out this training model successfully and would like to propose we find a way to potentially fundraise directly into a “training fund”. Mary expressed a need to keep travel program costs relatively constant from year to year and didn’t want the costs to vary based on how successfully we fundraised for training.

Erik’s proposal is in line with our need to have more bodies over less time – compared to how we have done things in the past. The board agreed that we would like to move forward with looking at the feasibility of providing this level of training for Travel.

Mary Kay indicated that Erik needs to provide financials around short term needs for spring 2012, and long term needs for next season. We need to look at travel costs for next season that take into consideration training levels, tournament fees, and any existing issues recovering costs to come up with a registration fee for next year. Erik will work on providing additional information for the next board meeting.

Andy would like to know how this approach will position us compared to other quality travel clubs and other premier clubs (lower level – not an Oakwood). Mary Kay has cost information from other clubs that she can provide.

Mike Newhouse added that he would like to see more of our “A” teams play at the premier league level (like Sal Calafiore’s team currently is). Mike’s goal is to improve the quality of the travel teams to see this happen.

Betty Davis would like us to do some baselines on expectations of the parents and coaches if we are going to roll out major changes.

Mike Newhouse would like to appoint a Travel Committee and was looking for input from board on good candidates. Sandy Gardner would like to see all coaches included somehow. We need to find a way to hear everyone's voice – but also have a workable group to make decisions. Mary Kay pointed out that a smaller group would help us with succession planning as we would have some people very involved. It could be a way to reward certain coaches for their participation. The goal would be to have issues raised and discussed at the Travel Committee meeting and then recommendations brought to the board to be voted on. Erik would like to have this type of meeting shortly to discuss: double rostering, balanced teams and to come up with an overall travel policy.

Double rostering is a hot topic. We need to decide if double rostering is an issue – or attendance is an issue. Do we handle soccer double rostering differently than we would handle someone doing travel and LAX or baseball/softball? Do we set an attendance policy or a double rostering policy? Do we have liability if we enforce playtime based on practice attendance? We need to look at impact of any policy changes on losing players and coaches. Basically before we make any major policy changes they need to be vetted with coaches, parents and board to assess the impact. Changes made last season regarding U9 were not vetted properly and many players chose a program other than Hartwell. We don't want to repeat this mistake. We need to make sure that our Travel Policy is packaged properly with the correct information prior to the registration so that parents can make the appropriate decision with all information provided up front. We need to make sure the information on the website is updated to reflect any changes. Right now we don't have a real travel policy – we have some Q&A's.

The next step is for Erik, Mike & Jim to begin doing some analysis on this with travel coaches and get back to board. Joan suggested using zoomerang surveys to gather some info from coaches ahead of time that could be discussed at the coach forum.

Treasurer Report

Matt reviewed the year-end numbers. We basically broke even. If you consider that the tournament profits are earmarked for capital investments then it appears that we actually lost money. However we prepaid some large expenses this year (e.g. patches) that could have been amortized over three years so we still basically broke even. Andy would like to know if the tournament is worth it from a financial perspective. Matt indicated that probably not. It was noted that there are other benefits for our club that are not financial such as club recognition. Matt indicated that he would like to revisit the budget again to really delve into the details of some of the expenses to make sure that they are being appropriated correctly across travel and rec. He also suggested that we pursue a Golf Fundraiser in the future for some easy money. Matt also presented next year's budget and reviewed the changes.

Recreation Update

No one is currently interested in this position. Basically the people who are coordinating now are too new to take on the full ownership. Mary Kay indicated that Lori Boyd could help out in the spring season. It was suggested that we repackage this role in a way that makes it more attractive to someone such as Jay Bentivegna. For instance we could have 3 directors:

- Academy Director (Pre K – 2nd grade)
- Rec Director (3rd – 8th)
- Travel Director (3rd – H.S.)

Mary Kay indicated that there have been 2 changes to the rec registration this season. One was that we are re-introducing the 3 year-old program. We were going to discontinue it but found a parent who would help run it.

The second change is that we are doing away with the academy & coed style of Kindergarten soccer. We will be have a girls division and boys division and each player will be assigned to a specific team and coach. Last season was chaotic and not well received.

Tournament Update

Andy provided an update. There are 140+ teams registered. Oakwood teams have not registered yet but some of the younger groups will. The next tournament meeting is Wednesday, February 15th. There is currently one key volunteer position that is open that he would like to fill soon and it is the site director manager (oversees all site directors). Bill Haddad was initially going to do this but has backed out. Jim Wadleigh did it last year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM. The Next Board meeting is Monday, March 5th.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Norman

Secretary