



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

September 16, 2012

Dorey Park Recreation Building

7200 Dorey Park Drive

Henrico, Virginia

In Attendance

Don Rose, State Commissioner

Don Gowen, Asst State Comm. /Softball Opns

Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner

Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner

Paul Link, District 13 Commissioner

Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner

Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.

Rick Bill, District 8 Softball Commissioner

Roy Brewer, District 5 Commissioner

John DeYoung, Asst State Comm. /Baseball Opns

Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Comm.

Nancy Currence, District 1 Asst. Comm.

Bruce Frye, Assistant Softball UIC, South

Dave Cogar, District 8 Baseball Commissioner

Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.

George Burke, Northern Umpire Consultant

Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire in Chief

Don Rose, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

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

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

Dave Gushee reported that the State treasury contained, as of 9/1, \$13,357.83 in the checking account (compared with \$15,134.48 in 2011) and \$44,897.32 in mutual funds (compared to \$31,263.52 in 2010). A number of expected expenses, including State Officer expenses, have not yet been submitted, but from informal estimates of those expenses, it looks like the budget for the year will be close to recent history, with revenue exceeding expense by about \$1 per team. Investment income for the year to date is \$823.53, reflective of the very low current rates of return generally being experienced.

OLD BUSINESS

State Tournaments

BASEBALL

John DeYoung began by thanking all the volunteers, including those present, for their contributions to the running of the tournaments. Overall, with the exception of the extreme heat during some of the tournaments, things went very well. The heat led to a number of cases of heat exhaustion and rescheduling of games from afternoons to mornings and evenings. Several tournaments were affected by the tremendous storm that raged through the State, forcing extensive work to get fields playable, motels and restaurants without power, and the like. Despite these travails, the general response of players and parents was very positive.

There was some discussion of the role of T-Ball tournaments in the State. Differences in philosophy from District to District surfaced, with at least one District Commissioner reporting a strong conviction among his leagues that kids playing T-Ball are too young to be put into the pressures of competition. Others disagreed while recognizing the legitimacy of the concern over the consequences of competitive pressures on kids so young. Don Rose, on the other hand, emphasized that, in his view, one of the keys to a healthy, growing population of Babe Ruth baseball players is getting them started young (and then keeping them in the system as they grow older) and getting them accustomed to tournament ball from early on. He has observed that players from other States with aggressive competition among players from their early ages has made them noticeably better ballplayers; he believes that the more competitive the player and his team, the more likely he is to keep on playing Babe Ruth ball.

One attendee recalled Ewell Unthank, State Commissioner a decade ago, when talk of T-Ball tournaments first came up, saying he was all for starting players younger and younger, so long as they were out of diapers.

SOFTBALL

Don Gowen reported that most went well. He also reported problems associated with the extreme heat and some rain issues, the latter not at all unusual with such tightly scheduled games. The tournaments were all held in Glen Allen. Don reported that he sees a real advantage in holding them all in one place; among the advantages is the economic impact of the kids' families. Summit Point, he reported, had a contingent of some 300 at the tournament. In planning for 2013, Don pointed out that "one location" could be two or more locations near to each other so that travel among them would not be onerous.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted two baseball Regionals in 2011.

The Cal Ripken 12-70 Regional was held in Glen Allen. Virginia had two teams (Glen Allen and Warwick Moose) in the top three finishers.

The Babe Ruth 14s Regional was hosted by Greater Loudoun and held at Firemen's Field in Purcellville. A few more volunteers would have helped spread the work load.

General Comments

Nancy Currence is stepping down from her Babe Ruth activities, which have been many (league president, Assistant District Commissioner, for example) and very fruitful. Don Rose thanked her for her many years of service; all the meeting attendees wish her well and are secretly hoping that she may return to Babe Ruth some day.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Assistant State Commissioner, Training and Compliance

John Armentrout did not run for re-election for this position last year when he became Assistant Commissioner, Southeast Region. Rick Bill has been serving as a temporary appointee. It was VOTED to elect him to the position for the rest of the term (ending at the end of October, 2013).

