



## **Board Meeting November 11, 2020**

**Board Members present on Zoom:** Lucy Campbell, Mark Gardner, Larry Holden, Kurt Fluegge, Rob Freytag, Cesar Garcia, Alan Wittman, Jack Chao, Elisabeth Carroll

**Meeting Start Time** 7:01 pm

**Meeting End Time** 8:40 pm

**Great news:** Mark Gardner is here to join the board.

**Communicating with our Community:** Lucy has drafted a letter that will can be edited on a google doc before Monday at 5 pm. After she gets feedback, she will send it to the community.

### **Planning for the 2021 Season**

- Lots of our volunteers are acknowledging that we didn't have a season last year and are stepping up for one more year. Yay!
- Chris Freer will help with Opening Day on April 24.

### **Equipment, Safety**

- Alan reported that last year, coaches received bags with equipment and balls. They still have them. Equipment exchanges are possible if needs have changed, but everyone should be set.
- AAA could start with safety balls for the first part of the season since players missed last year's season. We want to keep players feeling safe. Pitchers' skills will be developing, and we don't want batters to be injured if hit accidentally with bad throws. We will use safety balls until sliding starts. We should talk to Ryan to see if there is anything else that needs to be replaced.

- Rob has helped us dial in the pitching machines, along with Puesta details. We should plan ahead by having extra springs on hand. Rob saw 4-6 springs in the umpiring shed or storage locker in Factoria. These do break through normal use and because of age. Each year we need around 6. Alan will buy another box.
- We would like a checklist of what we would like to have in green boxes. Lucy will send an e-mail to three people.

### **Team Planning**

- Teams could be configured differently this year. In past years A and AA were combined and called "Rookies." It was split because older kids needed something more competitive.
- Rob thinks that considerations needed will be more obvious when we evaluate the pool of players we are working with. We might need to have plan A, B, C, etc. Hopefully, there will be many returning players.
- Teams for the older kids could be categorized as Minors and Majors. Kids between the ages 9-12 are eligible to play Majors. Anyone who doesn't play Majors would be in Minors. We could register by age group: t-ball (4,5,6) 7,8-year olds, 9-12 year olds. We will try to make age groups similar to recent years, but we won't worry about divisions for now.
- Little League will have to waive/modify green book language about attending try outs before playing on a team. Can we use last year's projections? What about all-stars?
- T-ball will start April 19<sup>th</sup>. (Opening day April 24<sup>th</sup>.) Fred is working on registering fields and needs details about dates. It would be helpful for Kurt to nail down when Mark Linden can hold the practice, then coordinate on with him so field reservations can be made.
- Coaches will work to ensure that younger kids are safe and involved. We might want to change rules to make the innings shorter too (mercy rule).

- Idea - This would be a good year to start extra Friday night training practices. No games would be scheduled Friday nights, kids would come to practice skills. Larry notes that the school district changed a policy to prevent people from over requesting field time, then canceling. Now they say if you try to return more than 20% of what you requested; we must pay. So far, we haven't requested Friday nights for this reason. If we decide to move forward with this, we should wait until after daylight savings (March 14<sup>th</sup>). Fred, Rob, and Kurt will collaborate and decide which day extra practices could be scheduled.

### **Registration**

- Larry has noticed no increase in registration numbers if we open early. Rob commented that Bellevue East registration just opened today. There are pros and cons of charging registration fees initially. Our new registration system gives us a chance to not lose money with credit card fees. We could structure fees with four rates – t-ball, 7-8, 9-12, over 12.
- Bonzi was purchased by another company, then Stack Sports. They have been using software called Blue Sombrero (formerly owned by Dick's). Little league now likes it. Benefits include integrated background checks with automatic residency checks.
- Last spring, generous families donated registration fees. This covered our field deposits and baseballs. Larry will come up with the registration fees to mirror last year. Our goal can be to open registration December 1. Knowing how many people are interested will help us in making other planning decisions.
- Kurt will keep track of Mark Linden. He owes us \$2800 because we paid him last year and weren't reimbursed.

### **Umpires**

- Cesar is thinking we will have similar challenges to past years when we encourage youth umpires to volunteer. Two years ago, we had seventeen (seemed like a good number considering we were going to interlock with Bellevue East.) There are free umpire training webinars available. Cesar will reach out to others and encourage them to register.

- Unfortunately, there hasn't been much advance notice for the webinars. Hopefully, they have been recorded, but there aren't any indications this is the case. Potential umpires have just been encouraged to register to participate live. There is room for improvement in communication about this from D-9. Chris Martin is the contact to find out more about viewing webinars.
- Larry could put together an e-mail list with age appropriate players who could be volunteer umpires. Cesar will draft a letter by Monday with a few tidbits about how much fun it is to be an umpire and training opportunities.

### **Board Member Assignments**

- Mark Gardner is interested in AAA VP. Perhaps Mark could coordinate machine pitch too? The only thing extra is helping coaches understand how to use the pitching machines.
- Lucy is willing to help with t-ball as long as Kurt can coordinate practices with Mark Linden. Larry is going to send out an e-mail to try to recruit another old board member.
- Big Diamond – Larry (unless a new board member would like this role)
- Fields – Fred
- The person we had in mind is not interested in being the new safety officer. Ryan did all the work last year up until the point of hosting the safety meeting. We definitely need someone to take this on and monitor cases each week.
- Ryan, Jay, Scott (?) spoke with Lucy two weeks ago. They haven't responded to her request that we need a waiver. Waivers will keep coaches and volunteers protected in case we make mistakes social distancing. D-9 is suggesting we have a parent who works as an attorney draft something for us.
- Larry will call someone and persuade them to remain on the board.

### **District Leadership**

We are required to turn in a safety plan that addresses COVID-19 protocols and liability releases. Unfortunately, we have not received any guidance about this or support in

determining what we would appropriate. Examples would be extremely helpful. D-9 has offered to share plans turned in by other leagues. So far no one has turned one in.

It feels impossible to run a program without leadership about how to keep players safe. Maybe we will not run a program? It seems logical that since we purchase insurance through Little League International that some information and help would be available. Unfortunately, this hasn't been the case. We need a "wet ink" signature that requires parents from releasing us from responsibility if their player contracts COVID-19. It feels tricky to know what would be appropriate. We are a non-profit and ultimately responsibility lies with Little League International.