



CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF APPROVED BASEBALL UMPIRES
March 13, 2024 MEETING

“MINUTES”

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

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

With Bernie Criscuolo unable to attend, John Cudgma filled in for Middletown with Kevin Dobo representing the Eastern Board for Kevin Moreland. Joe Bellino/Central attended as a guest.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7 PM, Tom Byrne called the meeting to order with travel allowance checks distributed. A roll call was taken with representatives confirming attendance and board affiliation.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

Josh Swabby welcomed all commenting on the new season ready to commence. Thanks were conveyed to all in service for their respective boards.

SECRETARY/FINANCIAL REPORT

Andy Zajac reports that recent consult/billing to the 8 board secretaries indicated a current umpire count of 716, a slight increase from 710 last October. The increase is somewhat misleading in that a number of umpires have become dual-board members and that some new prospects, included in the overall count, have since dropped out. It is estimated there are approximately 40 dual board members resulting in an actual umpire count around 670.

A handout was distributed providing an overview the CSBABU financials which listed a March 1st checking account balance of \$ 1,279.93. Mindful of annual expenditures that include the D & O insurance premium, seminar speaker fee along with and travel allowances afforded for attenders to meetings, proceeds and due receivables show a deficit. Discussion took place on options to reduce costs and/or increase proceeds. Per group discussion it was agreed that the annual board assessment be increased from \$ 50 to \$ 100 and that the per umpire charge be raised from the current \$ 1 to \$ 2 beginning in 2025. Dan Delpiano reviewed the by-laws that require a 60-day notification for any changes. Accordingly, Josh provided a verbal notice at the meeting to start the process.

Per notice to the executive board in January, Andy will be stepping down as CSBABU secretary-treasurer effective May 1, 2024.

RULES INTERPRETER REPORT

DJ Nadeau spoke on state rules representative meeting on March 4th and the March 6th seminar at Xavier HS. Per a prior e-mail from Greg Horton of the Fairfield Board stating in that rules changes were posted on the NFHS website last July, a request was made to have the state rules meeting be moved up to February. It was decided that boards cannot take the test before the state rules meeting. The date of the state rules interpreter meeting will remain in early March with the NFHS test made available the following day. The testing procedure in 2025 will be completed by board umpires on-line, utilizing the Dragon Fly platform. Brief discussion took place on the possible consideration for a statewide meeting forum for all umpires. Due to logistics and expected limited participation, that practicality of holding a statewide meeting was deemed not viable.

OLD BUSINESS

Conversation continued on prep/private school games fees charged by individual boards. Currently, the Northwest, Central and Western boards have negotiated games fees of \$ 130 for 7, \$ 155 for 9 innings or playoffs with other boards charging fees similar to CIAC varsity games. DJ had contacted the Founders Prep league with mention of the Fairchester Athletic Association in attempts to have an contract signed for uniformity in fees. Individuals Andy Dunn and Rocco Dimeo, with prep school league affiliations, were named as contacts with no conclusion reached. Efforts will continue to communicate with the previous mentioned leagues and the Western New England Prep league (WNEPL) on the issue.

A heated conversation took place with Bill Grabowski calling out DJ Nadeau for theatrics displayed at the October meeting mocking a Northwest Board umpire. Further drama ensued with the rules interpreter abruptly leaving the meeting only to return shortly afterwards. Josh intervened quelling the contentious situation moving onto the next agenda entry.

Per the October meeting, Josh proposed that an additional CSBABU meeting be scheduled after the scholastic season. Bernie Criscuolo has since reviewed the constitution/by-laws that allows additional sessions if agreed to. The group decided on a " Zoom " meeting format to be scheduled in June with date/logistics to be determined.

Brief dialogue was had concerning geographical/town game coverage. The previous decision citing the Meriden High schools, with a new citywide athletic director, was mentioned. Per mutual agreement, all Meriden HS games will be now covered by the New Haven Board with the Central board to provide umpire staffing for Derby. Currently, the majority of scholastic game coverage is separated by county lines with some exceptions. It was noted that issue applies only to the scholastic season and not summer/fall games.

At this juncture, the establishment of a CSBABU website will not be pursued. The topic had been discussed at the last meeting, and in prior years, with information that some boards' websites post relevant CSBABU information available to their members.

Barry Chasen reports that the Officials Assault Initiative continues with no formal action taken by the General Assembly, at this time, to move the prospective legislation forward. A Hartford Courant March 4, 2024 front page article was referenced publicizing the issue. The board recognizes and appreciates Barry's extensive work on the initiative with continuing developments to be communicated as warranted.

NEW BUSINESS

Prior to the session, Tom Byrne sent e-mail correspondence from Fairfield Board member Russ Chapman asking for consideration in implementing a time limit for sub-varsity/freshman games along with a base game fee raise for varsity/sub-varsity escalating \$ 5 per year. It is recognized that the CIAC has set officials fees for all sports and that our current signed agreement is in place until June 30, 2024. If interested in further pursuing, the game fee issue can be addressed when the current contract expires. Josh reports that Kevin Moreland had brought the time limit issue to the state advisory committee with additional information to be provided after a March 26th meeting.

In addition, Bob Melms from Fairfield sent an e-mail for boards to request that certain schools consider 3-man umpire crews for higher profile regular season games and in preparation for post season play. Comments were offered that some boards have been successful in reaching out to athletic directors for 3-man umpire crews while others have been met with resistance.

The warnings/restrictions/ejections agenda entry/topic is involved. It was agreed that this issue be not addressed this evening to be taken up at the next meeting.

UMPIRE RECRUITMENT

Discussion took place on umpire recruitment. The New Haven board was successful in placing a Facebook listing seeking umpires which resulted in some 25 leads. Some of the prospects were of high school age with further mention of an 18 year old age requirement to umpire CIAC sanctioned games. Boards are encouraged to share information/methods to attract new umpire candidates.

ADDITIONAL/NEXT MEETING

Josh inquired if there were any recommendations to serve in the CSBABU secretary-treasurer position. Dan DelPiano from New Haven offered Matt Cerasale as a candidate with Mark Carroza from the Central board also nominated. With all boards represented, a ballot vote was conducted with Mark prevailing. Andy will meet with Mark and Josh in April to ensure a seamless transition to the position.

The next CSBABU state representative meeting is scheduled for June, via “ Zoom” format ,with date/time/date logistics to be determined.

Josh Swabby brought a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 PM with all present in favor.

Minutes prepared by Andy Zajac