



Virginia

Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES October 4, 2020 Dorey Park Recreation Building 7200 Dorey Park Drive Henrico, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, Virginia State Commissioner	Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Commissioner
Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer	Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training	John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner
John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns. (by phone)	Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner	George Burke, State Baseball Umpire Consultant
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner	John Armentrout, Asst. SE Region Commissioner
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner	Doug Strong, Tennessee State Commissioner
Topper Phelps, District 3 Asst. Commissioner	Lynne Rose (joined for Hall of Fame presentations)
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Commissioner	John Rose (joined for Hall of Fame presentations)
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner	Casey Rose (joined for Hall of Fame presentations)
Matt Clark, District 5 Commissioner	Cathie Burke
	Ellen Strong (joined for Hall of Fame presentations)

[Owing to restrictions on the number of participants to comply with guidelines during the pandemic, only members of the Board of Directors of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. and other members of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. invited by the State Commissioner were able to attend the meeting (Section VII, paragraph C, of the State Bylaws was waived in this force majeure situation).]

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit of Virginia's baseball- and softball-playing kids in these unprecedented times during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction of guests

Paul Link introduced Tennessee State Commissioner Doug Strong.

Introduction of new Commissioners

Paul Link introduced Matt Clark, the new District 5 Commissioner. Paul informed the group that Chris Frazier was the new District 10 Baseball Commissioner. Marty Gordon remains the District 10 Softball Commissioner.

Moment of Silence for David Dove and those affected by the pandemic

Paul Link requested a moment of silence for David R. “Dave” Dove, an umpire in northern Virginia who passed away this summer, as well as all those lost to the COVID-19 pandemic and the West Coast forest fires.

A motion was approved to make a \$100 memorial contribution to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association in Dave Dove’s memory.

Reading of minutes from Spring Meeting

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

Treasurer's report

Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of October 4, 2020, \$3,067.00 in the checking account and \$88,313.51 in mutual funds (compared to \$79,100.00 in mutual funds in March 2020). There were \$6,932.32 in liabilities for total Cash and Reserves of \$91,380.51. A distribution of \$6,000 was taken from the mutual funds account on September 14, 2020. The Executive Committee approved \$6,000 in grants to four leagues.

Hall of Fame inductions

George “Old Geezer Ump” Burke and Donny Rose, Jr. were inducted into the Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Hall of Fame.

OLD BUSINESS

Reflections on the 2020 season (or lack thereof)

Paul Link: I think we all agree we have never seen anything like 2020. Even without a spring season, I know that each of you has never worked harder to keep things together in your Districts. Flexibility was the word of the moment. You had to deal with ever-changing Governor’s orders, rolling permit dates that overlapped seasons in some jurisdictions, gathering limitations, and social distancing guidelines, County regulations that closed fields well into the summer, and finally cancelled tournament trails.

As a testament to our volunteers, our league presidents remained determined, flexible, and positive with all the tough decisions they were forced to make. No one of whom I am aware threw in the towel, but rather they constantly looked forward to how they could adjust to get up in running in late summer and now the fall. I would like to publicly thank each league president and District Commissioner for their outstanding efforts.

What next? First, we now need even more effort to get all of our leagues chartered for the 2021 season barring no further restrictions or setbacks (chartering opens on October 12). It will be a challenge to get players and teams back. Parents will be hesitant and confused based on 2019 league refund policies. One league gave free fall ball to all players that registered for next spring.

Can every league find a way to register players now and have them pay later? I will be discussing with the Executive Committee after this meeting if we can afford to offer no State dues to any league who meets or exceeds their 2019 team counts. The benefit will pay back for years so that there will not be more lost players and teams, which will cause even more contraction in the Babe Ruth organization.

How dedicated is our league leadership to putting in the tremendous effort it will take to return to where we were in 2019? Just relying on email and website messages will not get the job done. We are going to have to knock on doors (so to speak) and use personal communication to get the job done.

We have a huge job in front of us. It is time to “step up to the plate” and make us forget about 2020.

SKOR candy bars were awarded to Matt Clark (D5) and Sheri Zimmerman (D7) for achieving 100% league charter compliance for the 2020 season. Paul handed out a list by District of all “league requests” that are still in a Commissioner-approved but “unpaid” status for 2020.

Review of 2019 growth and Commissioner challenge for new leagues

Paul Link reported these increases for 2019: +74 teams, +888 players, +61 T-Ball, and +17 Minors.

