



## **Board Meeting**

November 7, 2019

**Board Members Present: Rob Freytag, Larry Holden, Lucy Campbell, Jennifer Agustin, Fred Clarke, Tim Chin, Elisabeth Carroll**

Meeting Start Time: 7:02

Meeting End Time: 8:47

### **Finances**

Soren reminded us that we have an extremely tight budget. We can save money on fields and make sure that we are only paying for fields that are used. Bellevue East controls their costs by looking at fields two weeks ahead of time, returns them to the city if they aren't going to be used. We should do this too.

### **Field Scheduling**

We want to make sure that our new scheduler, Steve, is supported. Lucy has had a chance to chat with him about logistics. Larry sent him tons of information. Larry reported that Steve is confident about what to do. Rob volunteered to act as a second "back-up field scheduler" to communicate with the city as needed (if Steve is unavailable).

### **Interlocking**

November 21<sup>st</sup> we will meet at Terry's Kitchen with Bellevue East and all of the VPs from both leagues to talk about interlocking and local rules. Interlocking at the machine pitch level is typically tricky so it is especially important to be on the same page about this. We want to have both of our rule sets be exactly the same so we don't need "interlock rules." This way both VPS and all coaches would have the same information going into games at any level.

- We need a hard line for both baseball and softball about when kids can start stealing i.e. an agreed-upon date.
- We will make an agreement about pitching machine use.
- It can be helpful to use safety balls at AAA when kids are learning how to pitch, then switch to "real" balls later in the season.

Lucy shared feedback about her dialogue with Darcy from Bellevue East (BE). They would like to keep doing the same things they have done in the past. Rick thinks they will have at least one full team at every level.

Logistics/Cost Sharing:

- Lucy suggested that if we interlock (3 Thunderbird (T) teams, 2 BE teams) and things are equitable, then it makes sense for us to each handle our own costs separately.

- If/when things switch and T acts as the host, we would manage expenses.
- We need to make sure that things are equitable. Rick would like our field schedulers to both meet. We want to make sure both leagues are contributing financially.
- Larry suggests that BE pay for uniforms and also provide fields. If T provides fields then we would need to recoup BE registration fees.
- During the week our preference is to schedule games that are NORTH of our boundaries. Traffic congestion makes it difficult to travel south weekday evenings. We would like games at Robinswood and Big Picture (AKA “Robinswood North”) Fields.
- We can get a key to the green box at Robinswood for \$50 that would be returned when the key is returned at the end of the season. A key box would be put on the chain link fence that could be accessed and we would need one emergency backup key. Other field options that could work – Phantom Lake (has been “Eastgated Up”). There isn’t a safety box? Newport Heights and Somerset Fields are fine with safety boxes.
- Steve could make a spreadsheet with each field and list their fence details, safety boxes, back stop, etc. The idea is to have a cheat sheet about what divisions could play where. Larry will draft it for Steve.

## **Registration**

Stack Sports just bought Blue Sombrero. We don’t need to make any changes that we know of. We will open registration and hope things go well. A reduced cost should accompany the Blue Sombrero transition. (Team Connect is their version of Team Snap.) The software keeps improving and their tech support is very helpful.

Registration is ready, but we need to decide about what we are doing with background checks. We need to confirm how we will conduct background checks on our volunteers. The two choices are to use our current system or set up a new system that captures volunteer name, email address, and submits the information to the new JDP interface system. The software would then contact the potential volunteer to ask for the SS number and have them confirm, then complete the process. Note: Stack Sports doesn’t know what JDP is. If we use the new JDP, it could save us \$1200.

Larry will work on setting up administrator access for blue sombrero/volunteer check.

## **Winter training/Opening Registration**

If we are sending a registration e-mail, we can tell the dates for winter training. We would like to offer additional Friday night practices throughout the season. Our neighboring communities are having two games plus one practice every week. Families are asking for practice opportunities in addition to games once the teams start competing. We want to be sure that we are communicating about the levels that will be served on Friday nights.

Larry will open registration. Lucy will draft a letter that indicates registration is open and what people get what their money.

## **Marketing and Outreach**

Last year Lucy made a list of all Bellevue Public Schools in our boundaries with a list of number of flyers that should be sent to each. She copied flyers at Costco, counted, and separated them. They were hand delivered to the district office that distributed them to schools and students. The number of fliers varied widely. Some schools requested 12 copies to post on a bulletin board. It would be our responsibility to monitor and replenish fliers any empty bulletin boards. Note: Newcastle Elementary is the only school in the Issaquah School District and distributing fliers there is prohibited. Fliers are important. Costco may be our cheapest printing option.

Jennifer knows that Somerset Elementary has a tradition of event fairs with informational booths. Jennifer could find out when activities are between now and the end of the year. We could target the audience at those events with fliers at the door encouraging young players to sign up. The booth could have an iPad available so potential players could sign up right then. Jennifer wants to have a nicely decorated table. Maybe we could print the banner Jeff Unay made? Rob has a connection in table top printing.

We want to have lots of players registered so we can have a good attendance at winter training on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

Giving Tuesday is coming up. Lucy would like to create a donate link that could be distributed for giving Tuesday. Our web page is not currently set up this way. Larry can put a button on our home page under the Facebook button that would accept donations.

Lucy's goal is that every child living within our boundaries with ball aged children has heard of Thunderbird and considered registering.

Maybe we can reserve the Somerset gym on a Saturday for young kids. Lucy suggests that if we do this, we wait until a month prior to Opening Day. Our Marketing and Outreach for older levels need to start now for A and AA. Idea – we could have kickball in the gym. We could have a special training system after the end of winter training – maybe at Stods. A motion was made and approved to have three weeks of t-ball training at Stods.

Preschool – if we want to distribute flyers we need volunteers to drive the flyers to all the families. What if we asked preschools to e-mail our info out to families. Or we could ask them to print and distribute our flyers and give them a gift card.

We want to retain our existing base of Thunderbird families. We can encourage them to include their friends when they sign up. Jennifer has great ideas about how to communicate this message. Larry has adjusted the permissions so she can correspond with our distribution list.

It would be great to have coaches write and send letters to their players. We want to encourage them to sign up again and invite friends.

Elisabeth will increase our presence on social media. Thunderbird has Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. Marketing message ideas:

- Play up the angle that we AREN'T select. Our league is fun, relaxed, and good for everyone.
- It is also valuable to play up the value of competition and the successes of our teams. We had two state championship teams.

- Fred notes that since baseball and softball numbers are declining, it is becoming easier for softball/baseball college athletes to get scholarships.
- We are the lowest concussion sport. Lacrosse is second worst to football.

The misconception that Facebook freely distributes our message to all users who “like” our page was discussed. Business pages operate differently than personal pages. Elisabeth noted that Facebook constantly requests money to increase our audience and boost posts. It seems that whenever a post is boosted, future posts are shared with smaller audiences and more payment requests are made. We could spend a lot of money.

Maybe we could put a “Like us on Facebook” link on the bottom of our registration. We want to market to t-ball and the kids who are one or two years older.

Since we will be posting pictures online of our community, we should offer a way for concerned parties to opt out. Maybe we could say “Please understand that we share photos..... let us know if there is a picture published you would like to have removed.” Larry will write this.

Fred is willing to pay \$50-\$100 of personal funds for a new sign design (e-lance). Maybe we can have a short website on the sign like “Tbird.live”. We like the idea of just having one sign instead of several.

An ongoing problem exists with players who attend schools on the weekend. School is scheduled at the same time as our games and practices.

Last year we only had 413 players. We would like more this year.

The best way to reach Fred is via text message.