

May 16, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes—Westport Baseball & Softball, Inc.

Present: Ray Abramson, Steve Axthelm, Beth Cody, Mike Lustbader, Carl McNair, Jeff Mitchell, Meghan Rice, Phil Ross, Bob Smoler, Keith Stein, Tom Whelan

Absent: Jeb Backus, Amy Bauer, John Dexheimer, Ted Freedman, Mark Giordano, Greg Hawes, Brian Kurtz, Dave Loffredo, Jack McFarland, Bill Meyer, Kerry Nowaskey, Paul Rossi, Courtney Wall, Jeff White, Courtney Wilson, Teresa Yokoi

- I. **Approval of Minutes:** March 7, 2011 minutes were approved.
- II. **Advanced Baseball Report:** Carl McNair asked Bob Smoler about the hefty amount of cash in the Babe Ruth account. Bob said that a \$275 deposit per player for all leagues was put in Babe Ruth account but has not been allocated to the other leagues like Koufax, Mantle and Jr. and Sr. Legion. This money will be reallocated. Bob gave Ray allocation for every expense but right now, all the money is in Babe Ruth. Bob will send all rosters to Jeff White; they need to be in by a certain date for insurance determination.
- III. **Chairman's Report:**
 - (a.) Capital and Operating Budget Status:
 - Padding, Scoreboards, Etc: Carl said that a new rigging system and new nets have been put in boys' batting cages. All signage is up at the Little League fields (Rogers, White, Kowalsky). There is a new scoreboard at Rogers. We need to pull down the girls' net in the winter. Sunscreens have been ordered for all fields. They ordered backstop paddings for all fields, for safety purposes. They'll be here any day. Ray said these expenses will show up in the May report. They've spray-painted, repaired rotten wood at Meyer. Ax asked to replace banister on staircase but was told just to take off pointy brackets. Tarantino will make a rectangle for softball.
 - Greens Farms Field Discussion: Ax discussed improvements for the girls' high school program. He and many others would like to renovate the Staples high school field and make that the home field instead of Greens Farms, where fans have to drive to and many don't come as they would if the game was at the high school. Right now, the Staples field is not good. A renovation would be very special for the girls in the long term. They're aiming for two years out. Men's teams play there so they'd ask them for money too. Carl asked Ax to keep us informed.
 - Baseball Clinics: Little League is doing 3rd grade and 50/70 clinics and plans on doing 4th grade clinics also. Softball has been doing pitching clinics for the little girls every week, conducted by Sarah Holland and two high school girls. 20-30 girls have been attending.
 - (b.) Sponsorship:

Courtney Wall has gotten 77 sponsors for LL baseball, LL softball and Babe Ruth. The total comes to \$34,750 and she's collected \$15,800 so far. Some money goes directly online into a merchant account and the rest come in checks and are deposited to the proper accounts. \$8,300 was just deposited.
 - (c.) Maintenance Work: Carl said the last issue in maintenance is a new scoreboard for Coley Fenced, aka Don Levy field. We have to present to

the Board of Ed and we are waiting on contractors. Keith told the softball folks to be careful putting the correct wattage bulbs in the Meyers scoreboard. It has to be 25 watts or it can blow out the circuit. They can order through the scoreboard company. At any rate, they should post a sign on the scoreboard saying “25 watts only”.

- (d.) Testimonials: We have agreed to do recognition testimonials for three of our long-standing board members/volunteers. This was unanimously approved. They would be given plaques plus we can do a virtual Wall of Fame on the website. This can be part of Jeff White’s history project. Speaking of history, Westport Little League started in 1951 so this year is our 60th anniversary. We agreed to make patches for the occasion and Carl will work on this with an art director. We can put these on the district and travel uniforms. A member asked if we can use the extra money saved from cutting three district teams to pay for matching batting bags for the kids. We can get sponsors to fund this. We should also consider charging the district kids some money.
- (e.) Non-Charter teams insurance: Smoler needs to give number of players and number of teams to Jeff White for all his teams because we have to buy extra insurance for them. Ax will sent Jeff an email about his softball teams too.

IV. Treasurer’s Report: Ray sent the April financials out and will have to do the correct allocation for the older boys, as stated earlier. \$75,000 was moved from the CD to Vanguard last year. He is taking \$25,000 out to subsidize the operating budget and capital expenditures. The concession money has not been deposited yet. We are good cashwise until late fall. Reconciling with the database is fine, much better than Paypal.

V. President’s Report:

(a.) Baseball:

~~ **Diamond Club**: We had a Youth Day event at one of the Staples home games and Carl threw out the first pitch. We gave away 100 free hot dogs, there was a raffle, the kids were on the field during intros. Very nice event.

