

Sun Prairie Youth Hockey Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
December 18, 2011

Audience: Steve Traut, Kirk Wessel, Staci Mariani, Michael Sanders

President Jeff Thornton called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Steve Traut is looking for more information about the New Year's Eve event for the website and email blast. Jeff agreed that this topic will be added under old business.

Jeff added other agenda items: under Old Business, age appropriate players at practice, and under New Business, HS2 player fees.

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Secretary – Betsy McCrary

Minutes from the November meeting have been posted.

b. Treasurer – Paula Walker

- Invoicing Update – Families may have received multiple invoices due to a computer issue. All travel invoices are out, with payments due by Dec. 31. Coaches will be getting a list of those who are delinquent and players will be held out of games and practices until payment is made. Invoices for in-house programs will be due the Friday before. Jeff would like to see a walk-in plan in place for ADM session 2 if needed.
- Treasurer's Report – Paula distributed the report in advance of the meeting. Jeff thought some things looked odd, including OBHL.

Jeff asked about the audit report status. Paula expects the report by the end of January. The preliminary audit is done.

c. President Elect – Dave Batterman

- Semi-trailer message campaign – Due to city restrictions, semi-trailers with capital campaign messages will be placed just outside city limits. Dave is providing semi-trailers through Badger Utility, and has arrangements for them on Hwy N, Hwy 151, and Hwy 19, all on different sides of town. There will also be a banner on the building. He's still working on obtaining pricing, but there is an approved capital campaign budget. The Bank of Sun Prairie has also indicated we could put something at their downtown office.

d. Past President – James Trent

- James has obtained a few new URL's that point to the capital campaign website.
- He has been working with the equipment managers to get some additional dates for the new session

e. President – Jeff Thornton

- Insurance – The current insurance auto-renewed, but this will be revisited in Oct. 2012.
- Jason Fehrmann worked on the open locker room benches for volunteer credit and material costs. We're working on placement of extra nets.

3. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Volunteer Committee – No one present to report. Jeff has asked for a printed document for the lobby listing current volunteer hour status by family. He hopes to have it in place by Tuesday.
- b. Annual Fundraising Committee – No one present to report. We need to meet with Scott Halblieb to figure out the prizes for New Year's Eve. Jeff will follow up with Scott.
- c. Communications Committee – Steve Traut has a blast ready for the following topics: New Year's Eve, Hockey Boosters Youth Night January 5th, Varsity Booster Club Spaghetti Feed, which was moved to the high school after a tough year last year – they will be contacting team reps for tickets. Also to be included in the email blast is news that Capital Campaign Pledge forms will be handed out via the team reps. His plan is to send it early Tuesday morning. Troy asked that there be a note included that coaching modules are due Dec. 31. Steve will also include reminders about the middle school and 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade skates.

4. LEVEL REP REPORTS

a. ADM – Marcie Rauls and Angie Hadley

Marcie provided an update on the ADM jamborees. SPYHA is planning on hosting a jamboree March 17, going to March 18 if needed. Jon Lambert, Chris Finkler, and Troy Giesegeh are working on guidelines and will share

them with Mike Sanders. U6 jamborees are usually cross ice, with no score kept, and besides the home jamboree, they could plan for one additional jamboree in a 60-mile radius. Families participating would be responsible for the associated costs. Ideas for the U8 jamboree may include cross or half-ice, and again there could be an additional away jamboree in a 60-mile radius. There would be no full-ice games. It was noted that most jamborees do not seem to allow ages older than 8. The ADM Board Reps, ACE Director, and head ADM coach have reached an agreement in principal for the format and are working on refining that. Troy would like to see a mix of player ability. They are looking at 17 minute game times and 90 second changes, and hope to have something on line by the next Board meeting.

b. DC Diamonds – Nate Rosin

Nate reported that U10 is playing well, U12 had a learning experience at their recent tournament but is over .500, and the U14 group is learning and growing, too.

c. Squirt – Mike Weber

The Squirt B team was in a 15-team pool play tournament this weekend with healthy competition. The A team is looking forward to their Cardinal Cup the first week in January, and is 3-4-6.