The challenge to add one new player in every league in each age group still stands.

We also need new league focus. Paul gave each District Commissioner in attendance an envelope with contact information on all league inquiries that he had received since 2016 where the leagues did not eventually join Babe Ruth. Paul requested that each Commissioner reach out again to these contacts and that we redouble our efforts to get new leagues to join within the State. Paul mentioned to Doug Strong that inquiries had been received from two leagues around the Bristol, TN-VA, area and that maybe Tennessee would be a better option for those leagues because of the distance from the next closest Virginia leagues. Paul also referenced new target areas for softball league expansion.

District reports

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the of the Districts reported limited success in having their leagues conduct a Spring, Summer and (or) Fall ball season in 2020.

D1 – Brandon Currence reported that half of his leagues were trying to play a limited fall ball season. COVID has made a huge impact on his District leagues playing any games in 2020.

D2 – Tommy Clary said that District 2 had no baseball in 2020.

D3 – Topper Phelps reported that Glen Allen and Lakeside had a limited spring and summer season. Glen Allen would be playing fall ball.

D4 – Ken Bosserman said South Augusta’s spring season started in June. Augusta 13-18s started in late summer. With the Virginia Fall high school sports being moved to spring 2021, lots of questions are being asked about how football will affect the baseball season.

D5 – Matt Clark said five out of seven leagues tried to play in late spring. He has two leagues playing fall ball but due to COVID-19 restrictions in Charlottesville, the city went backwards and was at Phase 2.

D6 – No report (District Commissioner not in attendance)

D7 – Sheri Zimmerman reported two leagues had a season. The Cal Ripken leagues were limited to players age 9 years old and up. It was mandatory for the kids and the parents to wear face coverings or masks. The Virginia high school baseball season is scheduled to end on June 26, 2021. The impact that this will have on the 16-18-Year-olds State and Regional tournaments and the number of games played is not yet known.

D8 – Dave Cogar said all of the District 8 leagues are playing fall ball.

D9 – John Kemper said that District 9 had no spring baseball. Only Summit Point had four teams for fall ball. John indicated that every league would be coming back. Paul asked John to reach out to Fauquier baseball about coming back to Babe Ruth.

D10 – No report (District Commissioner not in attendance)

Rookie Invitational tournament

Williamsburg volunteered to host in 2020 but the tournament was not played owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Brandon Currence offered that Williamsburg had expressed an interest in hosting this tournament in 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of awards and grants

Grants were awarded to the following leagues via their District Commissioners:

Summit Point Babe Ruth League: Rodney Smith, President; \$1000 for facility improvement (nine fields) and \$500 for equipment purchase. Benefits 200+ players. John Kemper (D9)

Northern Fairfax County Babe Ruth League: David Singmaster, President; \$1500 for a new zero-turn lawn mower to maintain two 90-ft. fields. Benefits 200+ players. Sheri Zimmerman (D7)

Greene County Youth Center: Aaron Anderegg, President; \$1500 for facility improvements (concession stand repair). Benefits 288 players. Matt Clark (D5)

Greater Richmond/Lakeside Youth Baseball: Chris McCook, President; \$1500 for equipment purchase (to replace equipment destroyed by two floods). Benefits 250+ players. Curtis Moore (D3)

Paul Link reported that only four applications were received this year. He encouraged more leagues to apply, saying that it is free money and that does not happen very often.

2021 budget

Phil Larcomb reported that we will continue with the same budget policies of the past with no increase in State dues for 2021. Thirty-three leagues had paid their 2020 State invoices in the amount of \$7,190. In response to the two options presented in the minutes of the 2020 Spring Meeting, no league asked for a refund of their 2020 State dues. For 2021, every league will get the exact same invoice as in 2020 based on the number of teams from 2019 season. The leagues that paid in 2020 will receive a zero-balance due on their 2021 State dues invoice.

All anticipated expenses in 2021 will be covered by the income generated from the remaining leagues' State dues invoices and from the 2021 State baseball and softball tournaments. Paul Link is looking for a way to change the date on the 2020 State tournament baseball and softball championship banners (which were purchased prior to COVID-19) to 2021 so that they can be used for the coming year.

The State contracted with an accounting firm and a legal firm to handle our need for income tax preparation assistance and for legal representation. The 2019 Federal taxes were filed in the summer from our accounting firm pro bono.

