

BRLI Annual General Meeting

September 19, 2021

Amy called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. Amy noted that there was good attendance and there had been all year at the meetings. She noted how the Annual Meeting is different from the monthly meetings and the BRLI Operating year runs 10/1 – 9/30.

Secretary's Report – Attendance was taken. Minutes were presented. Adam moved to approve the minutes Laura seconded. Motion carried.

Susan read the list of those who attended at least 5 meetings during the year and noted they are eligible for voting on the new Board and on the Constitution. The following were listed: Randy Barnhouse, Amy Dinges, Steve Dinges, Jennifer Finn, Matt Finn, Julie Grams, Cassie Hayter, Chuck Higgins, Jess Higgins, Ed Johnson, Sue Johnson, Adam Kurtz, Angel Kurtz, Angie Marker, Kevin Marker, Willie McLane, Eric Minnick, Chris Murphy, Karen Murphy, Susan O'Neill, Chris Ohler, Jonathan Purks, Katie Purks, Crystal Renn, Danny Renn, Laura Ricketts, Katie Riley, Rick Riley, Cassi Russo, Brett Sofley, Elisa Via, Pat Via, Jana Wagoner, Nick Wilt, Heather Yamagata, Ryan Yamagata

President's Report – State of the League – The Annual Report will be sent to the email list and will be posted on the website.

Brunswick Railroaders Little League began its 2021 operating year in the middle of unprecedented pandemic times. The general membership voted in a new board of directors in September 2020 who swiftly began the order of business for the new operating year. The league sustained both baseball and softball programs for both our Fall and Spring seasons.

The league opened up the 2021 Spring season on Saturday, April 10th. In true BRLI style we held league pictures and the ever popular parade. Although an opening ceremony was forgone, it was a perfect weather day and all who came out to the ball fields were glad to get back to some sense of normalcy. Not to mention the players were so excited to be back outdoors, in action, and surrounded by friends. Honestly, the adults were as well.

BRLI had a busy Summer Tournament Season with several teams participating in local, district and state tournaments. BRLI kicked off the season with the Garel Hauver tournament held over the weekend of March 27-28. It was our turn to host the MD2 Gregg Quedewitt Tournament of Champions and we also volunteered to host the MD2 Junior TOC as well, both occurring the end of June. At that point all of our all star teams moved into tournament play. We hosted the MD State Little League Softball Tournament held July 2-10. What a fun and tiring week that was, but to hear all of the compliments the visiting district teams gave made it all worth it. Our annual Emory Frye Minor League tournament began on July 17th and ended on July 23rd. Another great week watching the district rising major league players.

As a result of the pandemic, the league has suffered some financial struggles as well as the fall-off of volunteers. As our operating year comes to an end, we managed to gain additional sponsorships, a small grant, and some company in-kind donations of a new sound system and new pressbox windows (being installed next weekend) at the Marvin Younkens field. The successful Spring Hit-A-Thon secured a little over \$10,000 towards the batting cage renovation project. Our volunteer base thrives during the spring season, but then falls off when summer approaches. Innovative ways to increase our overall, year long, volunteer base are needed in order to sustain the league.

At this point, members of the board of directors will share their reports for their area of responsibility.

Treasurer's Report – The condensed financial summary was provided noting that there is \$39,417.11 in the Checking Account currently, with revenue during the year of \$88,932.92 and expenditures of \$69,751.58. We are waiting on the invoice for AllStar and Fall Ball uniforms which will need to be paid out of the current balances.

VP of Baseball – The 2020/2021 season will be one to remember for BRLL. Starting with the fall season end of year tournament that saw over 30 teams in 2 divisions play in a single elimination tournament for the right to be crowned Fall Covid 19 Showdown American or National Division Tournament Champions. With all for BRLL teams playing in the National Division this was sure to be a tough matchup for the rest of the district. Led by a solid group of 12 year olds and a great supporting cast the BRLL Orioles defeated a strong Frederick National Lions team to win the National Division Championship. Great way to end the 2020 season and kick off 2021.

