



**ARKANSAS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 7, 2026**

Call to Order at 6:30 PM

Board Members Present: Barker, David, Eschenburg, Fennel, Jeremiah Fleeman, Lehner, Nelsen, Sheridan, Toboy

Board Members Absent: Janet Freeman, Jessica Saum, Windley

Slated 26-27 Board Members Present: Abbie Henderson, Smith

Non-Voting Members Present: Millner, Murray

Skatium Representative: James Belamy, not present

AHA Members Present: Jamie Bigelow, Jeremy Henderson, Bevan Keating, Geoff Nelsen, Shane Saum, Esther Kendrick

1) Minutes: Barker moved, Fennel seconded. March minutes approved unanimously.

2) Approval of Slate: Fennel moved, Lehner seconded. Slate passed unanimously.

- 8U: Christina Louise Smith, Marissa Eschenburg
- Christina won 6-2 in election against Ryan Lutes.
- 10U: Denis Sheridan, Matthew Lehner
- 12U: Jack Windley, Sarah David
- 14U: Brady Fennel, Jessica Saum
- 16/18U: Abbie Henderson, Ashley Nelsen
- House: Jeremiah Fleeman
- Travel: Anthony Barker
- President: Josh Millner (non-voting)
- Registrar/Coaching Director/Safe Sport Coordinator: Rick Murray (non-voting)

3) Rink Business - James Belamy - Not present

4) Association business

a) Public skate session (Lehner): Lehner had asked about having a skate pass for summers. Millner said the rink is not going to offer public skate nor a skate pass for future seasons. Millner will follow up with the rink again.

b) Grant follow-up, purchase schedule (Sheridan/Eschenburg): Sheridan said he had questions for Jack, will follow up with him. Also said he has not heard back from SAHA about reports, Murray said unless there's an issue may not hear anything. Eschenburg said DEI grant was received, May 31 and June 7 are proposed Boy Scout dates. Rink is going to charge us \$225 for each session. Will be 20 kids (ages 5-16), need a few older kids to come help.

c) Parent-skater hockey camp (Fleeman): As a kid, attended a camp in Minnesota w/ his dad to learn how to play together, would like to start this here. Millner said would just need to get it out there and set up, but it can be hard to get numbers in the summer. Sheridan said he's very interested, asked about what schedule would look like. Millner said ice is usually \$275/hour. Fleeman said camp schedule is flexible. Millner said he would help, said Sheridan and Fleeman can get together with him.

d) Summer schedule (Fennel): Stick and puck on Wednesdays last year but got feedback to change nights would be better. Millner said would be good to have stick and puck on Thursday would allow older kids to stay for adult league. Fennel will check w/ rink.

e) Drafting teams for house league (Henderson): Wants house program to be drafted into teams with a trophy at the end of the season. On first night, coaches would assess the kids on the first night and then split kids into teams. David said we need to bring all house coaches to the table to discuss. Smith asked how teams would be established,



Henderson said skills would be divided evenly. Eschenburg asked if this would be established fairly so kids would all get invited to travel to tournaments. Said this year kids were left out of travel opportunities. Henderson said this is just for the house games, nothing to do with travel opportunities. Jeremy Henderson said this would be like NWA where they have red, blue, black, etc. teams. Millner said he is concerned that we don't need to limit ice touches to just games when we have full sheet time and half-ice is only skills. Smith asked about making next season for 8U that we do every other week games on Saturdays? Millner said that's up to the coach and she could decide this.

f) Registration dates for 26-27 season (Saum): Millner spoke, said last year registration opened last May, so we are going to try to open again at end of May. Will be finalized at the next meeting.

g) JV team (Ashley Nelsen/Abbie Henderson/Bevan Keating):

- Henderson asked to confirm a date for JV try-outs to accommodate summer schedules.
- Keating said last year JV was house program, need to confirm option for higher level of play for JV for kids who could end up leaving to go to other teams.
- Millner said he looked at the four leagues Keating mentioned and none list JV and Dallas won't accept out of state. One has by-laws that you can only charge so much for ice and it wouldn't work with our rink's pricing structure. Barker discussed different age groups for each league being considered. Said it would be hard to have a try-out if we don't know which league we are joining. He has been reaching out to determine how strict these leagues are. NWA coach said their league does not allow play-up. SYTHL is 16U but do allow play-up requests through SAHA. Murray said USA hockey allows one age group play-up.
- Ashley Nelsen said we had 33 kids in 14+/JV last year, can only roster around 20.
- Want to establish travel team to eliminate confusion over who is participating in what.
- David said we need to have schedule and fees set prior to setting up try-outs so parents know exactly what they are signing up for.
- Keating and Nelsen said they are requesting one solo hour for JV travel in addition to the three hours for house JV.
- Millner suggested combined travel try-out for 14U + JV. Keating said he wasn't sure if Shane Saum was going to have a try-out.
- Barker asked to confirm what age range for try-outs?
- Keating said they will work to fit into whatever league we decide we want to play in. Will do 3-4 tournaments if they can't fit into a league.
- David asked if we are charging what do we do if a family can't participate because of the situation he described like a family can do Dallas league but can't do Atlanta. He said that they would try to work with the family.
- Murray asked how do we manage keeping a 14U and a JV team? Bevan said that needs to be a family decision and we shouldn't try to drive them to one or the other.
- Jamie Bigelow expressed concerns over last season JV for higher skilled players. They have been contacted by other teams to play for them, really want to stay with the Aces. Want to have the definition between travel/competitive option so there's a clear line of who can go to tournaments/play in a league.
- Question asked if this would be only AHA players or open to people outside AHA.
- Bevan said that would be a board decision but with 33 kids we should have enough for two teams but would let Board decide to open them up to outside kids.
- David moved to approve JV to have a try-out, Shane Saum said he thinks we are rushing this because he's concerned about not being able to build a full team. David she understands Saum's concern and would rescind her motion.
- Keating said he would encourage kids to continue playing 14U if they were on that team.
- Ashley Nelsen said Murray for clarification; she thought they did not need board approval to hold a tryout. Murray said since there is a conflict then yes, it needs board approval. David said board has to approve ice purchase.



- Quorum was lost at 7:48pm. Discussion ended.
- ADDITIONAL NOTE: Motion was made and approved via email to hold joint try-outs for both travel teams at a time that was mutually agreed upon by both coaches.

5) Financials (Windley): Windley emailed financial information.

6) Other Business

7) Upcoming Board Schedule May 5th @6:30 pm via Zoom

8) Adjourned 7:50pm after quorum was lost.