2013 Budget

Dave Gushee pointed out that 2012 is the fourth year of operation under current budgeting policies. Although the year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2012 outcome will be a repeat of the three previous years in which operating revenue exceeded operating expenses by about one dollar per chartered team. Last year, Gushee asked whether the Board would wish to reduce the fee per team by \$1.00 to \$5.00 per team (plus dues of \$5.00 per team for a total of \$10.00 per team compared to the current level of \$11.00) or would prefer to leave the current fee in place. It was decided then that the 2012 budget continue current budget policies and priorities, including that the existing dues/fee structure be retained for 2012.

This year, Gushee recommended that, since the operating results repeated the same path, the dues be reduced to \$10.00 (\$5.00 dues and \$5.00 fees) for the 2013 fiscal year and that otherwise, current budget policies be continued. It was VOTED to reduce the dues/fees and otherwise continue the current budget policies.

Gushee went on to point out that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past four years, primarily because the State Commissioner has donated his expenses back to us at the end of each year. The reserves now approximate two years cash flow. It is time to consider ways to use the income from these reserves for some appropriate purpose, such as to cost-share the start-up of new leagues in economically distressed areas. This year, for example, the Executive Board voted to lend a league some funds to help it restructure its finances in response to a significant organization change. This was a loan because the league is not in an economically distressed area.

The discussion which followed indicated a consensus that this was a good concept. Future requests for such aid would meet a positive response, subject of course to the specifics of the case.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame (Wilson, NC)

No one from Virginia was elected to the Hall this year; two nominees are going through review. Don Rose asked for the District Commissioners to think of potential future candidates.

This year, Glen Allen played in (and were champions of) the Hall of Fame invitational tournament as part of a fund-raising and attention-getting program. Southeast Region officials have suggested to the States in the Region to consider a \$100.00 contribution to the Hall each year to help cover its costs. Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia donated this year \$2,000.00, an advance covering the next 20 years. The Regional Commissioner and Hall officials are delighted and plan to use the funds to accelerate expansion plans for the Hall.

Waiver Process

John Armentrout's move to the Region has created an unsustainable process to grant waivers from Babe Ruth rules, primarily the number of teams in a league and the number of players on a team. Headquarters has granted the State each year for the past several years the right to grant these waivers, so the requests don't have to go to national. That helps, but it still requires the annual grant of authority from headquarters. It was agreed that Don Rose will ask at the Regional meeting in October that the rulebook be changed to make the grant of authority unneeded. Meanwhile, it was agreed that the process on the State Web page be changed so that the requesting league's request would go directly to the relevant District Commissioner, with information copies to the relevant State officers and that the Assistant State Commissioner for Baseball or Softball as appropriate be granted the authority to grant the waiver. Currently, a request has to be approved by a majority of the State officers.

1004 Policy

This policy states that once the State tournament brackets have been drawn (some 3 weeks before the tournament start date), when a team expecting to participate drops out, its games will be forfeited but the bracket remains unchanged. State officials are authorized to redraw the brackets or make other appropriate changes within that last 3-week period if, in their collective judgment, equity would be better served. This year, the issue arose a couple of times; the relevant State official exercised his judgment and made some minimal changes. The District Commissioners felt that the current policy worked well, that sound judgment had been used to solve this year's problems, and that the current policy as amended at the 2010 Fall state meeting should be continued.

Review of Realignment of Districts 6 and 7 into District 13

This realignment took place effective for the 2011 season, subject to review after a couple of

years of experience. The realignment provides for two District Commissioners, one of administration, one for field operations, and two teams from the combined Districts would go forward to the State tournaments. A side benefit was that Fairfax County, seeing a larger combined Babe Ruth operation, became more generous in field allocations. A few tournament team officials have asked questions about why one District was allowed two tournament slots.