The 2021 season started off as hot as the 2020 season ended. With our 3rd Annual Garel Hauver Memorial Tournament kicking off the spring with 14 teams from BRLL and around the district. With all 4 Brunswick teams winning their pools and advancing to the semifinal round it guaranteed Brunswicks first ever championship in our kickoff classic. The BRLL Phillies led by Nick Wilt and his scrappy group of players took home the championship with a great group effort with outstanding pitching and defense and timely hitting.

The 2021 regular season dubbed Getting Back To Normal or as close to normal as we could get started off with our traditional opening day pictures and parade. Although we did not have our opening ceremonies we did have fans in the stands for a full day of baseball. Getting back on the field playing baseball was just what the doctor ordered. life was good!!!

This years regular season saw the Phillies win the first half and the Orioles winning the second half forcing a best of 3 playoff crowning our season champs. The Orioles prevailed winning the league crown and advancing to the District 2 Tournament of Champions hosted by BRLL. The

Orioles came through the TOC unscathed to win their 3rd TOC Championship and Brunswicks 8th overall.

With our numbers being down due to Covid our minors division was forced to drop to 3 teams. We combined with Frederick American LL to give our kids some quality games and great instruction. Each player received great coaching from the likes of Adam Kurtz, Willie McLane and Brett Sofely providing them the much needed skills to advance their baseball careers in the years to come.

Our Brunswick Minors All Stars competed in our Annual Emory Frye Tournament playing some great baseball and displaying the skills learned throughout the season. BRLL lost the championship game to a talented Thurmont team but gained a lot of experience along the way.

Our numbers at our younger levels are growing. We had 6 Tball teams and 3 coach pitch teams. We heard a lot of positive feedback from those levels and we are excited going forward as the foundation of our league continues to grow.

Our Brunswick JR/SR program continues to grow as well. The JRs Division produced the top 2 teams in our district and provided a glimpse of some great things to come in the future. Our Brunswick Gold team beat the Brunswick Garnet in the TOC Championship to bring BRLL another flag at that level. Our JR all star team led by manager Pat Via put on a great display of baseball to win the District 2 JR Division Crown to advance to the state tournament. BRLL played some good baseball in the states but fell short in the win loss column but gained alot of experience non the less.

Our Brunswick SR Division led by Chris Ohler also advanced to the state tournament in nearby district 1. with scrappy play and a never say die attitude they battle their way to the championship game falling just short to Conococheague LL. Not a bad way to end their LL careers.

Our BRLL 11/12 team ended their season on a somber note. Winning their first game in convincing fashion at Frederick National they ran into a buzz saw in game 2 losing to eventual State Champion Montgomery County Lower LL. Their season came to an end losing to Montgomery County Upper in game 3 of the double elimination tournament.

To cap off our All Star season the 9/10/11 year old All Stars captured the 2021 Maryland State Championship!!! Led by manager Kevin Marker this team put up some pretty impressive offensive numbers led by the like of Henry Maishiro and Austin Lovelace only to be matched on the defensive side led by shutdown pitchers Jared Ricketts, Matt Johnson and Michael Minnick. The future is bright for this group and the future starts now!

VP of Softball – Chuck Higgins reported that in the spring there were 9 teams across t-ball through majors, showing great growth in the program. This year is the first time the district held tournaments for 8 – 10 and 10 - 12 age groups. BRLL was able to form teams at both the 8 – 10

and 10 – 12 age groups on their own for the first time. BRLL's 8 – 10 team won the District title beating Montgomery County in a double header and went on to play in the state tournament. Our 8-10 softball all-stars were managed by Ryan Yamagata with coaches Danny Renn and Mike French.

The players were Brielle Arvoy, Kylee Bell, Stella Boedecker, Jojo Droneburg, Skylar French, Brynn Gemmill, Addie Hsu, Ashlynn Lefever, Emma McNeese, Serenity Morris, Katie Paschalides, Ruby Renn, and Aubree Shafer.