d. PeeWee – Jen Kurtz

As of this weekend, the A team is 11-6-2, which includes four tournament games, so they are 15 regular games into the season. They won three games, lost one, and took third place in a tournament in December. As of December 4, the PeeWee B team is 6-5 excluding their tournament, and they took second in their December Cardinal Cup, losing to Eau Claire in the championship game. The PeeWee C team is 8-2-1 as of December 4, excluding tournaments, and took first in the Beaver Dam tournament. They were left scrambling when Amery cancelled their tournament planned for December at the last minute, but were able to get into the Beaver Dam tournament. Jen suggested that the tournament success of the PeeWee teams be added to the front page of the website.

Steve Traut questioned why there were so many A teams in League 2. Jen explained that associations make their recommendations to Region 4 as to where they'd like to see their teams, and that's generally where they end up.

e. Bantam – Chris Gehrmann

The Bantam A team is 6-8-5 and the Bantam B team is 15-5, with both teams recently at tournaments. Unfortunately, half the Bantam B team was sick after their tournament.

f. High School – Ken Frassetto

Ken reported that the team is 9-5-3. The team rep has done a great job with the schedule: they have 30 games and two tournaments, 21 skaters plus 1 goalie, so they are rotating skaters to have 18 skaters on the bench per game. Jen reminded Ken that the Region 4 game reports are needed for seeding. Regarding the incident report with SHAW, it should be emailed to Jodie Krause. Jeff reiterated that there were racial comments directed at one of our players during a game against SHAW's varsity team. The Bantam A team also had an issue with SHAW, and Jeff has learned that other local teams have also experienced problems, and Southwest has also cancelled. We should talk to the team reps and recommend that they do not schedule games with SHAW. SPYHA has cancelled the HS2 game with SHAW varsity, but will still be playing their JV team.

A side comment was made that Sauk Prairie cancelled their Jan. 8 league game with our Bantams, and at a recent game there only one referee was available.

g. Coaches rep. – Troy Giesege

Emails have been sent to coaches to remind them about modules. WAHA is not confident that the USA Hockey training site will be able to withstand the traffic. Troy encouraged members to hug a coach, because the modules represent a lot of time.

There will be a coaches meeting in January. The concussion seminar was poorly attended (four coaches), but was very informative with excellent discussion.

## 5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. New Rink / Building Committee – Dave is checking up on pricing from Stevens to see if there is a change from the original \$7.1 million projection. He doesn't see having additional meetings with Stevens prior to March 1. He has also met with Joe Lee, the architect, to bring him up-to-date.

- b. Capital Fundraising – Team meetings at all levels were held over about three days last week. Jeff reiterated information from the president’s letter and explained that this has to be our #1 priority. He and James had an interview with The Star, and has a meeting scheduled with the soccer and lacrosse presidents on Tuesday. There have also been user group meetings with the Rage, SWFSC, and the DC Diamonds. OBHL meetings are coming up. There was also a feeler inquiry from a Twin Cities group looking to place a AAA team for all age group sin the spring/summer.

The figure skating groups could increase ice usage, but were non-committal with providing pledges.

SPYHA must get to \$700k in additional cash, pledges, and donations (including in-kind donations) by March 1. We do not want to put our fate in the city’s hands regarding the project.

Jeff agreed that the building committee is quite as they concentrate on securing pledges. Jeff has updated the pledge form and proposes that the team reps gives the forms to all families. He explained that one block per family isn’t going to get it done, and a more realistic goal would be at least \$1,000 per family. He would ask the pledge forms be returned in envelopes within two weeks of distribution. Glass blocks are an easy form of recognition. Jeff will ask for the Board forms back before the others. Betsy asked how many years the pledges would be spread over – previously it was three. Mike explained that three was chosen because that was something the banks looked favorably on. Donations are tax-deductible. Betsy pointed out that it would be good to try to point this out to those who might be looking for a year-end donation.

