

Minutes of Liberty League Winter Meeting January 19, 2018 – NCAA Convention – Indianapolis, Ind.

Present: Kris Hall (Bard); Steve Yianoukos, Laurel Kane (Clarkson); Brian Miller (Hobart and William Smith); Susan Bassett, Michelle Manning (Ithaca), Lee McElroy, Karen Hansen (RPI); Andrea Golden (Rochester); Lou Spiotti, Scott McVean (RIT); Bob Durocher, Fran Grembowicz (St. Lawrence); Gail Cummings-Danson (Skidmore); Joanne Little (Union); Michelle Walsh, JoAnn Acquarulo, Kaitlin Leach (Vassar); Deb Steward (William Smith); Tracy King, Katie Meline (Liberty League).

Guests: Dr. Sandra Johnson (Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, RIT); Kelsey Morrison (NCAA Division III National SAAC); Shaina Iton (NCAA Student Immersion Program, RPI).

I. Call to Order

Steve Yianoukos (Liberty League President) called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the Sept. 12, 2017 meeting at Skidmore College were reviewed. It was noted in the minutes that Clarkson and RIT were piloting software for ADgreements, but the pilot has not officially launched as the software continues in development.

Motion: A motion (Hall, Steward) to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2017 meeting PASSED 11-0-0.

III. Financial Report

The financial report compiled by Mike Hanna was reviewed. Hanna's report projected a year-end surplus of \$21,630. Current bank balance is \$381,970.43. Detailed calendar year reports will be prepared over the coming weeks and submitted to CPA Dennis Hayes in March for the League's annual tax returns.

Motion: A motion (McElroy, Durocher) to approve the treasurer's report as presented by Mike Hanna PASSED 11-0-0.

Tracy King noted that while Hanna has retired as Hobart athletic director, he has agreed to serve as treasurer through the remainder of the fiscal year. King indicated that there are three options for the treasurer position: 1.) have the league office assume the responsibilities associated with the position; 2.) have another administrator take on the duties; 3.) pay Hanna a stipend to continue serving as treasurer as he indicated a

willingness to continue in that capacity. Deb Steward expressed an interest in serving as treasurer as she is currently able to co-sign documents on the league's behalf. With the primary banking institution along with payroll and insurance vendors based in Geneva, Steward would have easy access to those vendors

Motion: A motion (Spiotti, Cummings-Danson) to appoint Deb Steward as Liberty League treasurer effective with FY2019 PASSED 11-0-0.

[**Update:** Hanna has since indicated to King and Steve Yianoukos that he is enjoying retirement and has decided to hand over the Liberty League treasurer duties by no later than the end of February. Steward will meet with Hanna to discuss the transition.]

IV. Commissioner's Report

- A. Membership Inquiry – Le Moyne College:** Tracy King indicated that he had received a call from a consultant working on behalf of Le Moyne College. The consultant inquired as to King's interest in meeting with members of the Le Moyne administration to discuss Liberty League membership opportunities. King indicated to the consultant that the league is not actively pursuing additional members, but would be willing to meet with the school's administrators. King will be meeting with members of the administration on Jan. 23 at Le Moyne.

- B. Sponsorship Opportunity – Legend Rings:** Legend Rings made a proposal to serve as the official championship ring partner of the Liberty League. An agreement would not preclude schools from utilizing other vendors. Legend Rings has proposed that the Liberty League members would receive preferred pricing. Additionally the league could also receive a percentage of sales from all member school purchases in addition to in-kind sponsorships (i.e., hall of fame rings, award rings, etc.) and potential cash sponsorships. Exact figures were not disclosed in the proposal and would depend on the amount of revenue generated. Schools that have purchased championship rings through reputable companies such as Jostens have been very pleased with the products. At this time, there is no interest in a sponsorship agreement with Legend Rings.

- C. Single-Site Championships Review – Update:** At the fall meeting, King suggested forming a committee/working group to review the League's single-site championships and evaluate potential cost sharing and host responsibilities. In order to make a full evaluation, a better understanding of costs are needed for swimming and diving and track and field championships, which are being conducted under a different format for the first time. This data will be gathered from the host schools after the championships have been conducted and will be revisited at the spring along with a recommendation from the working group.

V. Review of NCAA Legislative Proposals

NCAA Legislative proposals were discussed and straw polls were taken to establish a league position for each proposal.

- **Proposal 1 – Academic Misconduct:** to define pre-enrollment and post-enrollment academic misconduct, clarify the individuals and activities to which the legislation applies, and clarify when an institution must report an academic misconduct violation (11-0-0, Support).
- **Proposal 2 – Sports Wagering Activities:** to eliminate the legislated penalty for sports wagering activities (11-0-0, Support).
- **Proposal 3 – SAAC Composition Expansion:** to allow for each conference and the group of independents to have a representative on National SAAC (1-9-1, Oppose).
- **Amendment 3-1 – SAAC Partner Conference Model:** to create a partner conference SAAC liaison structure, as opposed to increasing the size of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (10-1-0, Support).
- **Proposal 4 – Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Eligibility:** to permit a student that has graduated from an NCAA Division III institution to participate in intercollegiate athletics at the Division III institution of his or her choice provided the student has eligibility remaining (11-0-0, Support).
- **Proposal 5 – Football Preseason Start Date:** to amend the football preseason start date legislation as specified (3-4-5, Oppose – includes position of incoming associate member Buffalo State College).
- **Proposal 6 – Alumni Contest Exemption:** to permit the stand-alone exemption of one alumni contest per sport during any segment/period, with the exception of football (11-0-0, Support).
- **Proposal 7 – First Basketball Playing Date:** in basketball, to establish the first permissible contest date at November 8. When November 8 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday, a member institution may play its first contest on the Friday immediately preceding November 8 (8-3-0, Support).
- **Proposal 8 – First Ice Hockey Practice Date:** In ice hockey, to establish the first permissible on-ice practice date as the second Monday in October (2-0-9, Support).
- **Proposal 9 – Promotional Activities:** to amend the promotional activities legislation by requiring institutions to provide educational material in lieu of obtaining a release statement from the authorized representative of the charitable agency (11-0-0, Support).

Kelsey Morrison, a member of the Division III National SAAC, joined the meeting and shared the legislative positions of the committee. Regarding Proposal 3 to increase the size of the National SAAC, Morrison indicated that SAAC is opposed to the proposal. If SAAC representation is to increase, the National SAAC prefers Amendment 3-1. SAAC supports all other proposals.

VI. Conference Self-Study Guide

Tracy King edited the first draft of the Conference Self-Study Guide based on feedback from the assigned review teams. Edits are noted in the draft – additions appear in **boldface and underline** while deletions appear in ~~italics and strikethrough~~. King will circulate a clean copy of the revised draft to campus constituents with review and feedback requested by the end of February.

VII. Web Streaming Update

Katie Meline provided an update on the league-wide web streaming discussion from the fall meeting. Per a recommendation from the group, a webinar was conducted Oct. 18 with Stretch Internet and the league's SIDs. Meline also conducted a follow-up survey with the SIDs. League members currently utilize six different web streaming providers with costs ranging from \$1,000 to more than \$5,000 annually. While SIDs generally support the concept of a league-wide streaming platform, most SIDs indicated that they are satisfied with their current streaming provider. A league-wide streaming platform may provide an opportunity for additional league-wide marketing and branding initiatives. It was recommended that the league circulate a Request for Proposals (RFP) to several streaming providers and present proposals at the spring meeting.

VIII. Conference SAAC Meeting

Susan Bassett revisited the Liberty League fall SAAC meeting. Ithaca attendees felt the meeting was conducted as more of a business meeting and fell short of their expectations. Bassett noted that other conference SAAC meetings provide facilitators and professional development programming opportunities for attendees. Michelle Manning suggested that SAAC advisors could potentially be utilized to provide question and answer sessions with breakout groups. Tracy King will share the feedback with SAAC liaisons Megan Buchanan and Franco Bari and will discuss potential ways to enhance the league SAAC meeting.

IX. Weather-Related Travel Issues – Basketball

A recent snowstorm created weather-related travel issues during a Liberty League basketball weekend. Two institutions adjusted the start time of their doubleheader an hour earlier due to travel safety concerns. Other coaches contacted King to express concerns with the time change. It was agreed that weather-related changes should be discussed and agreed upon by administrators of the impacted schools. Coaches should not be contacting the league office with concerns. If two administrators agree to change game times, the other institutions involved in that weekend pod should be notified so they are given the opportunity to adjust accordingly.

X. Officiating / Assigning Services

- A. **Softball:** Karen Hansen reviewed the recommendation of the softball coaches to hire a league-wide umpiring assignor. The coaches met with three potential assignors on Dec. 15: Kathie Graf (National Softball Umpiring Academy), Cliff LaRose and Chris Tahonica/Mike

Eggleston. The coaches voted 5-2-1 in favor of Kathie Graf to begin assigning for the league in 2018-19. Assigning fee is \$200 per school with game fees of \$195 for a doubleheader and \$120 for a single game for each year of the three-year agreement.

Motion: A motion (McElroy, Golden) to approve Kathie Graf/NSUA as the Liberty League softball assignor beginning with the 2018-19 academic year PASSED 8-0-3.

