

Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting
Stittsville Minor Softball Association
Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2011
Stittsville Lions Hall
7 – 9 p.m.



Present: Wendy Hawthorne, Ed Joy, Craig Pavia, Dave Lee, Mike Kotuba, James Hernandez, Sylvia McGinnis, Paul Hansen, Thomas White, Eryn White, Colleen Haché , Laurie Chatigny (Administrator)

All 2011 final reports were available in advance of the meeting on the Stittsville Minor Softball website and copies were available at the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

E. Joy called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. C. Pavia began by welcoming Laurie Chatigny as the new SMSA Administrator.

Approval of Agenda

E. White requested the Umpire Report be first as he needed to leave the meeting early. All in favour.
CARRIED

Umpire Report

E. White began by indicating that Midget games should not be scheduled on the same night as Bantam games due to umpire scheduling. Recommendations for next year include:

- Proper training for coaches, so they do not always question umpires calls
- Absolute zero tolerance policy for abuse of umpires – any comments would result in immediate expulsion
- Must empower young umpires so they know they can expel abusers
- Training for coaches should include knowing how to question umpires appropriately – at the same time, umpires should be able to explain their calls
- P. Hansen suggested that junior umpires should be paired with older umps for mentoring at first, which gives them freedom to “find the strike zone” without feeling intimidated

It was also suggested that members of the executive wear their red shirts and circulate to various fields, so umpires know they have somebody there to back them up.

Fun League Report

C. Pavia indicated that based on the reported numbers for fun league this year, which are dropping off steadily, we need to focus efforts on recruiting and retaining kids. Fun League kids are the softball players of the future and if we don't have them, there will not be an association.

J. Hernandez said he was not sure why the numbers were so low this season, but a number of factors, most notably the weather, did not help. His recommendations for next season include:

- Need to develop a support network for coaches
- Coaching skills are not there, so they are not very motivated
- Very important to have a “rain day” for on-field training to ensure this happens despite the weather
- Need to follow up on the one day of training with much more support
- Learn to Play handbooks with unique drills – could also encourage coaches to post their own drills that work well and the kids like

Fun Day turned out well and was a good jump start to the season. J. Hernandez suggested he would like to offer a tournament to the Major-5 and Tyke levels as part of the Fun Day or possibly at the end of the Fun League season. The Minor 5s and t-ball would remain just for “fun.” This tournament could award medals for achievement, rather than just participation. It would also offer the younger umpires a good opportunity for development.

T. White suggested that the softball season is too short and we should perhaps consider extending the season to the end of July. Again, the bad weather at the start of the season did not help. D. Lee concurred, but there are many ramifications of this to be considered such as more field permits and higher expenses, leading to higher fees.

C. Haché suggested that we start earlier in the year by booking gyms for the smaller kids. She also asked who is in charge of the marketing function. D. Lee said he will be doing it this year and without the sponsorship/fundraising responsibilities, should be able to focus on early recruitment in schools in Kanata, Stittsville and Richmond starting in April.

C. Pavia re-iterated this should be the board’s most important focus over the coming year.

T. White and E. Joy committed to helping the fun league coaches by running clinics two nights per week in April and developing a program to support them through the season. C. Pavia also offered his help.

Motion: E. Joy motioned that the board should concentrate on increasing and retaining Fun League registration and providing better coach support. All in favour. **CARRIED**

C. Pavia indicated a full Board meeting should and will be dedicated to Fun League in January.

J. Hernandez agreed he would remain as Fun League Director for next season. He will send an email to all fun league coaches from the 2011 season, re-assuring them that their concerns are being addressed at the executive level and they will have more support in 2012.

House League Report

C. Haché began by saying there has not been a House League Director for boys for three years. In addition to being the SMSA Administrator, Karen Halse volunteered her time over the past season as the Boys House League Director as nobody else volunteered.

M. Kotuba noted that these are very important positions and the main point of contact with the Executive. The House League directors review the schedules to ensure no conflicts, recruit coaches and

work with them. He noted that it takes approximately 20 hours to initially create the schedule, but tweaking it takes a lot of time.

T. White volunteered to be the scheduler for house league games to help the convenors. However, we still need an umpire scheduler.

C. Haché raised the question about board designated teams versus the player draft and how it is conducted. W. Hawthorne indicated this is still being reviewed at the Executive level.

C. Haché went on to say the draft is difficult in that the rankings are not consistent and the coaches know how to manipulate the system. Pitchers and catchers are always problematic.

E. Joy recommended the best way to pick teams is to sit the coaches down and pick the required number of teams, without knowing which team they will end up with. While this is fair, it does not easily allow accommodations for any special requests.

Review of Executive Board Structure

C. Pavia indicated it was agreed at last year's AGM that the board structure be changed to six executive members sharing responsibilities so that nobody was overwhelmed. The structure would remain in place for the 2011 season and be ratified at the 2011 AGM.

All board members present agreed that this structure allowed them to handle the amount of work without hardship.

P. Hansen is stepping down from his Executive position after many years with the Association. This leaves a vacant position. C. Pavia indicated if nobody steps up, the responsibilities will have to be divided between the remaining five board members.

J. Hernandez felt there is a need for fun league parents become involved on the board and learn the ropes for future years. C. Pavia suggested that J. Hernandez recruit a fun league member who would be willing to be the sixth member on the Executive Board. J. Hernandez agreed to do so.

Motion: E. Joy motioned that the SMSA Constitution be officially changed to SIX (6) executive board members with equal responsibilities. All in favour. **CARRIED**

Trophies/Awards Coordinator

P. Hansen agreed to take on the role as Trophies/Awards Coordinator. C. Pavia acknowledged and thanked Steve Strike who has been doing this job for several years now and wishes to step down. S. Strike will provide all discs to P. Hansen.

Other Business

P. Hansen asked if the City of Ottawa would consider making the GRC an official softball diamond. C. Pavia responded that the City has already indicated there are too many problems with this diamond to make it viable.

C. Haché suggested we try to book some diamonds in Richmond that are very well maintained and lit. Carp also has a lit ball diamond. C. Pavia indicated we would look into it when submitting the permit application.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.