~~**Season so Far**: The season is moving along despite weather issues. The umpire notification system is not perfect yet. There are over 100 umpires for 42 games a week so there are some kinks in the system. Kids are able to click “decline” when they get a notification but the messages are not getting to Rick in time so this needs to be worked on. The last CAP games are Sat., 6/18 as are the championship games for AA, AAA, Minors and Majors.

~~**50/70 Program**: Kevin Hlavac, the Staples Freshmen coach, and Mike Diaz are running clinics. 10-12 kids for a 1 ½ hour clinic. They are playing against towns like Fairfield and Monroe and the kids are enjoying it. The pitching is a little tricky because you can’t plan on pitching in advance until you see who pitched in the Saturday regular LL games. We are monitoring pitch counts by posting them for regular LL and 50/70.

~~**Enrollment**: Baseball has 944 playing across all leagues; last year was 945.

~~**Memorial Day:** We have to decide on a limit for number of vehicles for the parade because right now we have too many. All vehicle requests must be sent to Jeff White. It was agreed to keep it in single digits. Vehicles must be decorated to be part of the parade, not just in it because they're too lazy to walk. We should have two coordinators on Parade Day. Meghan Rice, Tom Whelan, Jeff Mitchell and Keith Stein volunteered. As for Memorial Day games, they were changed from 5:30pm to 11:30am, which was received well. Keith suggested hanging flag banners on the Town Farms fences for Memorial Day and tie it into the 60th anniversary. These should be hung for the championships of June 18th.

(b.) Softball:

~~**Enrollment:** Softball enjoyed a late surge of signups and wound up at 382 versus 378 from last year. Ax said that Meghan Rice is a fantastic Pied Piper for the league. Softball is losing more girls as they get older because there are so many things for girls to do in this town plus the quality of play is getting better so it's harder. It's not just social anymore. There are 14 teams of 2nd and 3rd graders and 10 teams of K and 1st so the younger group is thriving. Ax said they are holding their own against other towns in AAA. However, AA is problematic. The coaches are very competitive. Lustbader commented that girls lacrosse is very popular in Middle School and some girls from those grades have left softball for lacrosse. Meghan Rice mentioned the get-together they threw for 100 girls at Town Hall field. They had pizza, met their teammates, etc. Seven Majors girls are mentors. It was very successful.

~~**Committee Assessment:**

Softball has very effectively implemented different committees to oversee different functions. They have a Safety Committee (CPR, child protection); Equipment Committee, Field Facility Committee, Rules and Umpires Committee, Executive Committee, Player-Agents Committee, Website committee, Curriculum committee, Uniform committee, Bridge committee (legacy program; stores documents online). Keith wants to model what softball is doing.

~~**Staples Night:** On Senior Night for the Varsity senior girls, they will have LL Softball Night this Fri., 5/20.

(c.) Babe Ruth: Phil Ross reported that the 15U Babe Ruth teams are doing really well. The 13U Koufax team lost seven players to Conn. Blue Jays.

(d.) District and National Issues: Carl has a President's meeting Wednesday. A safety manual has been submitted by Keith to Williamsport. When approved, he will post on website. He will also post who's coaching in the post-season, etc.

(e.) Website: Keith said that the new website is good, we are still learning about it, and he will do a write-up on how he did everything. One good feature is online forms—for example, for 50/70, a player can go online and check off when available for which game, 1st choice, etc. and then this can be dumped on a spreadsheet. Clinics, teams, sizes of uniforms are all things that can be created in a form in two minutes. For Youth Night,

we asked for kids to sign up in advance to win a prize and that told us approximately how many people would attend the event.

VI. Old Business for Future Meetings:

- (a.) Parks and Rec: Carl went to their meeting. There was a discussion about formal voting on use of town facilities by outside groups. If 70-80% of the kids and/or 50% of the adults are from Westport, then they could use the facilities. Because of Mickey Kydes and Beachside Soccer, people complained so they decided to formalize a policy about outside use. They talked about selling field space but Carl said that's okay for turf but not fields because we're already maxed out on usage and don't want to ruin the fields. If the Seals have mostly all Westport kids, then they will be granted space for games and practices. Dan DeVito does not want to do the scheduling for Seals or Men's softball anymore and wants us to do it. Carl said that we cannot do it because we're forbidden under our charter to have anything to do with organizations that compete with us, like the Seals. Baseball World runs a camp at Wakeman every day all summer. It is a sub-contracted service through Continuing Ed. Mickey Kydes does likewise. The rule going forward is 70-80% must be Westport kids and 50% adults must be Westport adults. Ax asked about when we run a tournament and it winds up having two out of town teams in finales. It is part of our LL charter so we're an authorizing entity and it's fine.
- (b.) Bridgeport Programs: An Eagle Scout has called Carl asking to donate baseball equipment to WLL; Carl wants him to donate to Bridgeport instead. He needs contact information.

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY: Beth Cody

NEXT MEETING: Monday, June 20th at 7:30. Staples HS, Room 186.