



**ARKANSAS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 3, 2024**

Call to Order at 6:30 PM

Board Members Present: Barker, David, Fennel, Fleeman, Hence, Henderson, Keating, Nelsen, Saum, Sheridan, Webb, Wibblesman

Board Members Absent: Windley

Non-Voting Members Present- Millner, Murray

Skatium Representative: James Belamy

1) Approval of November 2024 minutes: Henderson made motion to accept minutes, Wibblesman seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

2) Rink Business - James Belamy

a) Not present

3) Association business

a) Feasibility Study (Fennel) –

i) Fennel sent proposals for feasibility study. Would take 45-60 days, probably can do it online/remotely, may have to travel. Flat fee is \$17,000, which includes three-year financial projections plus feasibility. Pay \$5,000 up front when signing contract. Upon completion of first step, another \$5,000 payment. Upon completion of total project, \$7,000 payment plus all travel if needed. High end of travel costs is \$2,500.

ii) Fennel feels hockey cannot grow without new rink. Said there is ice available but we have to pay a premium charge for better ice time. Said we would need to either take out a loan from a bank or get sponsors to build a new rink. Millner and Fennel expressed concern that rink could close and our association would go away at that point.

iii) Sheridan asked who would operate new operates the rink? Fennel said we would hire a management company, learn from them.

iv) Millner said it's possible that this study would result in the answer being that our association is not able to run a rink, and we would lose the money if that's the result.

v) Keating agrees with the need for a new rink, but expressed that we do not have the ability as an association to run and own a rink. Keating said over last 5 years we've been able to save \$10k per year, which is not even enough to fund one employee per year. Keating expressed that we would be spending \$17k to find out that we need millions of dollars to be able to run a rink, when we currently are selling pastries as a fundraiser to afford ice time.

vi) Hence said we could apply for grants to pay for a rink. Saum said if we can get grants to pay for \$17k that's different. Murray said he doesn't think we will get someone to give us \$10m to run our own rink.

vii) Keating said this shouldn't be on the shoulders of the parents to fund. Would support having someone to own and build a new rink, but right now we can't even afford to pay for all the ice we need. Suggested spending \$5k to do marketing instead. Said we should talk to the city and corporate partners about study. We can't make this new rink happen with 70 families.



viii) Hence said she would go to the mayor's office to get the money to fund the study. Saum said yes, Brady has done a lot of legwork, but let's take that to the city or an outside partner.

ix) David said she's concerned about how the association pays for the loan and costs on a new rink if by the time it opens we are paying \$100,000 or \$125,000 for ice, who pays the rest of the mortgage/loan and costs? We would have to come up with enough people to use the rink to be able to pay possibly millions every year.

x) Hence expressed concerns about access to play hockey. Keating said we can't even fund scholarships for everyone who wants to play. We need to do more to market the program, increase the 8u and 10u program or else we won't have a program in a few years. Said money for feasibility needs to come from community-based option, like city, county, or private options. If we pay this, we will lose opportunities to have funding available to increase the program.

xi) Webb said this would be 35% of our funds. Expressed concern about development around the rink and whether rink exists in 5 years, and said he supports spending funds for study.

xii) Murray has a friend that builds rinks and has talked to him about doing a feasibility study. He ran a rink in DC and put 3,000 underprivileged kids on the ice and ran it with a ton of grant funding. Recommended shopping cost to other vendors. Said study is the first step for new rink, but we are a parent group and don't have the capacity to do this. An investor needs to decide what they want to do. Said it's irresponsible to use family money to do a feasibility with our funds if an investor is going to run this.

xiii) Keating said we have no stake in what happens after this, study needs to be funded by grants or city/external partners. Said that as a non-profit that has to answer for what we spend, it would be questionable. Millner said he talked to a tax attorney and it's fine. Keating said his concern is that we could lose our 501c3 status. Said as someone who runs a larger non-profit, if anyone is unhappy with what we do, then they could bring up a complaint. Murray said we run as an organization to buy ice not to build a rink. We don't even have a hockey director. The first step is to hire a paid director.

xiv) Wibblesman said she agrees. As a parent, she has to sell pastries because team has to pay so much extra ice and the association won't pay for it. Said they've worked hard to be sure fees are paid for, to then have association money used to pay for this study. Said she doesn't support using association funds to pay for this. Said find grants or external funding or ask parents to donate.

xv) Sheridan said we need to discuss ways to pay for this with other funds or find partners.

xvi) Fennel said we could use funds from the \$7,500 donation the men's league gave to the association.

xvii) Hence asked about timeline and total amount to be able to talk to mayor's office. Fennel said up to \$19,500 if there's travel.

xviii) Murray said it's not in the purview of AHA to do this. Need to connect people who are investing money, establish a working group outside the AHA who will pursue this and work on it. Said AHA doesn't have the ability to do this. Fleeman said what that means is that the AHA is not a body that would own the rink, we might lease the ice. Murray said yes, we don't have the infrastructure or capacity to build/own a rink. Will do everything in his power to support this but doesn't think this is for AHA to do.



4) Financials (Webb)

a) Webb emailed November financial report.

5) Other Business

a) Windley is still working to move over everything for the treasurer's position.

b) Murray – said we are almost completely certified for coaches. We still have a number of board members who need to certify. Those board members could be liable.

c) Henderson asked if we have ordered the intermediate goals yet? Millner said that's a Windley question. Murray said we need to consider buying nets, Webb said it was already approved. Murray said he would buy them and get reimbursed.

6) Upcoming Board Schedule January 7th @6:30 pm via Zoom

7) Adjourned 7:36pm, moved by Fleeman and seconded by Wibblesman