



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

October 12, 2014

**Dorey Park Recreation Building
7200 Dorey Park Drive
Henrico, Virginia**

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner

Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm. /Softball Opns.

Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner

Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner

Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.

Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner

John Armentrout, SE Region Asst. Comm.

George Burke, State Ump Consultant, BB

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm. /Baseball Opns.

Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

Nancy Currence, District 1 Asst. Comm.

Larry Pritchett, District 5 Baseball Commissioner

Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.

Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm. /Training

Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief

Dan Schmitt, President, Glen Allen League

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m.

Kenny Bosserman offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit 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 10/11, \$5894.56 in the checking account (compared with \$15,788.36 in 2012) and, as of 9/30, \$75,277.98 in mutual funds (compared to \$55,550.03 in 2012). The increase in funds value has resulted from investment of a major portion of the unnecessarily large balance in the checking account, and a strong growth in stock values. 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 a dollar per team. Investment income for the year to date is \$4,526.85, including \$3,308.76 in capital gains (compared to \$1,082.49 and no capital gains for all of the previous fiscal year), Gushee commented that the stock market is currently rather volatile, with a downtrend in the past several days not reflected in our stock portfolio valuation noted above.

OLD BUSINESS

Introductory Comments

Paul Link began by thanking all the volunteers, including those present, for their contributions to the running of the overall baseball and softball programs, including the tournaments. He congratulated Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner, for his District being the first to have all its leagues completing the submittal of their Charters and their team rosters.

He also reported that the Washington Nationals held a Champions Day on September 6, during which three Virginia Babe Ruth State Champions – Shenandoah Recreation League 12U Softball, Halifax County South 12-60 Cal Ripken Baseball, and Winchester 12-70 Cal Ripken Baseball were among six youth league teams honored on the field in a pre-game ceremony. The Nationals provided special rates for the players for a package that included game tickets, meals from the concession stand, a DVD of the ceremony, and a digital copy of the team photo. Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia covered the costs for the players, coaches, and parents. Details and photos are on the State Web site's home page.

State Tournaments

TRAINING FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

In June, Phil Larcomb, newly elected Assistant State Commissioner for Training and Compliance, held a State-wide Workshop for State Tournament Directors. The State has been working toward a more effective way to bring these folks up to speed on how to prepare for and then operate the tournaments. This is a hard job, in that so many are doing this for the first time. Phil reported that everyone there said they really appreciated it. John DeYoung echoed that sentiment, finding that the reporting of game results and other feedback, including many fewer questions from the tournament sites, went measurably more smoothly than in previous years. The Workshop will be repeated next year.

BASEBALL

Game results and Tournament winners are posted on the State Web site.

John DeYoung summarized the tournament experiences by reporting that, in general, the tournaments all went off well. It was not as hot as it had been in recent years, and it didn't rain much. There were a few minor glitches. One team in a District tournament had only 10 players and used the Extra Player (EP) rule. When one of their 10 starters was injured, the team had to forfeit, as the EP rule specifies that 10 players must be in the line-up at all times. One tournament had a bat problem; it was resolved quickly. A tournament was bothered by a fan who insisted on smoking near the dugouts. She was difficult but eventually moved away from the field. Don Gowen asked if Babe Ruth, the Southeast Region, or the State has developed a rule to cover e-cigarettes. It turns out there is none yet. The group tended to agree that e-cigarettes belong in the same category as tobacco cigarettes but the issue did not come to a vote.

It will be discussed again at the Spring meeting.

SOFTBALL

Don Gowen reported that most went well. He also reported problems associated with heat and rain issues, but the frequency and intensity were not as bad as in some previous years. The tournaments were all held in Varina.

State tournament results are posted on the State Web site.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted two baseball Regional Tournaments in 2014 – the Cal Ripken 12-60s in Staunton and the Babe Ruth 13-15 Year-olds in Varina.

Glenn Spangler reported that the 12-60s tournament went off very smoothly. There was rain only on one day. Halifax County South, the State Champion did well. The tournament winner, Sweet Water, Alabama, ended up the Runner-Up in the World Series in Alachua, Florida.

John DeYoung reported that the 13-15 Year-olds tournament in Varina was also very well run. The host league, Varina, provided a great ice-breaker picnic after check-in at the Dorey Park Barn on Wednesday afternoon. Pool-play games were played at Dorey Park and Varina High School on Thursday and Friday, with the single-elimination games at Dorey Park. Lumber River West (North Carolina), the Southeast Region Champion, was the Runner-Up in the World Series in Longview, Washington.

World Series

Virginia hosted two World Series – the Cal Ripken 10-Year-olds in Winchester and the Babe Ruth 13-Year-olds in Glen Allen.

George Burke and Phil Larcomb reported that the 10-Year-olds World Series went off very well. There was, however, a serious problem before the tournament itself in arranging for the volunteers needed to staff the various functions. Phil Larcomb described the basic problem as a gross lack of communication between the World Series Committee and the local (host) league. The Committee seemed not to recognize the need in advance, so there was a crash program needed to round up the necessary volunteers.

Curtis Moore reported that the 13-Year-olds World Series was a smooth operation. Host team Glen Allen and Virginia State Champion Gainesville-Haymarket were both 4-0 in pool play; both earned third-place awards for the World Series after falling in the semifinal games. Because officers of the local (host) league (and not a separate World Series Committee) were communicating directly with Babe Ruth Headquarters, the communications problem experienced with the 10-Year-old World Series in Winchester did not arise in Glen Allen, although in both cases, District, State, and Regional officials were not “in the loop” on communications between

Babe Ruth Headquarters and the host league entity. Paul Link will take this problem to the Southeast Regional Meeting to seek ways to improve the communications among the various supporting groups.

Waiver Process

The revised process got off to a rocky start, in that the national letter empowering the Virginia State Commissioner to grant waivers at his discretion for fewer than 12 players on a team and/or fewer than 4 teams in a league was not provided until late in the season. It was eventually posted on the State Web site. When leagues are creating their credentials books for their teams going to State Tournaments, copies of this letter must be downloaded and placed in the credentials books, with the District Commissioner's certification indicating State approval. District Commissioners should alert their leagues to this requirement as tournament time approaches and then ensure that the letter is in the credentials book when they sign off on it prior to District Tournaments.

A number of leagues asked for a waiver for more than eight 12-year-olds on a Cal Ripken upper level team. It appears that for some smaller leagues, it is a real problem to rigidly follow this rule, so that a waiver would be appropriate. In other cases, however, the league is assigning players to teams for reasons other than those that underlie the rule. It was decided that waivers of this rule would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Champion Plaques

Paul Link reported that there were some snafus in the process of tournament hosts' ordering those plaques not automatically provided by Babe Ruth League. The process details were ultimately worked out. It is hoped that the process will work better in 2015.

Banners

This was the first year that District Champion and State Champion banners were produced and made available by Babe Ruth League. The State bought these for the winners of all State Tournaments. Paul Link asked for feedback on how the banners were viewed by the winners and other tournament participants. The consensus report back was that they were a big hit – in fact two of the three 12-Year-olds State Champion teams participating in the Washington Nationals Champions Day festivities brought their banners with them and proudly displayed them in the team photographs, as shown on the State Web site. It was agreed that the State will continue to buy these banners.

General Comments – Most of the District Commissioners felt that the year went well. The discussion of the Tournament Director Workshop led to a discussion of whether the concept could be applied to training of new league officers. The Board concluded that holding workshops for new league officials would be worth a try. Phil Larcomb will set up a program to do that after the beginning of the year. Two workshops (north and south, for example) might be more effective than one, considering travel issues. The District Commissioners were urged to

contact their leagues early on to identify their new officers. Dave Gushee offered to circulate an email to all of this year's Presidents as an additional avenue to the new officers.

Glenn Spangler suggested that special support be given to officers of new leagues, in terms of writing bylaws, how to operate the charter process, and other administrative details.

NEW BUSINESS

Adoption of Revised Bylaws

John DeYoung has led a task force in drafting revisions to our State Policies and Bylaws to update them in light of recent changes in our operating environment. The process has been ongoing since the 2013 Fall Meeting. A draft of the revised Bylaws as was agreed upon at the Spring Meeting was posted on the State Web site home page for Board members and others in advance of this meeting. After a brief discussion indicating that the revised version met our needs, the Board VOTED unanimously to adopt them. The final adopted version will be posted on the State Web site and appended to the Minutes in the State's official archives. [This was done on October 12, 2014, following this Fall Meeting.]

2015 Budget

Dave Gushee pointed out that 2014 is the sixth year of operation under current budgeting policies. Although the year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2014 outcome will be a repeat of the four previous years in which operating revenue exceeded operating expenses by about one dollar per chartered team. Dave reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past six years, primarily because the State Commissioner has donated his expenses back to us at the end of each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves now represent more than two years' cash flow. Last year, the Board considered ways to use the income from these reserves for some appropriate purpose. 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 was not in an economically distressed area.

At this meeting, the Board agreed to continue the current budget policy.

At the 2013 Spring meeting, the full Board voted to institutionalize several items to use some of the reserve funds in memory of Don Rose, such as at least one annual Buddy Ball get-together with medallions for participants, to give a Don Rose Sportsmanship Award to the tournament team at each State Tournament best reflecting Don Rose's love of the game and good sportsmanship, and to provide medallions and plaques to T-Ball teams participating in State T-Ball tournaments. This year, these activities proceeded as planned, except there was no Buddy Ball get-together nor T-Ball Tournament.

At the 2014 Spring meeting, the Board considered two additional suggestions for new programs to use income from the reserves. According to the Minutes, "One was to develop a program to seek out opportunities in economically distressed parts of the State and to strive to plant new

leagues in these areas, using reserves income as starter grants. The second idea was to create a program to provide funds to leagues to use to provide registration fees, and perhaps equipment and uniforms, to kids in the areas where leagues already operate. The goal in both cases would be to draw into Babe Ruth kids in Virginia now unable to play because of their own or their families' inability to pay the usual costs of joining a league.

“The discussion which followed indicated a consensus that these are promising concepts. The Board VOTED unanimously to establish a task force to frame a proposal to bring to the Board at a future meeting to implement one or both of these concepts. Included in such a proposal would be how to identify candidate players or leagues, how to demonstrate the financial need, how to recognize the appropriate character ingredients that would indicate success in the individual case, what sort of application process should be followed, and how to decide on the funding level and the distribution of funds among the successful applicants.”

At this meeting, the Board decided that there was not enough reserves or income from reserves to consider further the option of using the reserves as sources of starter grants for new leagues. It looked favorably on the other option of providing funds to leagues to use to provide registration fees, and perhaps equipment and uniforms, to kids in the areas where leagues already operate. The Board decided it was time to move forward and labeled the initiative the Don Rose Scholarship Program. Phil Larcomb, Curtis Moore, and Don Rose, Jr., volunteered to serve on a task force to develop a proposal.

District Realignment

The State Executive Committee met several weeks ago to consider three issues that have arisen over the recent past: Whether Rockville Babe Ruth League should remain in District 5, even though its territory is in Henrico County (mostly District 3); whether Brentsville's request to be transferred from District 8 to District 13 should be accepted; and what to do about District 13, whose status is temporary. The Executive Committee recommended that Rockville should stay where it is and that the Brentsville move be made. The Board decided to leave Rockville Babe Ruth League where it is, given that there is no decision that would be without cons as well as pros and given that Rockville prefers to stay in District 5. The Board agreed to the move of Brentsville.

The Board then took up the question of District 13. The Executive Committee, after extensive deliberation, recommended that the District be terminated and that Districts 6 and 7 be reestablished. After consideration of travel distances and congestion issues, the Committee recommended which leagues be placed in which Districts and referred that recommendation back to the District and its leagues. The leagues, after discussion, proposed that, if District 13 was to be terminated, the four (three existing plus Brentsville) Cal Ripken leagues be placed in District 7; that Greater Fairfax, McLean/Great Falls, Northern Fairfax County, Northern Fairfax County Senior, and Brentsville Babe Ruth be placed in District 7; and that Vienna, Springfield, and Arlington Babe Ruth be placed in District 6. In addition, Falls Church-Annandale, which was inactive in 2014, will be in District 6. This alignment would determine who played whom in 13-15 Year-olds District Tournaments. Interleague play among all the leagues would continue.

The Executive Committee then put on the floor two options: leave District 13 as is; change as proposed by the leagues involved. The Board VOTED to go with the second options. Thus Districts 6 and 7 are re-established for the 2015 season.

There has been an issue of what to do with the 16-18 Year-olds leagues. This year, there were 18 16-18 Year-olds leagues in the State, very unevenly divided among the Districts. This meant, *inter alia*, that some leagues got free passes to the State Tournament, while others had a tough haul through District Tournaments. Paul Link proposed as an experiment that these 18 leagues be divided up into nine groups of two each, with each group of two competing for spots in a 10-team State Tournament (9 groups plus the host league). After discussion, the Board VOTED to table the proposal until the 2015 State Spring Meeting.

Don Gowen reported that there is an analogous problem with softball. There are 16 leagues in the State, with the same inequities as were pointed out for the 16-18 leagues. Don proposed that the District assignments not be changed, that each District hold its District Tournament as always, but that all 16 leagues be invited to the State Tournaments. The proposal was not acted on but was not summarily dismissed either. The issue will be revisited at the 2015 State Spring Meeting.

League Boundaries

Paul Link pointed out that, by rule [BR Rule 0.01-5], each District Commissioner should work out with his/her leagues the boundaries between leagues and, when agreement is reached, bring the agreement to the State, which would adopt it as proposed, absent some compelling reason to the contrary.

Determining Hosts for 2015 State Tournaments

John DeYoung has 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). As things stand at meeting time, the line-up is as follows:

<u>Tournament</u>	<u>State Host</u>	<u>Regional Host</u>
Rookies	D3	
9s	D9 (Winchester)	
10s	D8	Glen Allen
11s60	D13 [now D7]	
11s70	D5	Stafford
12s60	D1	
12s70	D4	
13s	D5	
14s	D4	
13-15s	D2	
16-18s	D9 (Greater Loudoun)	Colonial Heights

[On October 13, 2014, following this Fall Meeting, John DeYoung sent an email message to Baseball District Commissioners with an updated information on 2015 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.]

Ken Bosserman pointed out that 2015 is the last year to which the published rotation schedule applies. In response to agreement by all present that they desired to continue this process for assignment of host leagues for State baseball tournaments, John DeYoung agreed to bring a proposal to the 2015 State Spring Meeting.

Don Gowen, on the other hand, reported that there was no agreed-upon rotation schedule for softball State Tournaments. Softball folks report that they prefer playing all their tournaments at the same location and enjoying the large number of fans showing up. A major issue is finding enough communities able to hold five or six State Tournaments at the same time to rotate them around the State and not going back to a couple of places over and over again. He is talking with Shenandoah Rec League, which has not been host for a collective State Tournament bash, but no agreement has been reached yet.

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.

New Leagues

Discussions are under way with three possibilities: Dulles South (Ripken), Huguenot (baseball and softball), and Farmville (baseball).

Rule Changes for 2015

Babe Ruth headquarters has made a few changes. They are posted on the State Web site.

Umpire Fee Schedule for 2015

The State follows the Southeast Region in setting these fees. The Region has set the 2015 fees as follows:

Rookies Baseball and 8U softball = \$40 per umpire per game (in District and State Tournaments, 2 umpires for double elimination or pool play and 3 for championship game(s))

9-Year-olds, 10-Year-olds, 11-Year-olds, 12-Year-olds Baseball and 10U and 12U Softball = \$45 per umpire per game (same number of umps as above for tournaments)

13-Year-olds, 14-Year-olds, 13-15 Year-olds, and 16-18 Year-olds = \$55 per umpire per game (3 umpires for DE or pool play and 4 for championship game(s) for tournaments)

14U, 16U, and 18U Softball = \$55 per umpire per game (2 umps for DE or pool play and 3 for championship game(s) for tournaments)

The new fee schedule will be posted on the State Web site. [This was done on October 12, 2014, following this Fall Meeting.]

Umpire Patches

Historically, umpires have worn their State patches on their shoulders. Hats with patches are now becoming standard. After discussion, it was agreed that Virginia need not make this change yet, as it has a supply of shoulder patches for new umpires and ongoing umpires with new shirts.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer