



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

Home of Babe Ruth Baseball,
Softball, and Cal Ripken Leagues



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

September 24, 2017

Dorey Park Recreation Building, Henricus Room
7200 Dorey Park Drive
Henrico, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm./Softball Opns.
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner
Myron Struck, District 6 Commissioner
John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner
Jackie Sears, Lakeside League
Topper Phelps, District 3 Asst. Commissioner
Nancy Currence, District 1 Asst. Commissioner
Melvin Slough, Glen Allen Youth AA

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm./Baseball Opns.
Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.
Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm./Training
Shana Kirby, District 5 Commissioner
Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
John Armentrout, SE Region Asst. Comm.
Lisa Kemper, District 9 Asst. Commissioner
Caleb Brannan, Lakeside League
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner
Robert Drake, Warwick Moose League
Bradley Veach, MMES, Inc.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit of Virginia's baseball- and softball-playing kids.

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. He introduced two new District Commissioners—Shana Kirby for District 5 and Myron Struck for District 6.

Moment of Silence for Tom Steele. Paul reported that the North Carolina State Commissioner, Tom Steele had recently passed away and requested a moment of silence in his honor.

By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the Spring meeting was waived.

Dave Gushee reported that the State treasury contained, as of September 24, 2017, \$13,778.17 in the checking account (compared with \$7474.06 at the end of September in 2016) and, at the end of August, \$85,665.73 in mutual funds (compared to \$76,585.17 at the end of September in 2016). A number of expected expenses, including State Officer expenses, have not yet been submitted, but from informal estimates of those expenses, it looks like income for the year will be close to expenses.

OLD BUSINESS

State Commissioner's Reflections on the 2017 Season

Paul reported that the 2017 season was one of the smoothest of his tenure as State Commissioner. He thanked everyone for all their efforts, which made this judgment possible. Although smooth, there were a few hiccups. Six leagues paid State dues between June 7 and June 12 – too late because of the extra effort required to make sure that they were in fact paid in time for league certification for tournament play. Fifteen leagues posted rosters after June 6 (again too late, in his view). He congratulated District 6 and District 9 for not having any leagues in that list. SI Play, although improved, still has a long way to go, he believes. We need more subject matter experts that can assist leagues that really have problems with this interface. In his tournament visits, he found a few individuals who really know how to work within the confines of the system, based on their keen technical knowledge. He cited three individuals who meet this criterion and said we should figure out how to use that expertise to help all of our leagues.

State tournaments were again very well run by the Tournament Directors, who are really benefiting from the training Phil Larcomb conducts prior to tournament time. We attempted to add umpires to the TD meeting this year with very limited success. We will focus on this issue again next year. Umpire issues continue to surface at our tournaments. These were discussed later. We had a few credentials book issues that we need to address at our District Meetings (copies of birth certificates, dates on cards wrong, missing or unsigned Consent For Treatment forms). Nothing new here, but more attention to these details is needed. On the good news front, we made it through the new pitch count rules without issue.

We were not successful in promoting a Buddy Ball Appreciation Day. Our timing is bad when we try to do it late in the season. We should consider trying to do it earlier, perhaps at Opening Day ceremonies.

Our State was showcased by hosting four Regional Tournaments and one World Series. We heard many comments about how the visiting teams wished their facilities were as good as ours. That is a compliment to our league personnel in Stafford, Williamsburg, and Glen Allen.

New Leagues in the 2017 Season

Charles City County joined us this year with just a few teams. Prospects for growth by this league in 2018 look promising. District 3 has been working with several teams in the Greater Richmond area who have been cast adrift by Little League's recent decision to terminate play at the 16-17 age level. Curtis Moore reported that progress toward a solid organization to operate the teams as a league is being made. Brandon Currence reported that some Dixie Youth Leagues in the Virginia Beach area were thinking about joining us; these deliberations continue.

State Tournaments

In response to the State Commissioner's remarks above, Phil Larcomb suggested that it would possibly be helpful for the District Commissioners to attend his Tournament Directors training program. The DCs must review all the credentials books for the leagues in their Districts and perhaps exposure to the experiences of Tournament Directors when faced with incomplete or inaccurate credentials books would help them focus their attention on details when they review their leagues' books to authorize them as ready to go forward to the tournaments. No official action was taken on the matter.

