



**ARKANSAS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 6, 2025**

Call to Order at 6:31 PM

Board Members Present: Barker, David, Eschenburg, Fennel, Fleeman, Hence, Nelsen, Saum, Sheridan, Trowbridge, Windley

Board Members Absent: Henderson

Non-Voting Members Present- Millner, Murray

Skatium Representative: James Belamy (not present)

1) Minutes: Fennel moved, Saum seconded. April minutes approved unanimously.

2) Rink Business - James Belamy

a) No rink rep present

3) Association business

a) Schedule approval (Saum/Fennel)

i) Fennel reviewed registration packet. Discussed coaching, schedule, requirements.

ii) Stick and puck will check in at the rink and be billed from that. Saum asked if travel teams could buy out stick and puck for an extra practice, or if a house team wants to buy that hour for friendly, Millner said it would need to be at least 2 weeks out.

iii) Fennel discussed going to a reversible jersey. Jersey is from Jog and other teams who are happy with it. Everyone is going to go to this one jersey since we are on two year jersey cycle. Last year jersey and socks total was \$220, this year will be \$130. Practice jerseys are the same. Fennel said we will also have access to track suits, joggers, and hoodies this year from Jog. Player orders will go through registration, but parents can order for themselves via email to Fennel.

iv) Saum said she's talked to TLC to do an online store for t-shirts, beanies, etc.

v) Fee schedule was work by Fennel, Windley, Saum, and Millner. Wanted to cover all costs for travel and use built up budget to support house team and build program.

Jerseys are down about \$100 so it's a net win for everyone.

vi) 16U travel is now going to be included in 14+ house but will be able to go to tournaments as needed. 14+ house doesn't include tournament fees, friendlies, or summer practice. Fees will be billed out to families as needed.

vii) For 14U travel, difference in registration and final cost will be billed out to families at the end. Registration cost includes summer, anticipated MoHockey, and one tournament. Saum said MoHockey now requires 90 minutes of ice time for each game. McKindrey has the best price for ice so they're trying to use that.

viii) Reviewed payment plan options based on registration date.

ix) Saum asked if parents can pay for cost in full by check to avoid credit card fees? Fennel said he has to manually do that. Will add option to registration info, payment by check must be in full.

x) Fennel moved to approve registration packet and fees, David seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

b) Fundraising (Fennel/Millner)

i) Finalized with Simmons Bank to do concession fundraising for the arena. Approved through USA Hockey. Will have to do training through arena and follow dress code. Sign up will be first come first serve. Must go through course (around \$36) to get approved. Arena will send a shirt, hat is \$13, but also black pants and closed toes shoes required. 75% of fundraising will go to player's fees, 25% will go to Aces general fund. Can put up a banner promoting AHA. Trowbridge asked if it's all events or only certain ones. Fennel said he isn't sure, but they will get email to sign up to work. Will need to have a list of people who are willing to work any time, sign up for



arena will go fast. Saum said roller derby has done this. They do a google form with every event in the future, and people will sign up in advance for availability. Typically they want at least 6 people. Just need to keep in mind that if the show is at 6pm, you might have to show up at 3 or 3:30. Be strategic to look for events that will sell more concessions. Saum will send Fennel their sign up sheet as an example.

4) Financials (Windley)

a) Reviewed bank balance and expenses.

b) Draft budget discussed at last month's meeting will be built into Quickbooks for each team to help understand how we operate against our budget. Will be able to provide variance reports to each team. Each month, will discuss at board meeting we will review variance and budget status.

c) Want to have payments processed through invoices or AHA card instead of reimbursements. Please notify Windley if you need something paid. Fennel asked about coaching expenses that are eligible to be reimbursed, Windley said send receipt to him within 30 days to get that reimbursed. Hence asked if we can amend bylaws to discuss reimbursements, Millner said this is just policy.

5) Other Business

a) Millner said that he and Saum discussed that we need to amend guidelines to say that scholarship recipients must attend practice. If AHA is paying for cost of participating, we need to ensure that they're actually using that ice time.

b) Trowbridge asked for information about the scholarship, Saum reviewed the Hogan scholarship and guidelines. Millner said it's been funded by fundraisers, donations, and/or the board. Last year we only had \$2,000 and had to split that between applicants.

c) Hence asked if we have a contract with rink and if the rates are negotiable. Saum said rates are not negotiable but yes, we do have a contract. Hence asked if the cost will go up in the future? Fennel said we are locked in for next season. Rate depends on time of day, standard rate is \$250/hour + tax.

d) Trowbridge asked about advertising and recruiting? Millner said that's been a struggle. That requires budget for advertising, and we are operating at a deficit so we are trying to just cover costs. It's been voted down many times to spend a chunk for advertising because past attempts haven't been productive. Hence said she would like to propose attending events and pass out flyers. She said she has access and that wouldn't cost the organization anything. Hence said she has a friend with a printing business, talking about creating something with them from what's on our website. She said she doesn't know where to get a QR code, Fennel said he can do that. Windley said we do have a \$4K budget for marketing. Millner said that was budgeted last year to have Dan Sawyer do marketing and that wasn't enough. Millner said tv spots helped, and doing LTP feeding directly into the program has been great. Windley said our goal has been to keep fees as low as possible for families but we need to also consider costs because we are operating at a \$14k year over year deficit. We need to be very careful about expenses and increasing fundraising to ensure we can cover costs ongoing. We need a 3 year plan soon to discuss future player fee increases.

e) Trowbridge asked what the jersey sponsorship cost was? Fennel said it's \$1500 annually for two years. Said Faded Rose is a current jersey sponsor. Fennel said he's also pursuing helmet sponsors.

f) Barker said he wants to discuss minimum practice attendance to be able to participate in travel games or tournaments. If they can't be there at least 50% of the practices, it's not fair to the other kids and also isn't developing as a player. Is that something that can be done policy-wise? Saum 14U travel discussed that if players don't come to practices that they would get less play time. She said they got the same concerns. Barker said last



year there were players who paid less and went to fewer practices but got more play time. Fennel said 14U coaching staff has already discussed this and agree that there should be attendance expectations to pay. Fennel said he heard complaints about families who paid less but got to play when local kids didn't make the team and would have paid the full cost. Fennel said for 16U house tournament expenses will be paid in advance of the tournament, and it's possible kids outside AHA may be invited to play to have enough to make a full team. Teams will be expected to pay in full in advance of the tournament, and players can't attend if they don't pay in full.

g) Murray – SAHA has an annual meeting and they ask we send someone. Nashville - Aug. 2-3, starts 2pm on Saturday and ends 2pm on Sunday, will have presentations from Nashville Predators, program operations, etc.

h) Murray - this is an Olympics year, so maybe we could promote AHA in connection with the Olympics.

i) Nelsen said concern for 16U with MoHockey was that by doing tournaments we can pull players from other organizations because we aren't sure that we have enough kids within the program. Saum asked if the priority will be given to AHA players and if outside players will be expected to buy our jerseys? Nelsen said this is a new plan, would need to ask Bevan. There is a desire to let higher level kids play in some higher level tournaments.

j) Millner said we got hockey day approved in September. Will set up 4v4 men's league tournament, and fees are going to support youth hockey. People are saying they want this to happen again like last year. Fennel asked if for hockey day, do we want to do friendlies? Millner said we would need to ask coaches. Fennel said we have 6 hours, so we could get four games in if all teams want to play friendlies or if they want to play a scrimmage. Hence asked what team her kid will play on? Fennel said 14+. She asked if they can be alternates for travel teams? Saum said no, they have to be rostered, but the 14+ house team will have tournament options. Hence said house needs more options for games to increase morale. Fennel said that's driven by the coaches. Millner said it's not board mandated.

k) Saum will share on Facebook to promote Little Stars.

6) Upcoming Board Schedule June 3rd @6:30 pm via Zoom

7) Adjourned 7:47pm, moved by Barker and seconded by David.