The previous Ecomm had pledged \$60k. Jeff will destroy current Board members pledge forms to start fresh. There has been a meeting with the varsity booster club and varsity head coach to discuss donations, and the girls’ varsity program still needs to be contacted. There are plans for a community letter as well. The marketing/business committee met last week and has ideas for business support and banners/dashers that are strictly advertising. At the same time, there is care being taken to no hit businesses up double. The capital campaign and marketing groups will meet together at 7 pm Monday at PAC. One idea is to have various levels, platinum through copper, for dashers and tournament advertising, that could be included with business and restaurant guide.

James is the new face for the capital campaign. There is a plan to have some information available by New Year’s Eve.

Neil Stechschulte from the city has a list of contacts for big companies coming to Sun Prairie. We also have a pledge from the city council president to come with us to meet with these companies.

We have an invitation to speak in front of the Rotary Club, and we’re looking for a Lions contact. We can also talk to the chamber of commerce. We also can’t just limit ourselves to Sun Prairie.

Regarding brochures, there are just small changes to the glass block brochure before it can be printed, and the naming rights brochure has a few updates as well. Troy has updated the major brochure, and it’s down to 20 pages (from 24), which will save money.

There is the potential for a fundraising night from Uno’s through “Dough Coupons.” We’ve also fundraised through Culver’s in the past, and may be able to approach them again.

Mike was asked for a rough projection of borrowing capabilities. Much depends on changes in operating expenses. At our current ratio, we could borrow an estimated \$1.3 to \$1.4 million, based on 85%. If it changes to 80% or 70%, that increase borrowing capacity, theoretically from \$1.4 to \$3.6 million, but we would want to have committed revenue sources.

- c. Region 4

The next meeting is at 7 pm at Vitense. Chris is scheduled to attend.

There is a family from Poynette that should be requesting a SPYHA and Patriots release. Waunakee has released the child, who is playing for McFarland. Jeff confirmed that no release paperwork has been received.

- d. New Year’s Eve

Dave invited Jason Ledford, the New Year’s Eve chair, to the meeting, but as he isn’t in attendance, Dave provided what he knew. There will be raffles for skate passes, and teams will be asked to provide baked items. This is our last major event of the year for volunteer hours.

- e. Age-appropriate players at practice  
Players from other levels have been observed practicing with teams: for example, Squirts have been observed at PeeWee practices or PeeWees at Squirt practices. Troy will send a reminder to coaches that this is not appropriate, and also remind them of the locker room policy.

## 6. New Business

### a. Squirt B team request to exceed SPYHA game limits

Squirt B team rep Staci Mariani requested that the Board consider extending the game limit for the Squirt B team, as the majority of parents would like to add at least two more games. She provided the following reasons:

- When the decision to go with two Squirt teams, the team was moved down a league. The team is strong in league games and finds they're not competitive. They would like to add more competitive games.
- It is a large team with 16 players who would like more puck touches
- The parents were very surprised to learn of game limits and did not know about it. They felt it was very conservative. Last year these kids played more games as Mites and in in-house.

Jeff explained that USA Hockey recommendations were for 20 to 25 games total, with 75 practices. Staci asked how USA Hockey knows what burns kids out?

Mike said the most tangible piece is the level of competition. He noted this was a respectful request, and they were proposing to add two games at Waunakee and Pettit.

Jen asked how many games they had played. The initial answer was 10; however, Region 4 listed 11.

Troy explained that the development process USA Hockey recommends 75% practice/25% games. It's not just about competition. There is concern about player burnout and a loss of player intensity as time goes on.

Betsy reviewed the July 24, 2011 minutes where the policy was discussed, approved, and posted. This information was also included in the team rep handbook and explained at the team rep meeting. The game limit policy was not new to SPYHA, but had not generally been enforced for several years. It was revamped based on USA Hockey recommendations.

Chris asked how many players on the team were actually U8. There are five. She noted we are already violating USA Hockey recommendations by allowing them to play on the team.

Jeff asked that we go around the room and allow each person to comment, beginning with the public.

