



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

April 3, 2016

Warrenton-Fauquier Visitors Center
33 N. Calhoun Street
Warrenton, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner
Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer
Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm., T&C
Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 BB Commissioner
Dennis Cobb, Asst. Comm., District 4
Gayle Clary, Asst. Comm., District 2
Lisa Kemper, Asst. Comm., District 9

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns.
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Softball Opns.
Glenn Spangler, District 4 SB Comm.
John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief
Larry Pritchett, District 5 BB Commissioner
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
George Burke, State Ump Consultant, BB, North
Eusebio Santiago, Lakeside Babe Ruth League

Paul Link called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, asking that the Board carry out its deliberations with particular attention to the best interests of the State's players and that all the Board members get home safely after the meeting.

A moment of silence was offered in memory of the late Marvin Robins, president of the Gloucester Babe Ruth League and an active Babe Ruth official for some 40 years.

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

Dave Gushee reported that the State treasury contained, as of 3/31/16, \$14,293.90 in the checking account and \$70,281.59 in reserves invested in several mutual funds, Due to several one-time expenditures, the budget operated at a slight loss last year; \$4,000 was taken from reserves to deal with cash flow needs. Total assets as of 3/31/16 = \$84,575.49. The Funds values are as of March 24, 2016. Last year at this time, total assets were \$87,476.24.

So far this year, 39 leagues have paid their 2016 State dues, compared to seven last year. The difference, reflected in this year's higher bank balance, is due to a new dues collection policy, described later in the Minutes.

Old Business

General Discussion. Paul Link, as he begins his fourth year as State Commissioner, thanked all the volunteers throughout the State's leagues, and State Board of Directors for their efforts in making Babe Ruth baseball available to the almost 20,000 players in the State. Operating the system is getting more complicated all the time, and he appreciates the willingness of all these volunteers to soldier on in the face of these extra demands.

Buddy Ball for 2016. Don Gowen will spearhead planning for this year's get-together. It is tentatively scheduled for mid-May. Don will contact all the leagues with chartered Buddy Ball teams to invite them to participate. He will order Don Rose memorial medallions to give to each player. Buddy Ball was one of Don's greatest delights.

T-Ball Tournament Plans for 2016. T-Ball Invitational Tournaments are under consideration in Manassas and Glen Allen. Plans are being developed. In previous years, there has been some concern about the presence of some T-Ball players in the tournaments who have played during the season in machine-pitch games. Such players have a significant competitive advantage over players who have only hit off tees. This issue will be addressed during the planning.

Champion Plaques (District) and Banners (State). District champion plaques are the responsibility of District Commissioners. The Banners are provided at the State level. They have already been ordered.

Review of 16-18 Area Tournament Format. In 2015, District tournaments were replaced by Area tournaments, due to the uneven distribution of 16-18 leagues across the State. This has worked well and will be continued in 2016. Paul Link will draw up the Area pairings when the numbers and locations of 16-18 leagues have been finalized. Area winners will compete in the 16-18 State Tournament.

Vote on Changing State Dues Collection Policy. Under the previous policy, which required that State dues be paid on the final numbers of teams (those rostered by season end) before Letters of Eligibility would be issued, there has been a frantic hassle in mid-to late June to reconcile the number of teams paid with the number of teams rostered, league by league. (The problem arises because in many cases, teams are added or subtracted throughout the season as registrations are completed, while dues invoices have been based on the numbers of teams originally chartered.) This problem was discussed at last Fall's Board meeting but not resolved then. Subsequently, the State officers worked out a new approach. Leagues would be billed on the basis of the previous year's final numbers of rostered teams; payment of that invoice would be regarded as making the league paid up, even though the payment might not match the final numbers of rostered teams. After the season, each league's final roster count would be compared

against the amount paid, a debit or credit would be determined and applied to the following year's dues invoice, which would be based on this year's final numbers. The Board VOTED by email to approve this policy change.

As reported in the Treasurer's report above, this change has led to about two thirds of the leagues having paid already, compared to only seven last year under the previous policy. Most of the leagues that have commented like the new policy. A few leagues have commented that they are already sure of their final numbers and asked that this year's final numbers be the basis for the dues payment. The Treasurer has accepted those requests, which means that those leagues will for sure not get a debit or credit on next year's invoice.

