

Commissioner Meeting Minutes
 November 9, 2022
 6:40 pm
 Location: Google Meetings

ATTENDEES:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Board Position</u>	<u>Attended?</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Board Position</u>	<u>Attended?</u>
Michael Richardson	President	Yes	Katie Villalobos	At-Large	Yes
Nancy Hitt	Vice President	No	David Rill	At-Large	Yes
Katie Niemi	Vice President	Yes	Kevin Welsh	At-Large	Yes
Adam Whittaker	Secretary	No	Steve Leaver	At-Large	No
Jeremiah Stevens	Treasurer	Yes	<i>Open</i>	At-Large	
			<i>Open</i>	At-Large	

Sports Represented/Attendees:

Cornhole	Paul Johnson
CMSA Ultimate	Noel Drain
Open Volleyball	Christopher MacKoul
Women's Basketball	

M. Richardson called to order 6:45 PM

1. Opening Thoughts - M. Richardson
 - a. Welcome, setting expectations for a collaborative discussion, and intent of the meeting to share resources that you have access to as commissioners
 - b. Future of Leadership is in crisis as we are seeing leagues cancel seasons due to lack of leadership. It has been shared that commissioners might not feel as supported as in the past and are reluctant to take on additional leadership roles. How do we grow and encourage leadership so we do not lose more sports?
 - c. Our response to this is, as a whole the Board is working to improve processes and it has been determined that more time is needed to set up a league. Due to a variety of circumstances, the CMSA Board can no longer support last-minute requests to set up sport registrations. **Effective immediately, a minimum of six weeks prior to the desired opening of your registration date, park permit application and a complete budget must be submitted to CMSA Treasurer and your sport's Board Liaison.** Noting that six weeks is the minimum, but eight weeks would be the preference and should be the target.
 - i. **Question:** Is the six week headway, just for permits or do you want registration completed before that time?
Response: We want your budgets and permits submitted in that time, the expectation is not that registration is complete. Registration periods are still completely up to each sport to determine.

- d. It is the Board's intention that this is a benefit to all involved and gives everyone time to play and respond. We have received recent feedback that the Board isn't responsive and isn't acting fast enough so we are trying to improve our processes to make them more efficient. We also want everyone to remember that we are a volunteer organization and all Board members are performing their duties in a part-time capacity and have other obligations beyond CMSA.
 - e. We are also navigating changes in personnel at the Park District which has impacted our usual timelines in receiving permits.
2. Commissioner's Corner Tutorial - K. Neimi
- a. <https://chicagomsa.org/aboutcmsa/commissionerscorner/>
 - b. Planning for your next season - J.Stevens
 - i. If a purchase can be paid via a CC or receive an invoice that is the preference
 - ii. Thresholds for approval:
 - 1. Under \$250, do not need approval.
 - 2. Over \$250 it needs to be approved by the Treasurer and Liaison, in advance of the purchase.
 - a. Generally easy, if it's in the budget send an email notifying of the purchase, if it's not in the budget there may need to be a conversation about why it wasn't budgeted before approval.
 - 3. Over \$500 it has to be paid via check directly from Treasurer or a CC purchase by the President. There are limited exceptions to this rule, but they must be approved in advance.
 - iii. LeagueApps - There are a lot of tools available to help organize your leagues that are not being leveraged, M. Richardson is a LeagueApps wiz and is volunteering his time to teach any commissioner how to better use this tool. Reach out to him directly.
 - iv. There is no reason that you can't plan months in advance, posting on the website with, "coming next year," the more we can plan in advance, the better for everyone involved. The website can be updated and it doesn't matter how far in advance any league season is planned.
 - v. We would like all leagues to consider moving away from team fees in the direction of league sponsors. A few sports have adopted this change with much success. Team fees can cause undue burden on teams that are already struggling to participate, or lack the network to find sponsors. League sponsorships can benefit everyone in the league and create equity in the cost to participate. We are consistently refining this process. We are open to feedback from leagues that have adopted, or are considering adoption.
3. League Social - M. Richardson
- a. Beyond the responsibilities of running a league, being a commissioner is a CMSA Leadership position and in that position we have to at all times be aware of the space we are creating for our players and in our sports. As commissioners, you should all be very aware of the Code of Conduct. It should be communicated often in your leagues and all members should be held accountable. As leaders in this organization we should all be even more aware of our own behaviors and that we at all times are a representation of

the organization. While the Code of Conduct is enforceable at CMSA events, it is our intent as a Board to convey that this standard should be followed by all our leaders beyond this boundary as representatives of the organization.