Staci noted that every team/player develops differently. The decision should not be swayed by the previous decision to allow 2003 birth year players. She feels like it would really upset some people not to allow the addition.

Kirk Wessel agreed with Staci, feeling that the team was competitive at their tournament. There were no additional public comments.

At the Board table, Mike explained it was a respectful request with unique circumstances, and they would like this consideration. Paula echoed Mike's comments, and noted previously there was a 12 + 12 limit for this level, although it wasn't enforced. She stated that we said if you want more games, you have to ask, and that's what they were doing. It is about competition. She also referenced Chuck's email and stated she agreed with his thoughts. They are handily beating teams in the league, and are only asking for two games.

Marcie agreed with the points presented so far. They have 100 hours of ice time – what's two more.

Angie had nothing more to add, except that she was glad her daughter was on the Diamonds.

Betsy expressed concern about the true number of games the team had already played and was scheduled to play, based on information on the website. After reviewing the information available on the SPYHA website and the Region 4 website, it was confirmed that the actual number of games the team had already played was 12, not 10. However, it was also determined that the proposed games were already listed on the team schedule, and that the team had 23 games on their schedule, plus three tournaments, meaning they were not asking to exceed the game limit by two games, but instead by three games. Betsy also mentioned she had heard rumors that the team was considering hiding games, which she found completely unacceptable. This was particularly distressing as evidenced by the failure to give a correct answer about the number of games the team played. If there are referees, it's game – period, regardless if there was a scheduling mistake and they ended up playing an A team. Betsy's

other concern is the disregard for USA Hockey's recommendations. They are there for a reason, and it's so kids don't get burned out. At the time, it can seem fun, but as an experienced hockey parent, she's also seen the flip side of kids losing their passion, intensity, and drive. She's observed the parent's dismay when the child just gives up playing, despite a talent for the game. Sometimes, you have to be willing to make a tough decision in the best interest of the kids, and she felt the limits were in that best interest. Her kids like candy, but she doesn't always let them have it, and she has the same feelings about this – kids love to play games, but that's not always what's best for them. They need the development time, too, in practice, and in moderation.

James said he could understand if it's only 2 games, but it's starting to seem like it's closer to 25 total games - 5 additional games. All team reps get offers to play additional games, but not having the reciprocal ice to offer can hurt the next group's reputation. Tournaments already give the opportunity to play other teams. James acknowledged that the Board had approved additional games in the past, when he was a Board member. He felt kids learn more in practices than they do games. As a coach, his experience is that during a game, they're not really listening.

Jeff finds it interesting that there are rifts between parents of older and younger skaters. He's concerned that at the young ages there is such a focus on winning, when our goal is to develop hockey players. He felt it if was important to add two games, then there should be six additional development practices added, too.

Dave stated if he felt there was an accurate game count, he would be okay, but he's not sure there has been full disclosure. As the parent of a Squirt A player, they've also turned down games, and he doesn't think it's fair to other teams to allow just one team the additional games.

Jen noted that she voted against the Squirt limit in July. She would support it if it were two games in the spirit of good competition but she also wants to get accurate game counts.

Troy is curious about how weekends are being filled, as there seem to be a lot of multi-game weekends. He also wanted to know how practice times are being used. If the idea is to build competition, why not have the B team players work more with the A team instead of splitting up right away, and use competition within the association/level.

Nate explained he was on a six game weekend bender between two kids and it was unimaginable to want to add more games. It's a slippery slope to grant exceptions when we already have a policy; however, he likes Jeff's suggestion of adding practices to be able to add the games.

Chris is concerned that the numbers in Region 4 don't add up, and she doesn't know who to believe. The disclosure really bothers her, and she felt we made this decision already. She also saw Chuck's email. Chris noted we'd already spent 45 minutes discussing this. She respects the reasons but doesn't want to open a can of worms. One-third of this team (five players) is 2003 birthdates/underage, and already receiving an experience way above and beyond what USA Hockey says is appropriate for their age. She would like to see the team be happy with what you've already been granted by the Board.

