

Minutes of Liberty League Fall Meeting September 28, 2021 – Zoom Video Conference

Present: David Lindholm, (Bard); Scott Smalling, Laurel Kane (Clarkson); Deb Steward, Brian Miller (Hobart and William Smith), Susan Bassett, Erienne Roberts, Will Rothermel (Ithaca), Lee McElroy, Karen Hansen, Kevin Beattie, Katie Paradise (RPI); George VanderZwaag, Kris Shanley (Rochester); Jackie Nicholson, Scott McVean, Bethany Marren, Amy Reed, Jeff Siegel, Pat Sofia (RIT); Bob Durocher, Franco Bari, Randy LaBrake (St. Lawrence); Gail Cummings-Danson, Megan Buchanan, Keelin Hollowood (Skidmore); Jim McLaughlin, Joanne Little, Beth Tiffany (Union); Michelle Walsh, JoAnn Acquarulo, Kaitlin Leach (Vassar); Tracy King, Katie Meline (Liberty League).

I. Call to Order

Lee McElroy (Liberty League President) called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the June 8, 2021 virtual spring meeting were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted.

Motion: A motion (Steward, Durocher) to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2021 meeting PASSED 11-0-0.

III. Financial Report

Tracy King reviewed the league's financial report. The league recorded a deficit of \$24,897.40 in FY21 due to a COVID-19 cost-saving dues reduction. A budget deficit of \$28,425 is projected in FY22 due to the same dues reduction. The two-year deficit will be offset by a budget surplus of \$53,638.94 in FY20. Membership dues payments have been received from nine full members and one associate member. Payments are due by Sept. 30.

IV. League Governance / Issues

- A. **Volleyball – Proposed 2022-2024 League Schedule:** King provided an update on the development of a new Liberty League volleyball schedule, which will include William Smith (new varsity program) as the league's ninth team. The coaches reviewed several scheduling models and preferred a league schedule that minimized the number of days in which teams play multiple matches in a day. With the preferred model there would be three weekends of league play with each weekend including three 3-team pods. Each host institution would host one team Friday. Two matches would be played Saturday at each site – the host team against a second visiting team

followed by a neutral-site match. The schedule would also include two matches – one home and one away against the other teams in the same pod.

King noted the coaches are still exploring options for another model that eliminated the need for multiple league matches in a day. A final proposal from the coaches will be presented in October.

- B. Softball – Liberty League Assigner:** Karen Hansen, Liberty League softball liaison, reviewed the current situation for assigning of umpires. The league’s agreement with Kathie Graf (National Softball Umpire Academy) expired with the conclusion of the 2021 spring season. Due to coaches concerns with umpires assigned to some league games, the coaches explored other options for assigning services, first meeting with Mike Aguglia, head of the Central and Western New York Umpires. Some coaches expressed concerns that Aguglia’s roster of 64 umpires that would be utilized for Liberty League and Empire 8 games may not be sufficient enough since some umpires also work for other assigners. The coaches ultimately voted 5-3 in favor of retaining Graf as the league’s assigner. Given the challenges that Graf faced in assigning during the COVID-19 pandemic this spring, the consensus was that she should be provided an opportunity to perform her duties during a normal year and then be re-evaluated.

Motion: A motion (Cummings-Danson, Smalling) to retain Kathie Graf of the National Softball Umpire Academy as the Liberty League softball assigner on a one-year contract PASSED 7-1-3.

- C. Tennis – Proposed Protest Policy:** King reviewed a draft of a proposed Liberty League protest policy for tennis. The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) has determined that any protests filed during conference matches must be resolved by the respective conference. As a result of a protest that occurred in a match between two Liberty League men’s teams this past spring, it was agreed that the league establish a policy to review and resolve the protests. The proposal calls for any protests to be submitted to the league by the institution’s athletic director on behalf of the coach. A committee would be convened to review and resolve the protest. Options for the committee included the commissioner, sport liaison and ITA official and/or either three coaches or the league’s Executive Committee. It was agreed the Executive Committee would be a better option than a committee of coaches.

Motion: A motion (Walsh / Durocher) to adopt the proposed tennis protest policy while utilizing a committee consisting of the commissioner, sport liaison, ITA officials and Executive Committee to review and resolve protests PASSED 9-0-2.

- D. Basketball Technology in the Bench Area:** King reviewed the NCAA pilot program that would permit basketball teams to utilize technology in the

bench area to view game video. Conferences would need to submit requests by Oct. 1 to participate in the pilot program. The consensus was that the league does not currently have the technology or resources needed to utilize technology in the bench area.

- E. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Update:** King updated the league on spring discussions of the league's Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designees. The ADID discussions focused on two areas: 1.) developing a process for handling bias-related incidents, and 2.) conducting league-wide programming on a DEI issue. Regarding the process for handling incidents, the league currently has a process for addressing conduct-related incidents, but it doesn't specifically include language for incidents involving race or bias. King will schedule a meeting with the group to continue discussions on these issues.

V. NCAA / National Issues

- A. **Constitutional Convention Survey / Sept. 30 Town Hall:** The NCAA released results of the Constitutional Convention survey on Sept. 22. A virtual town hall has been scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 30, in which New York athletic directors can provide feedback and ask questions of Division III representatives serving on the Constitution Committee.
- B. **NCAA Championship Hosting:** NCAA Chief Medical Officer Brian Hainline indicated that the NCAA is not planning on conducting on-site surveillance testing for COVID-19. Unvaccinated individuals will need to be tested prior to departure to the championship site. For potential host institutions, the only on-site testing will be testing of symptomatic individuals with rapid PCR tests. George VanderZwaag indicated that the difficulty in obtaining rapid PCR tests may be an obstacle for institutions considering hosting championships. [Hainline later clarified on his Sept. 29 Zoom that the NCAA Medical Advisory Group determined that ANY rapid test – antigen, PCR or NAAT – could be utilized to test symptomatic individuals at championships.]

VI. 2021-2022 Meeting Dates

- A. **2020 NCAA Convention:** Indianapolis, Ind. (Jan. 19-22, 2022); Liberty League meeting would be held Friday, Jan. 21, if in-person attendance is required at the Convention. The NCAA has not determined whether virtual attendance and voting will be permitted.
- B. **Spring Meeting:** June 1-2 or June 8-9. The consensus was that the spring meeting should be held in-person if COVID-19 conditions permit. A central meeting location will be identified.

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.