The process of generating the credit/debit data has not yet taken place. How it goes will be reported on at this year's Fall meeting.

Vote on Increasing State Tournament Host Fees. After last Fall's meeting, a review by the State officers of the State's Annual Financial Reports of the past several years showed that the Host Fees (\$350 per tournament, with special discounts for leagues simultaneously hosting more than one tournament) have not covered the State's costs associated with State Tournaments. A Host Fee of \$400 per tournament, with no discounts, would be required to cover the costs. The Board VOTED by email to increase the Host Fee to \$400 per tournament.

New Leagues. District 4 has attracted five new softball leagues, most but not all associated with existing baseball leagues. Discussions are either ongoing or pending in several additional cases; they will probably not lead to new leagues this year.

Hall of Fame Ceremony for Winchester Babe Ruth League. The Winchester league has been elected to the Southeast Region Hall of Fame. The official induction ceremony is scheduled for April 16 in Winchester.

Phil Larcomb noted that Winchester has certainly earned this honor, but so undoubtedly have other leagues across the State. For example, Lane is celebrating its 50th year in the Babe Ruth system. He urged the District Commissioners to talk with their leagues with long histories of association with Babe Ruth to identify additional opportunities to be considered for membership. All it takes, he says, is for someone to gather the data and submit it in the proper form. Virginia leagues and individuals are already well recognized in the Hall of Fame, but many other individuals and leagues would be worthy candidates.

New Business

Status of League Charters. Sixty-one leagues (about 95% of last year's leagues) have chartered and have been billed for State dues. Thirty-nine have paid. Lists of all non-chartered leagues and billed but unpaid leagues were distributed.

New Registered Agent. The Registered Agent is our official contact point for the Virginia State Corporation Commission and is our legal contact point should we be subject to legal action of any kind. Al Kassabian has been our Registered Agent since the incorporation of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia on April 7, 1967 (see Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation posted on the State Web site). Al, a lawyer, was an official in the Vienna Babe Ruth League when his sons were playing. He is now in his 90s and has asked to be relieved of this duty. Goodman Allen Donnelly, a law firm in Richmond, has agreed to become our Registered Agent.

Rule Changes for 2016. Headquarters has instituted a number of rule changes. The whole set of changes is currently on the State Web site. Covered are: slash bunting (banned), tournament host leagues having the option of having one or two tournament teams – one as the host team and one to compete through the tournament trail, imposition of a tournament team administration fee for baseball and softball age groups with a World Series, option to use a pitch count limit during local league games, and player eligibility protests must be in writing from the protesting league president. Also discussed were the 2015 rule addition (Rule 0.01, paragraph 5b) providing the option for a player in a school located in the boundaries of a league different from that of the player’s residence to play in the league in whose boundary the school is located (a form on which to apply for this permission has been developed and will be available on the State Web site). The clarification that “These documents must stay in possession of the Tournament Director during each tournament level.” has been and remains as a NOTE to Rule 11.04, but in the absence of housing teams, the State policy is that tournament team documents, after review by the appropriate tournament officials, are to be retained by the team managers and available in the dugouts during games. The official Babe Ruth memoranda were sent to all leagues by email and are posted on the State Web site.

Pilot Programs for 2016. Babe Ruth has authorized three pilot programs for this season: mandated day of rest for 9- and 11-year-old pitchers on the tournament trail after pitching six innings in one game or six innings in two games in one or two days; a 16-year-old player playing in the 13-15 Division is not eligible for 13-15 tournament play but is eligible for 16-18 tournament play if he has also played in the 16-18 division during the season; tournament teams will be allowed a fourth coach on the tournament trail for the 16-18 Baseball Division, 12U Softball Division, and 16U Softball Division, but if the team qualifies to advance to the World Series, the fourth coach is responsible for their own transportation, lodging, meals, and other expenses.

Experience with new Babe Ruth Database System. Reports coming to the District Commissioners show that the Sports Illustrated system option works well, with a couple of minor glitches. One advantage is that teams can only be categorized in accordance with official Babe Ruth categories, which makes State authentication of rosters as tournament time approaches much easier. One problem is the requirement for email addresses – lots of folks all over Virginia, particularly in the rural areas, do not have email addresses. The alternative, non-SI program, is a lot less friendly when assigning teams and uploading and submitting rosters.