Ken doesn't have a problem with the request, but also understands USA Hockey's recommendations. Additional off-ice activities would be good.

Jeff stated that reporting/non-reporting of games shouldn't cloud the vote. Jen asked if we are adding the games for one Squirt team, shouldn't the A team get that two.

Jeff noted that if the Squirt B team played 12 games, have nine games on the schedule, and want to add two more, then they're actually asking for three more games.

Marcie made a motion to allow both Squirt A and Squirt B teams to exceed the game limit policy by adding up to three additional away games, with the requirement of adding three additional off-ice practices per additional game. Ken seconded the motion.

Jeff requested that those impacted by the vote abstain. There was no additional discussion. Roll vote:

ADM1 – Marcie – abstain

ADM2 – Angie – yes

Squirt – Mike – abstain

PeeWee – Jen – yes

Bantam – Chris – no

HS 2 – Ken - yes

DC Diamonds – Nate – yes  
Coaches rep – Troy – yes  
Treasurer – Paula – abstain  
Past-President – James – yes  
President-elect – Dave – abstain  
Secretary – Betsy – no  
Motion passes 6-2 with 4 abstentions

Jeff stated the website needs to be updated appropriately to reflect games/schedule, and the off-ice practice plans are strongly encouraged to be shared with the ACE Director. He thanked the Board for a difficult discussion.

b. HS2 player fees

Ken has received an email asking about tournament fees and the sit-out policy. Mike asked for an explanation of the situation, and Ken explained that the team started with 24 skaters, and every skater was then required to sit out 5-6 games because only 18 skaters could be on the bench (playing) a game. Mike Sanders explained that he raised the concern because he didn't want to drive to the Marinette tournament to see his son only play in one game. As a result, he's volunteered to sit the tournament, but wants to know what the requirements for paying for the tournament and coaches rooms are, and how this would affect things like future sits and playdowns.

It was confirmed that the league tournament (Cofrin/McGuire Cup) was covered by player dues, so the Marinette tournament fees would need to be covered by the team. The league tournament is in Beloit, so it's within easy driving distance. Three players have volunteered not to go, so the question is are they still responsible for the tournament fees, or are costs only for families that go.

Chris asked if each kid sits 5-6 games, would the tournament games count toward the games missing. That was really what needed to be clarified.

Ken then added that the coach's thought is to just pick 18 skaters (plus the goalie) for the state and league tournament, and those would be the 18 skaters for the rest of the season.

Marcie commented that there are bench warmers for every high school team.

Dave pointed out that HS2 is not a varsity program. Jeff asked on what basis would the coach be selecting these 18 players? Mike Sanders commented that restricting the coach's decision on this castrates the coach. Jeff explained that if you are going to exclude kids, this has to be disclosed now, and the criteria used for that must be known. Jeff asked about a team meeting, and Dave wondered how this could be decided for the team.

After discussion, the consensus from the Board was that all team fees should be split equally. If skaters choose not to go to the Marinette tournament, they would still be responsible for the tournament fee and coaches room. If there are enough players to go, then those who opt to sit out can then count the games as sits, provided that doesn't cause a problem for the rest of the team. If it creates a problem, then everyone goes, and anyone who still opts not to go does not have the games counted as a sit.

Regarding playdowns and sate, Jeff explained that at this point, the coach has some say in who sits, but it's a pay for play organization. It is the coach's discretion for who sits, but it cannot be the same kids at each event. The league tournament should stay in the regular rotation for game sits.

James asked Mike Sanders if he's okay with the skating dues, as there had been concern earlier in the season. Mike explained that there's always concern, but he wouldn't know for sure until the season was over and the games and sits determined.

c. Other business

Betsy asked about WAHA tournament requests for 2014. Based on rotation, everyone agreed to the following choices: Squirt A, Squirt B, HS2, Bantam A

Jeff's final comment was that after three hours of discussion, we need to keep our eyes on the big picture.

James made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Paula seconded the motion. All approved except Nate, who voted nay. Motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 pm.

Next meeting Sunday, January 15, 2012, at 7 pm.