Phil reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past year, primarily because the State Commissioner has donated his expenses back to the State at the end of each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves represent a positive cash flow for the period of November 2019 to present.

New Southeast Region Service Representative

Paul Link reported that Daniela Bottoni (daniela@baberruthleague.org) has been assigned as the Designated Hitter (formerly Service Rep) for Virginia following Grace Paglione's retirement last spring. Paul handed out and discussed the new Designated Hitter (DH) support program developed by Headquarters to directly assist league presidents. The program was well received. The only concern was about the hours during which the league presidents need support which are typically during the late evening hours and not during the traditional work day. Paul mentioned that the DHs were presently working from home, so he was sure this had already been discussed with each DH.

2021 State baseball tournament rotation chart (handout)

John DeYoung stated that, for 2021 State baseball tournaments, the Districts responsible for hosting each age group should send the host information (host league name, tournament director or league president, phone number, email address, and name and location of playing fields) to him with a cc to Paul Link by February 14, 2021.

2021 Southeast Regional tournaments in Virginia (handout)

The 2021 tournament worksheet provided by John Armentrout was handed out with a revised check-in date for the 12s60 Southeast Regional tournament. Virginia is the host State for the 11s70, 12s60, and 16-18s (all in Stafford).

2021 World Series in Virginia

No World Series will be held in Virginia in 2021.

2021 Softball tournaments

Paul Link explained that Virginia was returning the Area and State tournament format for softball with no Regional tournaments. The Champions and Runners-up in each age group will advance to the World Series and other teams may register once they are eliminated.

Tournament Directors training meeting

Glenn Spangler reported that Virginia will schedule two TD training meetings for the 2021 tournaments. One for D1 and D3 and the other for D4, D6, D7, and D9. Glenn will secure a location in Staunton and Paul Link will secure a location in Richmond.

Buddy Ball event plans for 2021

Paul Link reported that Waynesboro will be the number one priority in 2021 because they were rained out in 2019. They will be followed by Williamsburg and then Herndon.

Background check information

Paul Link explained that every Commissioner will need a new background check for 2021 because they were last done in 2019. Babe Ruth will again provide a portal for free background checks for Commissioners (do not go through a league or another source or you will have to pay on your own).

The new Babe Ruth policy for leagues being required to use Sports Engine for their background checks was discussed as part of the new DH program. Each DH will work hand-in-hand with league presidents to resolve any recreation department or other parent organization issues concerning this new requirement.

Hold Harmless Waiver

Paul Link explained that although most pre-injury liability waivers are not enforceable in Virginia, it is still better to have the waiver signed than to not have it. It is Babe Ruth policy that all coaches, players, umpires, and other volunteers sign this waiver even though the Supreme Court of Virginia has stated that it will not enforce pre-injury liability waivers because they violate the public policy of the Commonwealth.

Open discussion

Commotio cordis chest protectors for catchers—these have not yet been adopted by Cal Ripken or Babe Ruth for the 2021 season. [Commotio cordis is an often-lethal disruption of heart rhythm that occurs as a result of a blow to the area directly over the heart at a critical time during the cycle of a heartbeat.]

Quickball—Paul Link encouraged all Commissioners to promote Quickball to their leagues as a way to increase participation and improve teaching the game to younger entry-age players.

Umpire training—Donny Rose, Jr. and George Burke reminded the group that they were working to combine some of the District-supported umpire training sessions to make better use of the amount of time that is required to do this training. Currently, it takes every weekend from January through March to complete the sessions.

Location and schedule for State meetings—Paul Link suggested changing the current practice of holding a Spring Meeting and a Fall Meeting each year to include virtual meetings. This will require changes to paragraphs B and C of Section VII of the Corporation Bylaws of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Section XII of the Bylaws states that the Bylaws shall be amended in the manner prescribed by Article V of the Articles of Incorporation: “Bylaws of the corporation may be adopted, altered, or amended only upon approval of at least two thirds (2/3rds) of the members present at a regular or special meeting of the members. No proposed Bylaw shall be acted upon unless the has been presented in writing to the entire membership at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting at which such proposed Bylaw amendment or alteration is to be considered.” Members will review the Corporation Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation (both of which are posted in the State website) and explore possible changes to present to the organization’s membership (defined in Section IV of the Bylaws as encompassing “all adult personnel of member Leagues holding an official status, i.e., officers, Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Board of Directors, and team managers and coaches, be they elected or appointed.”).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer