

WESTWOOD LITTLE LEAGUE BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 11th 2013

MINUTES

Attendees:

Rob Gotti • Peter Cahill • Mike d'Entremont • Kathleen Holland • Mark Jessup •
Mitch Katzman • Paul Longo • John Loughnane • Kevin McDonald • Jennifer Perkins •
Mark Pezzuto • Chris Pfaff • David Reilly

Agenda:

Opening Remarks – WBA President Robert Gotti welcomed the new board. He stressed the importance of setting a positive tone for the league and continuing to create culture of inclusion, collaboration, and transparency to enable healthy discussion to build upon the successes of this past year.

Secretary's Report – WLL Secretary Jennifer Perkins reported on the minutes from the last meeting which included:

1. An acceptance of the minutes of the October annual meeting,
2. An acceptance of the annual "State of the League" report from the President,
3. An acceptance of the determination of the board positions for the 2013-2014 year, and
4. An acceptance of the election results to fill the board positions.

Treasurer's Report – WLL Treasurer Mark Pezzuto reported that the work to transfer the financial information had begun and should be complete before the next board meeting. At that meeting, he will give the board a complete update.

Action Item – Mark Pezzuto to complete the necessary paperwork to gain access to financial information

Major Initiatives and Planning for the Year – Rob Gotti, in collaboration with Chris Pfaff and Mitch Katzman proposed priorities for the board in the coming year.

- Priority #1 – "Focus is on baseball" – specifically player and coaching development. The group stressed the importance of maintaining a focus on making the "product" better through pitching and catching instruction and winter clinics as well as through better alignment with the principles of the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) and support for the coaches with ideas and "practice plans" to keep the players (and parents) engaged.

The board actively discussed several ideas and suggestions including building in additional practice times/days for the younger grades or creating “rotating stations” allowing multiple teams to use the same field space in a more effective manner. Little League International (LLI) has coaching plans and videos that could be incorporated into WLL’s coaches training along with material from PCA. Members of the board suggested that we could supplement the LLI videos with some of our own and email them to the coaches as well as make them available on the website.

Action Item – Mitch Katzman to arrange for facility to hold winter clinics

Action Item – Mitch Katzman to arrange a meeting with WHS Varsity Coach to discuss player/coach development

Action Item – Rob Gotti to contact PCA regarding renewal and potential for a Board seminar

- Priority #2 – Finish the Morrison revitalization – specifically the snack shack, the scorer’s booth and the restrooms. During the 2012-2013 year, the fields and dugouts were completed as part of the overall plan. The board agreed that the feedback on the improvements had been overwhelmingly positive. The goal for the 2013-2014 year is to complete the revitalization. To do this, the board has engaged the Boston Architectural College (BAC) to assist with ideas and plans. This has been provided by students of the college at no cost to WLL. Conceptual plans were presented and feedback was provided to the students by the previous board. Final plans will be forthcoming. WLL is not bound to use the plans provided.

Action Item – Chris Pfaff to continue to examine carpentry options for scorer’s booth

Rob Gotti reminded the board that there is an offer from a local benefactor to match any Morrison gifts of \$10,000 (up to \$50,000) and asked the board to promote this opportunity in the hopes of raising an additional \$100,000 (\$50,000 in contributions and \$50,000 in match money). John Loughnane also indicated that the previous board had been in discussions with local developers to discuss additional donations. Those conversations are still ongoing.

One board member suggested that the WLL discuss their needs with other funding sources. The board also agreed to get more informed about the potential to change the existing rule of “no signage on Morrison”.

Action Item – David Reilly will explore additional capital funding sources.

The board was informed that one of the abutters to Morrison had filed a written complaint about the increase in the number of foul balls on his property. It is the

abutter belief that the increase is due to the reconstruction of the park and changes made to the backstop and netting. The board discussed what changes could be made and at what cost and whether these changes would, in fact, “fix” the problem. It was agreed that the board should approach the town to discuss the issue and determine next steps.

- Priority #3 – Continued Innovation – specifically adding new ideas, programs, activities to increase interest and enjoyment for the players and their families. Members of the board gave updates to several of the new innovations that were made this past year.
 - Fall Ball League – this past year, WLL offered a league for graduating 11 and 12 year olds utilizing the “Roche Bros” softball field and setting it up as a 50’ 70’ field. The goal of the league was to introduce new elements of the game (leading, stealing, balks) and acclimate the players to the “big” field. The hope is that this gradual introduction would increase participation in the Babe Ruth league by reducing the fear of the large field. This year the league had 5 teams (2 from Medfield, 2 from Dedham and 1 from Westwood) and played during the week. WLL purchased a portable mound to accommodate the field.

The league maintained an attitude of development, learning and fun rather than fierce competition. No standings or playoffs were included as part of league play. Board members that were involved recommended that we continue the league this coming year. Other options for 2014 Fall Ball include participation in the Sharon league which is played on the weekend (rather than during the week).

- Diamond League – this league is hosted by Norwood and is designed for 7th, 8th and 9th graders. Board members involved recommended that we continue to participate in this league in 2014.
 - Surveys – Board members agreed that surveys should be sent to families at the conclusion of spring and summer ball to continue to determine if these programs (new and existing) meet the needs of the players and their families. The board further agreed that additional questions from the PCA should be included in those surveys.
- Planning Calendar – Rob Gotti went through the monthly calendar to familiarize the new board with past planning timeframes and annual events.
 - Spring Registration deadline –President Gotti suggested and the board agreed to open registration on 11/25 and offer an “early bird” registration incentive. All players registered for spring ball prior to January 1, will be entered to win a \$250

gift certificate from a local sporting goods store (to be determined prior to the opening of registration). The board anticipates that fees will stay the same but will investigate the costs of Babe Ruth in relation to its revenue contribution to determine if the fees for Babe Ruth need to be reset.

Action Item – Mark Pezzuto to produce a report comparing Babe Ruth revenue to expenses to determine if the Babe Ruth fees need to be reset.

Action Item – John Loughnane to prepare the website for the opening of registration on 11/25

Action Item – Jen Perkins to publish the notice of registration in the local media

Action Item – Rob Gotti to arrange for “refreshed” registration signs

Board Action – The Board unanimously approved a motion to permit the President of WLL to expend up to \$500 to refresh the signage announcing registration

- Hot Stove Event – The date for the Hot Stove event has been set for 1/26.

Action Item - Kathleen Holland will pursue reserving the necessary space for the event.

Other Discussion

- Open board positions – the board acknowledged a few remaining open board positions. Board members agreed to try to recruit parent volunteers to fill the two or three positions that are open.
- Hosting a “B” Reilly tournament – the board discussed the possibility of hosting an additional Reilly tournament for the same town’s B teams. Further discussion at a future board meeting. Determination to be made by January board meeting.
Action Item – Add to Board Agenda for December meeting
- Drop bat restrictions – the board discussed the reasons for the “drop” restriction for WLL and the potential to change the rule.
Action Item – Rob Gotti will ask for LLI recommendation on drop restrictions. Add item to Board Agenda for December meeting.
- Team selection processes– the board discussed, at length, the Majors selection process – its challenges, its history, the reasoning for the existing rules, proposed changes. The board agreed that in an effort to create the widest possible pool of coaching talent, parents of current 10A summer ball players would be able to be “named coaches” for the Majors season. This is not a change to the policy but an affirmation of the existing

policy that 10A players are certain to make the Majors and therefore their parents should be eligible entrants into the coaching pool.

Action Item – Rob Gotti will draft additional language to include in the player selection process so it matches the coaching selection process policy.

Action Item – Add summer team selection process to the Agenda for the December meeting

Action Item – Add Williamsport team selection process to the Agenda for the December meeting

Next Steps Responsibility and Timing

This agenda item was not discussed separately but included as part of each item

Meeting Adjourned