B. Volleyball: Kris Hall shared that the volleyball coaches discussed utilizing a league-wide assignor at their Jan. 3 meeting. Securing quality officials for league weekends has proven challenging for North Country teams. A local assignor suggested the league would be better served in having one individual/organization assign for the entire league. Volleyball will be the only Liberty League team sport not utilizing a league-wide assignor.

Motion: A motion (Hall, Durocher) to support the concept of a league-wide assignor for Volleyball PASSED 8-0-3.

Tracy King will draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) and will circulate it to prospective assignors. Mara Wager, who currently assigns for the SUNYAC and several Liberty League schools, was suggested as an option along with Josh Huntley (Ithaca assignor) and Jeff McKinney (RIT assignor).

C. Basketball Fee Proposal: The basketball coordinators, Mike Schmidt (WBB) and Tom Reinisch (MBB) have proposed fees for the next three seasons, 2018-19 to 2020-2021. The fees are the same accepted by the Empire 8 and slightly less than the fees negotiated by the SUNYAC. Game fees are \$210 for 2018-19 and 2019-20, increasing to \$215 in 2020-21. Assigning fee is \$450 for the first two years and \$475 for the third year. Officials selected for postseason games will receive a \$10 increase per game. A table official for postseason games will be paid \$125.

Motion: A motion (McElroy, Kane) to approved the proposed basketball officiating fees for 2018-19 through 2020-21 PASSED 10-0-1.

XI. 2018 Baseball Championship Play-In Game

At the baseball coaches meeting Dec. 6, Tracy King indicated that the coaches proposed a play-in game for the 2018 season to be played on the first day of the league championship. Current format is two games Thursday, three games Friday, one/two games Saturday. The addition of the play-in game between the No. 4 and 5 seeds, would add an additional game on Thursday, making the format 3, 3, 1/2. While tournament formats expanded in sports with nine or more teams, baseball was not included in that expansion. Baseball is scheduled to go to a two-division format once Ithaca begins competition in the Liberty League. In that format, eight teams will compete in a best-of-three series with the four teams advancing to the double-elimination tournament. The coaches felt that the baseball

should also have an opportunity this spring to have an additional team qualify for postseason prior to the implementation of the divisional format. The administrators were comfortable with the current format and plan to expand the tournament once divisional play begins.

Motion: A motion (Walsh, McElroy) to approve the recommendation of the baseball coaches to conduct a one-game playoff between the No. 4 and No. 5 teams on the Thursday immediately prior to the first game of the Liberty League double-elimination tournament FAILED 1-7-3.

XII. Squash Championship – Future Format

JoAnn Acquarulo provided an update on the future format of the Liberty League men's and women's squash championships. On their Dec. 13 conference call, the squash coaches proposed a joint championship in men's and women's squash with those two championships being conducted on the same date and same location in the future – the first weekend in February. A combined championship may limit the ability of certain institutions such as Rochester to host the event. St. Lawrence is scheduled to host in 2018-19. Since Vassar and Bard effectively co-hosted the women's squash championship this past season, Deb Steward suggested the coaches explore the concept of Rochester co-hosting with Hobart and William Smith, which would give all teams an opportunity to host.

Motion: A motion (Steward, Golden) to approve the recommendation of the squash coaches to conduct a combined men's and women's championship the first weekend of February beginning with the 2018-19 season PASSED 5-0-6.

XIII. Composition of All-League Teams

Tracy King reported that the volleyball coaches proposed expanding the size of their All-Liberty League team because of the expansion of the league. The size and composition of most all-league teams has not changed despite the addition of three full members in the last seven years (Bard, RIT and Ithaca). Rather than consider proposals from coaches on a sport-by-sport basis, should the league review its awards program to ensure a consistent approach across all sports? King will survey other conferences to see how they determine the number of student-athletes represented on all-league teams. Further information will be provided for the spring meeting.

XIV. Track & Field Scheduling

Susan Bassett raised the issue of track and field scheduling and its fluid nature. While other sport schedules are established well in advance of the season, track and field schedules can change during the season with some teams even splitting their squads and participating in different meets on the same day. Some of this may be due to the number of teams that host schools invite to their meets. Participating teams may need to alter schedules depending on meet availability. Is it possible to establish a consistent schedule? This issue will be brought to the track and field coaches for further input and discussion.

XV. Future Meeting Dates / Sites

Dates for the Liberty League spring meeting are May 30-31 at the Otesaga Resort Hotel in Cooperstown, N.Y. Revisiting the fall meeting, Lou Spiotti raised the possibility of conducting meetings via conference call if the agenda is short. A more central location could also be sought to reduce travel time for the western schools. The Executive Committee will revisit prior to the fall meeting.

XVI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.