Paul Link reviewed the history and pointed out that, if the realignment were terminated, the former two Districts would have their two teams, so that the concern seemed to be based more on lack of information than on equity. It was decided to make the reorganization permanent and to point out the pros and cons to those who raised concerns when those concerns were raised.

Other District Realignments

This subject is always on the table. A brief discussion showed that there are no pressing generic concerns at this time, so no action was proposed or taken.

Determining Hosts for 2013 State Tournaments

John DeYoung polled the District Commissioners about whether their Districts would be able to host State Tournaments in accordance with the rotation schedule (posted on the State Web page and passed around at the meeting). All agreed that they expected to be able to find the necessary host leagues, with one exception. District 9 is scheduled for the 11/60 tournament; District 4 for the 12/60. Experience has shown that these two tournaments can easily be run concurrently at one location, given the limited number of teams involved. District 4 said they would be willing to host both. Since Phil Larcomb, District 9, was not in attendance, it was agreed that he would be asked about his interest in hosting the 11/60 or if he would be willing to cede it to District 4. John reminded the District Commissioners to remind the host leagues to use the correct terminology for their tournaments. The tournaments are 8s, 9s, 10s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 14s, 13-15s, and 16-18s; no U's anywhere, unlike softball.

Don Gowen, on the other hand, reported that there was no agreed-upon rotation schedule for softball State Tournaments. He is looking at District 8 as a possibility for the whole set.

Format for 16-18 State Tournament

After discussion of this year's two tournaments and the fact that the Regional for next year is scheduled for August 1, there is no issue of interference with the regular season schedule. Thus, it was agreed that the usual, historic scheduling would be followed.

VBRUA

Donny Rose Jr. reported that we have more certified umpires than ever before (some 300) and more are being assigned to Regional Tournaments. He suggested that District Tournament hosts try to get State-certified umpires for District Tournaments, to maintain this progression of umpires to higher tournament levels. Donny pointed out that, in some tournaments, the host

leagues had troubles getting local State-certified umpires. Donny urged such hosts to follow the State guidelines – contact either him or the State regional umpires in chief when the problem becomes obvious; they will find State-certified umpires in other parts of the State to come in.

Donny reported that he had been granted authority from headquarters to set up a pilot program to train younger umpires, including some who are still in school. This program would lead to State-certified “Junior Umpires”. The State has already trained some 200 youngsters under the national program, which requires a relatively large fee and offers no training, just a membership number. The pilot program would cost the applicant \$10.00, which would stay in the State and provide a shoulder patch as well as the training and certification.

This idea was met very favorably, even including the consensus that, following the Treasurer’s suggestion that new uses be sought for income from reserve funds, if the program needed more funding than the \$10 fee would generate, it would be a good use for reserve funds.

Lead Times Between District and State Tournaments

It was agreed that District Commissioners be free to schedule their District Tournaments at their discretion, using their judgment as to the time necessary for the winners to get to the State Tournaments and to send to the State Hosts team pictures and rosters so that the Hosts can include them in the tournament programs.

Tournament Baseballs

Several tournaments experienced batches of headquarters-approved and rulebook-specified Rawlings baseballs that were soft and got flattened after only a few batters. Don Rose will talk to officials at the Regional meeting in October about this.

Webmaster

Now that John Armentrout is working with the Southeast Region, he has much less time to devote to maintaining the State Web site. This caused some delays in posted information. Don Rose will discuss with John his expectations of available time next year and will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the site is kept up to date hereafter.

Parents Gate Pass Calculations

Some costs in this calculation will change from last year. The new formula will be finalized at the Spring meeting.

Amendments to the MTIPs

During the 2012 State tournament season, requests were made to amend or remove requirements concerning players wearing official tournament passes and which dugout the home team would occupy. John DeYoung will draft the agreed-upon changes and ask to have them included in the

2013 Managers Tournament Information Packages (MTIPs).

National Softball Policy Changes

The new Xtreme softball program was noted. It appears that some Virginia leagues will participate, but there is insufficient information to generate a meaningful reaction.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer