



## **Board Meeting**

March 12, 2020

**Board Members Present: Larry Holden, Lucy Campbell, Fred Clarke, Erika Satterlund, Kurt Fluegge, Alan Wittman, Ryan Mullenix, Soren Llanes, Chris Freer, Jack Chao, Rob Freytag, Elisabeth Carroll**

*Cesar was unable to attend, but provided notes to be reviewed*

This meeting was held as a conference call in compliance with CoVid19 containment recommendations. Phone 425 659 5266 meeting code 747 296 965#

Meeting Start Time: 7:05

Meeting End Time: 8:53

### Current News

Lucy was at the D-9 Presidents meeting last night. Little League International made a decision today to close all little leagues down until April. Our schools will be closed until April 24<sup>th</sup> due to an order from Governor Inslee to slow the spread of CoVid19.

Opinions in the district are mixed about whether or not it is safe to continue to play while containing germs. If a parent would like to hold a playdate to get some fresh air on a field, it will NOT be insured or associated with Thunderbird in any capacity.

The twelve game minimum for all-star eligibility has been canceled. This year exceptions will be made.

The reality of “Flatten the Curve” recommendations and timing will impact our season. It could still be feasible to hold Opening Day Ceremony on April 25<sup>th</sup>. We should consider reimbursing families as much as possible.

Thunderbird held an all-coaches meeting with more than 20 managers from all levels last week. Attendance was great and coaches received white binders with safety information and sleeves to organize their important documents. Lucy received e-mails from multiple coaches about how much they enjoyed the presentation. They were grateful for the league’s message, consistency, and presentation while having everyone in the same place.

### Finances

The uncertainty of the pandemic makes it hard to know what we can expect. We remain hopeful that players will be able to participate in our programs beginning April 25<sup>th</sup>. We have already collected registration fees and would like to be accommodating and fair to our families.

The city has canceled field rentals for all of March and April. They will not charge us for those reservations. The school district will most likely need a request to cancel our bookings through April 24. Soren will talk with his contacts about this tomorrow.

If we must cancel the season, an option would be to issue a credit toward fall ball or next year. Soren is also willing to consider how much money is sunk. He could do an analysis of what we could afford and we will consider what to do. Lucy has been responding to refund requests that we don't know at this time. Little League International should be able to offer guidance. Perhaps we could offer to transfer registration fees collected to fall ball and discounts on next year's registration.

Families would appreciate us being proactive and offering information that we are working on this. We would appreciate families offering to donate their registration fee to the league. Lucy will communicate that we are analyzing this.

Our priority is to reenroll families for the 2021 season. Ideas about how to offer families the best experience this year...

- We could assign teams a color and they could wear any t-shirt they want to. This would eliminate uniform fees.
- Add extra field time as soon as we are allowed to start the season.
- Be proactive with communication. We are hoping for a great second half of the season and want to be accommodating.
- Be gracious about offering to return as much money as possible.
- Consider dipping into reserves and what we can absorb without folding the league. We are a non-profit with shallow pockets.

Our community has to come together. All of us are financially impacted by the recent events and health crisis. We will figure out what we can absorb and offer as an incentive to come back next year. We could also present the option to use any potential reimbursement as a donation to Thunderbird. We can communicate that we are working on this and hope that we will still be able to have a great second half of the season.

### Sponsorship

- Erika has been secured \$5000 from Republic, their logo will be on the uniforms with a check expected mid-April. Their GM might speak again at Opening Day.
- Councilman Regan Dunn will be donating \$5000. There will be a photo op with him and a big check.
- Dick's Sporting Good donated a \$500 gift card, equipment, two discount shopping weekends. Ninety coupons from our league were used during the special two weekend promotion!

We will try to schedule another shopping weekend when it is close to the start for the lower division teams. The coupons we received expire May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. We are expecting a \$500 visa card from Dick's. This could be used for the baseballs we purchase annually. We have three sets of catcher gear that may fit up to age 11, but could use bigger sizes. We also have two long nets.

Alan can take a look at the quality of the donated gear. If it isn't appropriate for league play, it could be raffled off. Alan has some tees that he has modified with a hacksaw to make them shorter. Erika has all the donated equipment and will coordinate with Alan to get it to the shed.

### Opening Day

Chris is doing well with his raffles so far but would like the board to seek camps, Stods time, Mariner's Tickets (If they will play any games this year.) We can all seek items. Chris, Jennifer, and Derek met last week. Chris is working hard to make the transition seamless when it is time for him to retire from the board. Derek is very enthusiastic, has tons of energy, and a four year old. He took flyers back to his son's school and new t-ballers registered the next day.

### **Planning Needs:**

- Share volunteer lists
- Consider NOT scheduling any games on Opening Day (This would eliminate the biggest problem. Coordination of the photo schedule with games is extremely tricky.) Games could potentially be scheduled on Saturday evening or the next day.
- Chris will check with Ginny from the Bellevue School District. Discussion about whether or not we should delay Opening Day to the following week. Consensus is that we will keep it on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Equipment

Alan reported that we are in good shape. Everyone other than machine pitch has what they need. A big clean-up was done at the shed, lots of things were thrown away or donated, the shed now looks great. Great teamwork!

Ryan and Jack will get first aid equipment to distribute with uniforms.

### Uniforms

Jack has already ordered all the uniforms and is working with the upper division VPs to have names on the back. Given the current pandemic and uncertainty, we could scratch the customized name on the back of each jersey. Discussion....We will have the numbers put on the back and play without names this year. If the season is canceled, we could consider using the uniforms next year.

Jack is also thinking about the All-Star uniform needs. There are lead times where things need to be ordered. Sponsor forms are also sent out for \$200 (doesn't cover the cost of uniforms for each team). Jack purchased All-Star caps and already has approximately half of what is needed.

Maybe we should go back to the traditional t-shirt that goes under the vest and a cap. Our position has been that we do not buy teams "fancy" uniforms. Last year we did make a purchase for girls' softball since there wasn't anything usable for them. The new uniforms were returned at the end of the season. We should make it clear to families that purchasing extra uniform items isn't their manager's decision. Thunderbird does NOT require uniforms, especially custom uniforms. Managers should not purchase uniforms and expect parent reimbursement.

We should be proactive about fundraising before the quick transition between the end of the regular season and beginning of All-Stars. Jack will move forward with nameless uniforms – numbers only. We need to make a decision about whether or not to require each team to have a \$200 sponsor. Each team sponsor gets a logo on the website, photo plaque, the value of the sponsorship has not changed. Lucy could create a footer on her e-mail that includes a thumbnail of each sponsor's logo that would accompany all league correspondence.

Although we had thought about distributing uniforms next week, things are different this year. We will wait until April 25<sup>th</sup> when fields open and we have a better idea of what our options are. Erika will reach out to Republic about the uncertainty. Should we still solicit sponsors for individual teams? We are still hoping to play. Idea – for teams - get a \$200 check. If you don't get uniforms, tear up the check. We will give you more time – an extra two weeks to get the sponsors. We usually collect \$5600 through these individual team sponsors (t-ball teams are not included). We will give teams as many games as humanly possible during the month of May.

### Training

Kurt will reschedule Mark Linden's clinics that were planned for this weekend. He has canceled and our payment is being held as a credit for Fall Ball or next year's programs. Idea – Kurt could connect with coaches about Big Al training. He will send out several e-mail reminders with the information and link to an updated list of assigned coaches. It would be helpful to send this out weekly.

### Safety

Ryan started pulling up the videos from last year's safety clinics. He is ready to send those out and get a confirmed acknowledgement from coaches that they watched those videos. Lucy suggests that we include a quiz at the end that is sent to Ryan for grading. He pulled together a two page cheat sheet. Our interlocking teams are levels A and above. That means all these teams need a first aid kit with ice packs. These are organized and ready to hand out to coaches with uniforms.

Lucy notes that levels AAA and up have the entire safety plan in their binder, in addition to signed code of conduct, signed medical documents, a single sheet with nuts/bolts on one side and field addresses on the other side. That field address sheet is in the front of all binders for reference so 911 dispatchers can be informed about WHERE the emergency is happening. We have wanted to have this resource for a long time and it has finally happened.

### Interlocking

Fred proposed that we cancel interlocking for AAA with Bellevue East. We have had trouble scheduling games with them in the past and ended up responsible for all field costs. In addition, games were often forfeited since their teams didn't have enough players. We may only have 8 games and if that is the case, we can just play within our league. Lucy will wait two weeks and then e-mail Bob for clarification about our concerns.

### Coaches

We had planned to vote in coaches tonight, but there is less urgency due to the delay from the virus.

### Rules

Cesar distributed a PDF of the local rules that he would like to approve. Lucy is concerned that we keep our rules aligned with Bellevue East. We should probably table this discussion for tonight because Bellevue East Representatives need to be part of the conversation. Cesar and the Bellevue East UIC agreed on proposed changes, but then their president overruled the decision. Our board is supportive of the changes recommended by Little League International to shorten games and improve the player experience. We need more time to work this out for consistency.

Cesar states VPS must remind managers that they need a volunteer umpire for every game. AAA levels and up need to work on this. Coaches may NOT umpire their team's game. Parents from A and AA should be umpiring so that by the time they get to AAA, they already have a few years' experience. This will be a point of emphasis this year since games should be covered by more than one umpire.

Rob and Fred will try to solicit more volunteer umpires. If we want umpires to be hired for Big Diamond, a request should be made. Our rules are that the visiting team supplies a field umpire. The home team supplies a home plate umpire. The goal should be to have two trained umpires on the field, but we are willing to accept untrained volunteers as well. We have 12 volunteer umpires committed, and are looking for more with incentives. Training was held on February 29 with ten umpires. Cesar plans to send out online training links and information during our break. We are concerned that parents have minimal responsibilities when baseball resumes.

Cesar has provided junior umpires with full gear sets to take home. Leaving them in the green boxes leads to fast deterioration, poor maintenance, and missing pieces. If an umpire does not have a full gear set, the umpire may only stand behind the pitcher (not the catcher). Anyone can ump from behind the pitcher. They may wear their own gear. We shouldn't pressure anyone to wear a mask they aren't comfortable with. They can be disinfected to prevent germ transmission.

Other:

The minutes from February were approved.

We will schedule another conference call within the next few weeks.