Game results and tournament winners are posted on the State website.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted four baseball Regional Tournaments in 2017—the Cal Ripken 9-Year-olds and 10-year-olds in Williamsburg, the Babe Ruth 16-18-Year-olds in Stafford, and all five Regional softball tournaments in Stafford. The baseball tournaments went off rather well overall, although there were a couple of local issues: one team brought its own boom box and played loud objectionable music; one team never showed and didn't tell anyone; one team had a District Commissioner serving as coach who resorted to a little gamesmanship regarding an attempted protest. The softball tournaments were not well attended by out-of-State teams; only eight out-of-State teams showed up instead of the usual 20. Stafford as a result lost a good bit of revenue. Softball tournament management planning at the national level is the issue; Stafford will press its concerns at both the Regional and national levels.

Regional tournament results are posted on the Southeast Region website.

World Series

Virginia hosted one World Series in 2017—the 14-year-olds in Glen Allen. Dennis Cobb reported that, even though the Virginia teams did not win the World Series, this was a very fine tournament, a really great experience.

Champions Day at Washington Nationals Park

This was the fourth year that the Washington Nationals hosted State 12-Year-Olds championship teams at one of its games. Our winners—Glen Allen, which won both the 12s60 and 12s70 Cal Ripken State tournaments, and Bethlehem, which won the 12U State softball tournament—were recognized on the field before the game. The winning players really enjoyed the experience, according to all the parents and State officials who were also in attendance.

Paul reported that the State's support of this Nationals initiative has paid back real dividends.

The Nationals have granted two Cal Ripken leagues in Virginia \$5,000 grants from the Baseball for Tomorrow Fund over the past two seasons. So far, the Pioneer and Arlington leagues have received these grants.

Additionally, leagues in District 7 have been participating in the Nationals' Uniform Program where the Nationals supply each team in the league with players' jerseys and caps all displaying the Nationals logo. This program has saved these participating leagues thousands of dollars in uniform costs.

Review of State Dues Invoicing Policy Change

At the Spring 2016 State meeting, the Board voted to change the dues invoicing and payment process. The move was made to ease the crunch experienced in late May and most of June each year as the State Commissioner, the Secretary-Treasurer, all the District Commissioners, and a major percentage of the leagues struggled to settle on their final numbers of rosters and match their dues payments thereto. Each league is billed for the number of teams they had rostered the previous year, regardless of how many teams they might end up with this year. Payment of that invoice would satisfy the dues paid requirement in order for the leagues to be eligible for their Letters of Eligibility (LOEs) for tournament play. Differences between the numbers of teams finally ended up with and the numbers paid for would be dealt with by a debit or credit on the next year's invoice, on which they would be billed for this year's numbers of teams rostered.

In preparation for this year's billing cycle (2017), Dave Gushee, the Treasurer, in July of 2016 extracted from the national database the numbers of rosters posted for each league in 2016 and created his own database of these data. compared to that year's payments. All the leagues with the same number of teams last year as the year before were billed for last year's roster numbers. Those leagues with more or fewer in 2016 vs. 2015 were billed for 2016's numbers adjusted for the change in number of teams between 2015 and 2016.

The leagues responded basically without comment, so the process seems to be appropriately transparent.

Now that all the rosters are up for the 2017 season and all the leagues have paid the 2017 invoices, Dave has already prepared the invoices for 2018 except for the issue date and the identities of the league treasurers. So, most of the Treasurer's anticipated 2018 January through April time spent creating invoices has already been spent. The in-process computer spreadsheets are a bit more complicated, but the total time commitment seems to be about the same as before the change.

Review State 16-18 Leagues Area Tournament Process

This process, first used in 2015, disregards the Districts in which the leagues are chartered. The State Commissioner puts all the 16-18 Year-olds teams in a pot and generates two-team (or three-team) Area tournament pairings. The winners of these double-elimination Area tournaments advance to the State tournament. At the moment, this leads to nine 2 (or 3)-team

tournaments followed by a ~10-team State tournament. Most of the leagues involved have liked the arrangement better than the District tournament approach. There has been an occasional complaint about which teams are paired, but that sort of “goes with the territory,” so to speak.

Some members present at the meeting, in essence giving it a vote of confidence, wondered whether the concept could be applied at other age levels. See the item below about softball plans for the possible extension of the idea to softball.

