



Mission: The “Upper Valley Hockey Association” mission is to introduce the youth of our area to and promote the game of hockey, so that every child in the program can enjoy a positive experience through encouragement, skill development and character building while creating a passion for the game

UVHA MEETING MINUTES
January 18th, 2023 – 8:00 PM

1. Approval of Minutes - December Minutes Approved

2. Monthly Reports

- a. Coaching Coordinator - Will Meyer has sent out coaching requirement reimbursement forms and set a deadline for the beginning of February. There have been some coaching requirement changes for Mite coaches. Kylie reported there is a “Try Coaching for Free” option. This might be more affordable and a better option for us to get parents on the ice without having to complete a class. We should look into this option for next year. Kylie also reports that there is talk that USA Hockey is going to extend the Level 4 certified people to 2024. They haven’t rolled out continuing education for next season yet, so they are extending it to give people more time.
- b. Safesport Coordinator - No update. Roni did report there were some SafeSport deadline changes that may be coming up and that we should be aware of that.
- c. NH State Representative - Brock reported that the New Hampshire Futures camp is being shared with eligible NH families. Nothing else to report.
- d. Girls Development - Tom reported that the 12U Girls' played a game. Girls development is partnering with Woodstock to possibly find more games. Tom is canceling girls development this Friday because of the Dartmouth game shootout. Next week is the first “Woodstock” practice. UVHA will still have GK training during the normal time slot.
- e. Fundraising - Tom asked if we were doing concessions for the State Tournament. Jen is meeting with a group of parents to start to plan this. A photographer offered to shoot the game and offer a digital download for \$5. He will reach out to Jen. Skate-a-thon- discussed it being on 3/3 but there is a Mite tournament conflict. Jen will email the Mite group and ask to hold off on the hotel and the board will continue to throw around ideas of when to make the Skate-a-thon happen.
- f. Registrar - Birth certificates are due by the end of January. Kylie is working with team parents to get this accomplished.
- g. Scheduler - No Update
- h. Equipment Manager - Girls Development is going to get pink jerseys and pink socks to wear for the Dartmouth game Friday night. We need to reassess pads going forward and what sizes we will need to provide in the future. There was discussion about jerseys for a 12U girls game. We do not have enough pink jerseys in the right sizes for them to wear. However, Hillary said they do have enough Storm jerseys to use for the Woodstock girls too.
- i. Treasurer - No Update
- j. Marketing/Social Media Manager - No Update
- k. Safety/Concussion - No Update

3. New Business

Brock proposed a 3 night spring tryout - Monday, March 20th, Tuesday, March 21st, and Wednesday, March 22nd - with step-up skates to begin the week of March 13th. There will be a \$75 tryout fee which will be applied as a credit to 2023-24 registration. If the player does not register for the 2023-24 UVHA season, the deposit becomes non-refundable. Tryout registration will be through SportsEngine. Spring tryouts are "mandatory minus exceptional cases." For those players, there will be 2-3 fall evaluation skates in October 2023. Full season fees will be needed by the March meeting and team sizes will be important to consider since there may be new players in the fall.

The board talked about the positives of having spring tryouts for UVHA as a program. Spring tryouts logistically put us in a better position organizationally being able to identify coaches and complete certifications, schedule games, and order jerseys. We will be more ORGANIZED. Team bonding can begin ahead of time and create cohesiveness. The spring opportunities put us at a more level playing field with other organizations. The advantages it will give us in the fall are to have practices and exhibition games earlier in the fall because we are always so late to the game. A negative that was brought up was taking into account the growth of players over the summer because having the fall tryouts allows for growth over the summer and to be placed appropriately.

A final vote on this topic resulted in 8 Yes votes and 1 No vote. The Board will officially move forward with spring tryouts.

The final order of new business was the WYHA Partnership Proposal. Brock and Will met with Hanover. To make a long story short, they had a board meeting the day after the Brock/Will meeting and their board decided they feel good about the younger groups and want to spend time and energy on that and not focus on a merger. Brock and Will met and had a conversation with Woodstock and they are still on board. A whole new organization will not be formed if it's not all three associations joining together. The communication and marketing surrounding this would be a 14U partnership between UVHA and Woodstock only.

Brock shared the information that was agreed upon during his conversations with Woodstock. The intention is for this to be a long-term arrangement. Brock wondered what that would look like. Should we formalize it to be at least three years (2023-24 season, 2024-25 season and 2025-26 season)? Other details included a joint, spring tryout to conclude in two teams, the top team will play in the GSL under the UVHA banner. Both groups have a long term desire to have three teams. Top team would play in GSL. The other two teams would be one UVHA, one WYHA. All teams will share ice evenly (as much as possible) between WABA and Union. Brock felt coach recruitment would be critical to attracting kids to play in the partnership organization.

Brock still feels this will be the best way to keep community access to hockey, specifically providing opportunities for higher level players to stay local to play. The system is broken and club teams are becoming more aggressive, recruiting players away for community associations. Brock opened the floor for discussion, during which points were made by key members of the board. Roni says across New Hampshire numbers are short for Bantam. Kylie is still against this merger because we don't need it for next year. Tom says having one big team is a disaster. We lost a lot of kids at 14U and kids are leaving to go and play for other clubs if we don't have the level of hockey they are looking for. Tom was in support of anything we can do to keep numbers better. Storm numbers took a nose dive during covid. But losing athletes to large club organizations is happening everywhere. One of the reasons BABA isn't happening this year is because they only have 100 kids in the whole organization. They are losing kids to the Dynamo and Flames. Josh asked the question "how do we fix this problem in years to come?" Hillary asked if we talked to current U14 kids that have come to UVHA. How do they feel after spending a season here?

The discussion continued to talk about how to attract players to our organizations and there was a larger group support for being more intentional about building the connection between high school/ college teams and youth organizations. Kylie wants more middle school kids getting involved in

hockey to grow the sport and the board talked about ways to go about facilitating that need within our community. Tom Daniels suggested ways to create more connections by having high school players help out at practices. Brock suggested adding a board position to be ambassador to High School sports and the community.

The discussion concluded with the majority of people being in favor of starting to formalize the Woodstock Partnership. Brock will begin a collective bargaining agreement and get the document going around so that we can track changes and make comments on it.

Meeting adjourned at 9:57pm.