Tournament Host Required Training. Phil Larcomb reported that previous years' sessions have been well received and that he got many recommendations that it be repeated annually, since so many Tournament Directors are new to the task. The location, date, and time for this year's workshop will be posted on the Web site once plans are finalized. The State will pay mileage to any Tournament Director or his designee who attends and submits a Reimbursement Form to the State Commissioner.

Scorebook Requirements for 2016. Scorebooks will no longer be required to accompany tournament teams. The "Games Played Chart" tabulation, signed by the league president, will suffice.

2016 State Tournament Host Leagues and Estimated Teams. The locations, start dates, and contact persons for each of the 11 State Baseball Tournaments and five State Softball Tournaments are available on the State Web site. It is too early to determine the numbers of teams that will participate.

Assignment of State Representatives to State Tournaments.

Baseball

Rookies	New Kent	Brandon Currence
9s	Gainesville-Haymarket	Dave Cogar
10s	Herndon	Bob Rhyne
11s60	Madison	Larry Pritchett
11s70	West Augusta	Ken Bosserman
12s60	District 4	Ken Bosserman/Glenn Spangler
12s70	Lakeside	Curtis Moore
13s	Augusta	Ken Bosserman/Glenn Spangler
14s	Glen Allen	Curtis Moore/Dave Shoaf
13-15s	District 1	Brandon Currence
16-18s	Greater Manassas	Dave Cogar

Softball

6U	not scheduled	
8U	Varina	Don Gowen
10U	Varina	Don Gowen
12U	Varina	Don Gowen
14U	Varina	Don Gowen
16U	Varina	Don Gowen
18U	not scheduled	

Trophies, Plaques, and Patches. The Trophy Case has changed hands but will make the trophies and plaques. Ken Bosserman reported that the prices this year will be held even. The trophies will be ordered early with the goal to have them available for the tournament directors at the tournament training workshop.

2016 Southeast Regional Tournaments in Virginia. The Southeast Regional 11-70s

Tournament will be held in Williamsburg, the 12-60s and 12-70s will be held in Glen Allen, and the 14s in Colonial Heights. All five Regional Softball Tournaments will be held in Varina.

Waiver Process Review. Rob Connor has approved our request for blanket waivers for fewer than four teams per league and fewer than 12 players on a team – for any leagues that have properly chartered, paid their charter fees, met their insurance requirements, and completed their on-line rosters. A league needing such a waiver must go to the State Web site, print out Rob’s approval letter, and include the letter in its tournament team credentials book. All other waiver needs are to be requested through the waiver process laid out on the State Web site.

Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association. The Association stands ready to help league officials identify umpires for both regular season play and tournament play. To help VBRUA to do this, Donny Rose asks the District Commissioners to find out from their leagues what umpire association(s) they use for umpires so that he, George Burke, Mac Pultz, and Bruce Frye can interact with them for mutual benefit.

Umpire Training. George Burke reported that six baseball umpire training sessions and one softball training session have already been held. Nine junior umpires have joined.

Umpire Assignments for District and State Tournaments. Don Rose, Jr., will work closely with District Commissioners and Tournament Directors to identify and schedule umpires, all of whom must be certified by both National Umpires Association (NUA) and Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA).

Virginia Umpires Association Fees. Fees for 2016 were determined at the 2015 State Fall meeting.

Parents Gate Pass Program Fee for 2016. The Parents Gate Pass Program Fee table for 2016 State baseball tournaments (played in the default double-elimination format) was distributed; the tables for baseball and softball tournaments will be available to tournament hosts.

Champions Day at Nationals Park. This year, the celebration of 12-year-old State Champions in Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. will be held on September 10. The Washington Nationals will also celebrate “Youth Baseball and Softball Days” on May 15 and June 12 with discounted ticket prices and an on-field pre-game parade: http://washington.nationals.mlb.com/was/ticketing/group_theme_games.jsp. Owing to Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia’s developing and strong relationship with the Washington Nationals Community Relations Department, they have awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Baseball for Tomorrow Fund to the Pioneer Cal Ripken League.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer