



CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF APPROVED BASEBALL UMPIRES
October 18, 2023 MEETING

“MINUTES”

OFFICERS: Josh Swabby, Tom Byrne, DJ Nadeau, Andy Zajac

CHAPTERS: Central- Mark Carroza
Eastern – Kevin Moreland
Fairfield – Greg Vetter
Hartford – Barry Chasen
New Haven – Dan DelPiano
Northwest- Bill Grabowski
Western – Troy Childs
Middletown- Bernie Criscuolo

The group welcomed Tom Byrne, Dan DelPiano and Greg Vetter to their first CSBABU meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7 PM, Tom Byrne called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken with representatives affirming attendance and board affiliation. Tom has been appointed by the Fairfield Board to serve as CSBABU Vice-President for 2023-2035 while no nominations were offered for the secretary-treasurer and/or the rules interpreter positions. DJ Nadeau will remain as rules interpreter for the term; travel allowance checks were distributed to all present

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

Josh Swabby conveyed his thanks to all in service to their respective boards. Albeit a few months prior to actual installment and consistent with our by-laws of executive board succession, Josh assumed the President position after John Egan stepped down in June.

SECRETARY/FINANCIAL REPORT

After a recent assessment and review of March reporting by all chapters, the umpire count for the eights boards is approximately 710. It is recognized that an estimated 40 umpires are dual board members, making the actual number of current umpires around 670.

Andy Zajac had sent the last M & T Bank statement in a recent email, showing a October 1st checking account balance of \$ 2,246.35. Travel allowance checks totaling \$ 402.50 were disbursed at the meeting. Josh & Andy had met at M & T Bank in September to update the account along with ordering new checks which have yet to arrive. As in past years and per by-law content, Josh had proposed a \$ 500 honorarium to the secretary-treasurer that was approved by the representatives.

RULES INTERPRETER REPORT

DJ Nadeau spoke on the successful CUT clinic, with over 70 in attendance, held in August in North Branford. Various presenters took part with Mark Carroza and others offering positive comments on the clinic. A winter seminar is being planned in early 2024 with Middletown High School as a possible venue. It was agreed that a \$ 300 fee would be available for a guest speaker with DJ to advise when logistics are finalized. The state rules interpreters meeting in tentatively scheduled for March 4, 2024.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

A handout was distributed listing 2024 CIAC game fees. Barry Chasen observed that a minimal \$ 1.94 fee increase is evident for varsity baseball games. Tom inquired if negotiation is warranted to increase CIAC game fees. After an involved discussion, it was concluded that CIAC fees for all sports are contracted mirroring the amount of teachers' raises in a specific timeframe.

Conversation continued on the variation of prep and private school games fees charged by individual boards. The Northwest board has negotiated set fees of \$ 125 for 7 innings and \$ 150 for 9 innings or playoff games, subject to probable increase in 2024, since implemented by the Western & Central chapters. Other boards are currently charging prep/private schools fees similar to CIAC varsity games. Further dialogue took place on the level of play/games that vary greatly from 7th-9th grade programs to upper-level prep school with post-grad players. Dan DelPiano proposed that a "Prep" school contract be drawn up; DJ Nadeau will research and correspond moving forward. It is recognized that individual boards reserve the right to continue with their agreed to prep/private school game fee structure without a contract.

The recently submitted Northwest Board grievance was reviewed. The content of the grievance, also copied to the CIAC, addresses the exclusion of Northwest Board from later round CIAC tournament assignments. Group discussion took place on the issue. Although an independent review was requested by the Northwest Board, no action will be taken.

Due to the current month 5-7 month gap in gathering, Josh proposed that an additional CSBABU meeting be scheduled. A meeting date in later June, after the scholastic season, was discussed with the group in consensus.

Josh led conversation concerning geographical/town game coverage. The situation of the three Meriden High schools, currently covered by 3 separate umpire boards, was offered as an example. With a new city athletic director, Maloney and Platt HS games will now be staffed by the New Haven board; the Central board will now provide game coverage for Derby. Currently, the majority of scholastic game coverage is separated by county lines with some exceptions. Moving forward, the forming a committee may be considered but at this juncture any change of board game coverage will be addressed on an individual town/school basis. It was further noted that issue applies only to the scholastic season and not summer/fall games.

Tom inquired about the need for establishing a website to include relevant CSBABU documents, adopted policies and informational content. The issue apparently had been addressed in prior years with the comment that some boards' websites post relevant CSBABU information available to their members.

Nominations for the now vacant CIAC Baseball Advisory position were presented offering Mark Carroza/Central, Kevin Moreland/Eastern and Tony Litizio from the Middletown board as candidates. Mark withdrew his name for consideration with a ballot vote taken for the remaining two candidates. Kevin Moreland prevailed and is designated to the position.

Brief Discussion took place on umpire recruitment and retention. The Eastern Board conducted an accelerated 3-day training program this summer which resulted new umpires working games immediately. A national program to attract service veterans to officiating in all sports was mentioned. Per "Battlefields to Ballfields" website content, that entity will cover the cost of equipment, uniforms and 3 years of local dues for eligible ex-service members. Dual-board Northwest/Hartford umpire Rit Forcier has additional information on the program.

The new uniform policy, transitioning to MLB styled shirts and other attire, moves forward for full compliance in 2024. Barry Chasen had questions on the pants with various brands of manufacturers mentioned; charcoal colored pants are the required color. With some boards having their own logo, the "Connecticut Approved Baseball Umpire" patch will now be optional at discretion of the individual board.

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE/NEXT MEETING

An updated CSBABU master contact list was sent to all meeting attenders prior the session. The year-end CSBABU M&T Bank statement will be sent to executive board and state representatives in January.

Information on the 2024 winter seminar/ clinic will be distributed to all chapters when date, time and location is determined.

The next CSBABU state representative meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday March 21, 2024.

Josh Swabby brought a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 PM with all present in favor.

Minutes prepared by Andy Zajac