- b. Following the Code of Conduct in your leagues is a requirement and at any time a situation arises where this is not the case, we would prefer that all league issues are settled in the league. Escalation and/or intervention by the Board should only be the solution when absolutely necessary.
4. Future - J. Stevens
- a. CMSA runs an annual revenue around \$600k with approximately \$500k in expenses (managed by one volunteer Treasurer position) and has 3,000+ members, this puts CMSA in the category of a large non-profit organization. Much smaller non-profit organizations have full employed staffs to manage their growth and success.
 - b. The various members of The Board have been discussing for the past year the need for a hired position to help manage the organization. This position would be focused on the day-to-day operations and needs of the organization when it comes to such tasks as: managing vendors (park, bookkeeper, auditors), managing things that need follow up in a timely manner, availability during normal business hours to make dealing with banks, businesses, and the park district more efficient.
 - c. Committee work is underway to research the responsibilities, draft a job description, and identify a budget. The committee is working toward a timeline to finalize information needed to post the position, recruit, interview, hire and onboard is within the next fiscal year (September 2023)
 - d. The main obstacle is how do we ensure this is a sustainable expense to pay for in the future. One piece of this strategy is the realignment to the written bylaws.
 - e. Previous Boards began allowing a 10% carryover of remaining funds, which is not only a violation of bylaws, but it has created a lot of challenges in the financial health of the organization as a whole. The practice of this carryover has become so ingrained in the organization, but it is for the benefit of all that we work toward righting this wrong.
 - f. The intent of the bylaws was designed so that surplus money from individual sports would flow back to the organization to cover the cost of doing business (administrative overhead, cost of writing checks, cost to running league apps, storage facility, cost of hosting website, etc) . The carryover practice has taken us away from this intent and created a gap in being able to be financially stable and successful. It has also created a mentality of sports vs. the organization as a whole; league money is thought of as an asset of only that league to the point that the idea of league money “going back” to supporting CMSA as a whole is a negative outcome.
 - g. We recognize that this is a huge shift, but our hope is that it is seen as a necessary shift for the future. We have to stop thinking of ourselves as a loose collection of sports, and as one organization all working together for the advancement of our community as a whole.
5. Q &A Forum - All
- a. Is it an option to a stipend for commissioners if we are losing people to lead our sports?
 - b. General reminder that delay in score entering is frustrating and is a top complaint received from members. Make sure to enter scores & standings in a timely manner.

- c. Support in favor of hiring paid personnel to manage CMSA, even if that means an increase to members. We are vastly underpriced compared to other organizations like Chicago Sport and Social.
 - d. Question to explain how “budgeting to zero” or draining a league account at the end of the season, can directly impact a commissioner?
 - i. J. Stevens provides an example - Before the season, a commissioner plans to have 100 teams and budgets to spend all the money from 100 teams. The sport in fact gets 105 teams so on top any additional expenses like court/field rental, leagues are saying “I don’t want that money to go back to CMSA” and plan for ice cream trucks, or other spend so there is no money left at the end of the season that rolls back to CMSA. We want you to have what you need, but need to change the mentality that money going back to CMSA is “wrong”.
 - e. Request for more transparency about where the organizational budget is spent, especially the money from leagues.
 - i. M. Richardson - that information is out there, people just need to access it. After every Board meeting the treasurer report is accessible. We do hear that we need to find better ways to communicate the resources that exist. We are committing to hosting more meetings like this to directly talk about the organization.
 - f. Discussion of developing a target or general administration fee that all leagues build in budgets to go back to CMSA.
 - g. Are there still openings for appointed Board positions? YES! Follow up directly with anyone interested, we have responded to everyone that had submitted during the nomination period.
6. Close Meeting - M. Richardson
- a. Expect another meeting before the spring/summer season. We will continue meetings on a more regular basis.

Adjournment: 7:43 PM