District 2 Little League Meeting

November 14, 2024 *|* Take 5 Restaurant, Meeting called to order by Steve DePalma at 6:31 pm

Attendance

**Towns In Attendance: Longmeadow BB + SB, Gateway, Chicopee, Northampton, Southampton, East Longmeadow, Agawam, Belchertown, Westfield, Easthampton, Amherst**

**Steve DePalma, Ernie Fitzell, Marc Winer, Michelle Winer, Steve Elliot**

* **Trainings:** Make sure all volunteers are completing the Diamond Leadership (one time only) and Abuse Awareness trainings (new LL based training). Make sure you get a copy of the certificate to keep on file.
* **Elections/New BOD:** If any towns have not completed their annual meeting/voting for new BOD, please inform Marc/Ernie of any changes upon completion.
* **All District Team:** November 16, 2024 we will have a banquet to honor the players chosen for this recognition. We have planned to go to the Thunderbird game that evening, where they will be recognized out on the ice during intermission. We would like to continue this tradition every year.

 Process for choosing the players for this honor for next year was discussed,

 and a suggestion was made to have players voted on from the opposing team after each game during score reporting. More discussion to come…

* **Constitution:** All constitutions must be updated if it has been done in the past 5 years. Names, dates, and information must be updated. Please follow the sample constitution as closely as possible from the Forms and Publications resource on LittleLeague.org
* **Dues:** Reminder to submit dues at or before the January meeting. Please get these to Ernie as soon as possible. Checks should be made out to Steve DePalma.
* **ASAPS**: These will be open as of December 1 on the Data Center. Please work on updating and submitting by February 1, 2025. Last year, we did get to 100%, but it was after the deadline, so we missed out on a kickback to the District and to each Charter. Please make sure these are all completed by the deadline so we can all benefit.
* **Jimmy Fund:** AJ reported that Agawam LL donated $9,000 to the Jimmy Fund Foundation, which is the biggest amount to date since Agawam took over the tournament. Hoping to grow this amount next year and to find a way to involve softball as well. Tournament is open to all teams, not just LL teams. We have had teams from the North, West and South of our region participate, and would like to expand even more. Looking for more towns to help with venue. Umpires are paid directly from the Tournament fees, so towns are not directly responsible to pay them. Just need some fields and volunteer participation.
* **Green Monster Tournament:** Dates are set for 2025. July 13-19 will be 10U baseball. July 20-26 will be 12U baseball. Fliers to come soon.
* **All Star Program Book:** Steve DePalma brought forth the discussion about a program book for 2025. Need to have as much information as possible before the season starts. Information that will have to be in June will be team rosters, coaches, pictures, and info about the above. It was suggested to have each town acquire 2 or more sponsors to help offset the cost of printing the books. Also available will be parent/family shout-outs for the players at a small cost. Once completed, the books will be available to each league to be sold at a set price (by the district) for a fund raiser opportunity. More discussion in detail at January meeting.
* **Sports Connect:** All charters must use the Sports Connect website for registration starting in 2025. If you are not already on this platform, you must complete the setup as soon as possible to open registration. If you need help with anything, please reach out to Ernie/Marc with any questions.
* **Softball update:** Marc is still working on bringing in possible new charters (Belchertown, Palmer, West Springfield). Discussion was had about starting the season earlier to get more games in and not be so tightly scheduled. Also, with Easter so late, Spring school vacation is the last full week of April, so season should start before then. More discussion to come…
* **Baseball update:** Nothing new to update that hasn’t already been discussed.
* **Waivers/Boundaries:** Waivers need to be submitted ASAP as they come in. Waiver form will be attached again to the email with the minutes. Steve will send them in as they come, and results will come directly from LL International via email. Please keep them for your records.

 Reminder to check your boundaries on the Data Center to make sure they are 100% correct. If there are any discrepancies or changes that need to be made, please let Steve DePalma know ASAP.

* **Northern Expansion:** Steve D has reached out to some towns in the Northern part of the District. Greenfield and towns surrounding Deerfield have responded to him with interest in possibly joining LL this year or next. He will set up meetings with these regions soon to talk to them about details. If we get some towns up North, likely we will split into North and South divisions for travel divisions. More to come as details progress…
* **Combined leagues for Tournament play:** Two or more towns can combine to form a team during the regular season or tournament season to give more players the opportunity to play. If you cannot get enough players to form a team, please let us know, and we can work with surrounding towns to for a combined team. Please let us know as soon as you can so we can help with the waiver process.
* **Umpires:** Steve Elliot will be starting clinics indoors in February. UPDATE: Dates are February 15 for Beginner clinic, March 1 for Refresher clinic, and March 29 for Mechanics clinic. Anyone 12 and older can become an umpire in our District.
* **CORI checks:** All volunteers must have background checks completed through the state of Massachusetts, and also through JDP with LL International. A reminder should go through the Sports Connect website when they sign up to volunteer with your league. MA state once need to be done separately and need the last 6 digits of their SS#, so be sure to get that from each volunteer.
* **New Business:**
	+ Registrations: Some towns are already open and many more to be open by December. Please open as soon as you can to get a head start on the Spring season so we can start earlier.
	+ Levels of District play eligibility: Players can play in any division that they are age eligible for, no matter what level they played during the regular season, however, they can only play for one team at a time. Once the team they are playing on is eliminated, they can be added to the roster of another team if age appropriate and there is space on the team.
	+ Senior division District players do not have a required minimum amount of game to be played. They only need to be registered with the town they will be playing in. Also, the team needs to be registered through the Data Center by June 1.
	+ Insurance certificates are now available through the Data Center to be printed out for use by your town.
	+ AJ spoke about how to apply for state funding for your league. He suggested that you reach out to your local Representative or Senator about youth sports funding. There is much to be awarded, you just need to ask.
	+ Discussion about shortening the softball playoffs to allow more time to prepare for District play. More discussion will be needed as we move towards the Spring season.

**If you are willing to host the next meeting, or any other meeting in the future, please reach out to Steve D, Ernie, Marc or Michelle with a location. We are more than happy to move the meeting to a different location each month. Please think about hosting one meeting a year at least in your town. We need a space that will house at least 20 people in a relatively quiet place for up to 2 hours.**

**Please make every effort to send at least one representative from your league to each of these meetings. It is VITALLY IMPORTANT that everyone receives this information and is involved in the discussions. We need every town’s input and vote at these meetings so we can continue to move forward together as a District.**

**Next Meeting: January 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM. Location is TBD.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Submitted by Michelle Winer