Review SI Play Roster Process and Issues

See State Commissioner’s comments above.

Tournament Directors Training

This year, the tournament Umpires-in-Chief were added to the invitees to the Tournament Directors Training Workshop. It helped, reported Phil Larcomb, who coordinates the workshop. The training program seems to have helped upgrade and make more uniform across the State the way the tournaments are handled, but there are still some issues from tournament to tournament. The workshop will be carried on, and this time the District Commissioners will also be invited. One of the issues to be emphasized next year is how to deal with unruly behavior from players, coaches, and (or) fans.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame

Dick Glover of Henrico County, a member of the Henrico County Board of Supervisors and a major supporter of community baseball and softball through his consistent efforts to maintain County attention to playing facilities and their maintenance was inducted posthumously in 2017. The induction ceremony was conducted at the 14-Year-Olds World Series in Glen Allen.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers for 2017-2019

All the incumbents for State offices were re-nominated. There were no nominations from the floor. It was VOTED unanimously to re-elect the incumbent Officers:

- State Commissioner – Paul Link
- Assistant State Commissioner for Baseball Operations – John DeYoung
- Assistant State Commissioner for Softball Operations – Don Gowen
- Assistant State Commissioner, Training and Compliance – Phil Larcomb
- Secretary-Treasurer – Dave Gushee

2017 Budget

Although the year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2017 outcome will be close to budget. Operating expenses may slightly exceed operating revenue. Washington Nationals Champions

Day, the Tournament Directors Training Workshop, and Umpire Training Clinics, all expanded in the past several years, account for the much of the change from a slight excess of revenues over expenses to our current excess of expenses over revenue. In addition, we have contracted with an accounting firm and a legal firm to handle our need for income tax preparation assistance and for legal representation. We did this because these functions continue on but our volunteers change over time. Income from the reserves is more than sufficient to cover the difference.

Dave reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past 8 years, primarily because the State Commissioners have donated their expenses back to us at the end of each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves now represent close to 3 years' cash flow because the stock market has been stronger than our need to draw on the reserves.

Given this stable financial performance, the Board VOTED to continue the current budget policy.

25-Year Pin Award Ceremony

Five volunteers with 25 years of participation have been identified. Two, Robert Drake and Nancy Currence from District 1, attended this meeting and were awarded a pin and congratulatory letter (see photo on the State website). The other awardees are Duane Burtner and Debbie Gregory from District 4, and Laverne Flint from District 1.

Softball Reorganization

Paul Link pointed out that the softball program is in need of additional attention. He has asked Don Gowen to focus on the role of technology in the design and operation of the program and has appointed Curtis Moore, Glenn Spangler, and Dave Cogar to operate the softball program and consider some rearrangements of interleague relations, perhaps in a manner similar to the current 16-18 State tournament format.

Rob Connor has proposed a new concept for selection of three World Series volunteers from each State to serve as part of the Press Box-Media operational staff. The volunteers would work the scoreboard, serve as announcers, and keep score using the mobile scoring platform iScore. The State would be responsible for the cost of housing for the volunteers. Discussion was brisk and largely negative. Paul mentioned that his reaction to the request had also been negative at first. However, after thinking through both sides of the issue, he concluded that there may well be a few softball volunteers that would enjoy an expenses-paid working vacation in Florida to see a World Series event. After the discussion, it was decided that Paul would let Rob Connor know that Virginia could not commit support at this time but would keep the option open pending more information and discussion at the upcoming headquarters meeting.

New Bat Rule for 2018

Phil Larcomb presented a brief review of recent history in bat standards and provided a simple summary of the rule as it will stand for 2018:

T-Ball bats must feature the USABat Mark and accompanying permanent text “only for use with approved Tee Balls” (or a sticker if the bats were purchased before the new program was implemented).

All metal and composite bats for the Cal Ripken and 13-15 Year-olds levels of baseball play must have permanently printed on them the USABat marking. (For 16-18 Year-olds, metal and composite bats must be BBCOR .50 and no greater than -3. Metal and composite bats marked BBCOR .50 are also allowed for 13-15 Year-olds.)

Full details are posted on the State, Regional, and headquarters websites.

Babe Ruth App

Melvin Slough, an official in the Glen Allen League, has been working with Entertainment Solutions, an app developer, to create an app that can be used by Babe Ruth to help organize, promote, and operate tournaments. The Glen Allen and Winchester leagues are experimenting with it and suggest that other leagues as well as the State might find it useful going forward. Don Gowen is going to gather more information and begin testing the app.

Donation to Babe Ruth’s Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund

Last year, Board discussed the current policy of donating \$500 each year to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund. Steven Tellefsen, Babe Ruth League, Inc. CEO, in response to our letter asking for some additional information about the uses to which the money in the Fund are put, provided an informative response which was included in the minutes of last Fall’s State meeting. Thus, discussion at this meeting was brief and supportive of the contribution. It was VOTED to make the donation again this year.

Donation to the Don Rose Sr. Youth Scholarship Fund

Don Rose, Jr. reported that this scholarship fund, in the name of his father, for Loudoun County high school graduates who have been active in youth sports, was able to award six scholarships to students in six of the County’s schools. Donny reported that response to the Fund’s solicitations has been promising; its goal is eventually to be able to award scholarships to one student in each of the 17 high schools in the county. Donny reported that the Fund’s Board is considering adding a similar scholarship to be granted to a student from any high school in the State. The Board members voted 2 years ago to donate to this Fund \$1,000 each year for 2 years and to reconsider the question this year. It was VOTED to follow this policy.

Donation to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association

Paul Link suggested that the Board authorize a \$100 contribution to the Association in memory of Tom Steele. It was VOTED to make this contribution.

Southeast Regional Meeting

The meeting will be held at national headquarters in New Jersey next month with the Middle Atlantic Region. Paul Link will represent Virginia and John DeYoung will be among the Southeast Region representatives.

Regional and World Series Tournaments in Virginia in 2018

No World Series will be held in Virginia in 2018. There will be four Regional Tournaments:

11/70s	Stafford
12/60s	Stafford
14s	Stafford
16-18s	Augusta

Determining Hosts for 2018 State Tournaments

John DeYoung has revised the rotation schedule for hosting State baseball tournaments in 2016 through 2021 (posted in the Documents Download Center on the State web page). As things stand at meeting time, the line-up for 2018 is as follows:

<u>Tournament</u>	<u>State Host</u>	<u>Regional Host</u>
Rookies	D8	Ocala, FL
9s	D5	Clemmons, NC
10s	D4	Jacksonville, FL
11s60	No longer held	No Regional
11s70	D1	Stafford, VA
12s60	D7	Stafford, VA
12s70	D9	Live Oak, FL
13s	D2	Hendersonville, TN
14s	D8	Stafford, VA
13-15s	D3	Longwood, FL
16-18s	D6	Fishersville, VA

John DeYoung plans to send an email message to Baseball District Commissioners with updated information on 2018 State baseball tournament hosts and a request for information on: 1) host league name, 2) name of field(s), 3) tournament director (or other contact), 4) phone number(s), and 5) email addresses, noting that early availability of this information assists with planning for preparation and emailing of tournament contracts, distributing MTIP questionnaires, scheduling of the Tournament Director Training Workshop, and assigning tournament officials.

John DeYoung reminded the District Commissioners to remind the host leagues to use the correct terminology for their tournaments. The tournaments are Rookies (8s), 9s, 10s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 14s, 13-15s, and 16-18s—no U's anywhere, unlike softball.

Plans for the 2018 softball State Tournaments are as yet not formulated.

Establishing a “Social Media” Policy

This issue was sparked by the unseemly actions of a Little League team which belittled an opposing team during a tournament. The team was ejected from the tournament.

Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia has no specific policy to deal with this category of incidents. One or two leagues in the State do, but most don't. Discussion led to a consensus that it would be a good idea to formulate a policy. Given no guidance at the moment from Babe Ruth headquarters or the Southeast Region, it was agreed that Paul Link should raise the issue at the upcoming Regional meeting, which will be held at headquarters with many headquarters staff also present.

Umpire Matters

Donny Rose pointed out that it is getting more difficult to recruit and then retain umpires. One of the issues is the fee schedule. The Regional umpire fees, which we follow, are not changed for 2018. Paul Link will raise this issue at the upcoming Regional meeting.

The current roster of State Umpire-in-Chief and Regional UICs will continue into 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary-Treasurer