The 10 – 12 team also won the District title also defeating Montgomery County in a double header and went on to play in the state tournament, hosted in Brunswick. The girls tournament run was highlighted by a 9 run 6th inning to come back and beat Dorchester. Our Little League Softball All-Stars were managed by Chuck Higgins with coaches Jen Georg and Carroll Haugh. Competing for the Lady 'Roaders were Briana Butler, Aeriana Carter, Joey Georg, Kaitlyn Guyton, Ava Higgins, Sophia Parks, Lindsay Pearre, Sienna Russo, Emma Smith, Rileigh Smith, Julia Thompson, Angel Wenner, and Charlee Wilhelm.

We look forward to seeing the program continue to grow.

Player Agent – Cassi reported that for the Spring 2021 Baseball season there were 200 players registered and for Spring 2021 Softball there were 93 players total.

She reported that for Fall Baseball there are 125 registered, with the numbers down this fall the league has struggled finding managers and coaches for the fall. Baseball players seem to be trying other fall sports this season. In Fall Softball there are 50 players registered with some late adds coming. The numbers are up and improving.

Fundraising – Jess Higgins reported that the Opening Day raffle brought in \$8K; Hitathon - \$10K; Golf Tournament - \$4K. We were unable to have the Cash Bonanza and Springfest, but overall fundraising results were good. We received a Community Foundation Grant which helped pay for new sound system.

Safety – Sue Johnson reported that from a Safety perspective, the 2020-2021 annual year for BRLL was an eventful one. BRLL, like other leagues, had fluid plans in place to assist with mitigating COVID-19 risks to our players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators. Our "Spring 2020" season was converted to a "Robust Fall" 2020 season played in September and October. Our BRLL Return to Play plan was consistently used in the Fall 2020 and for much of the Spring, 2021, season. The plan was recognized as a model for other leagues in District 2. BRLL was fortunate to have never experienced a case of COVID-19 spread due to league activities for the annual year despite having tracked approximately a dozen cases of positive COVID-19 tests and approximately thirty instances of quarantining. Due to very low community transmission rates in the summer of 2021 and changing CDC guidance on masks and cleaning protocols

BRLI relaxed some masking, cleaning, and distancing practices. However, BRLI still currently makes effort to keep players, volunteers, and coaches apart when outdoors and conducted spring 2021 tryouts on our fields rather than indoors. General and Board meetings were (and are) held outside when possible and moved to larger indoor facilities when outdoor meetings were not practical. Meetings have also been conducted by video conference when appropriate.

All fields and facilities are regularly inspected for safety risks. We still have a couple of high priority items to remedy like the metal beams and poles on the batting cages but, overall, our facilities do not present any notable safety risks.

More background checks were conducted in the 2020-21 year than in any other year. Injury wise, it was also a very safe year. We had a few ankle twists, head bumps, cut lips, cut skin requiring stitches, jammed fingers, and bruises, but no broken bones, concussions, or other serious injury. All teams were issued basic first aid kits that came with instruction cards. Teams that travelled away from Brunswick fields were provided with comprehensive first aid kits with an additional array of items that would be useful. One other improvement in first aid service was the placement of a cache of single use ice packs at each of the concession stands. Finally, our 2021 ASAP plan was approved as submitted. An approved ASAP plan is necessary to enter Tournament play.

Field Maintenance – Chris Ohler reported that during the 2021 year we installed new dirt on Frye field and put in new bases. We ordered new fence cap and it is ready to be installed. At Marvin Younkens field a new backstop net was installed, along with a new batter's eye and a new roof being put on the equipment shed. James Main field's new backstop net is available and will be put in along with a new batter's eye to be installed. In 2022 we will be working on Younkens field to address issues, along with installing a new roof over the bleachers at Younkens field and installing electric in the Younkens equipment shed.

Umpire in Chief – Bill Machen reported that the 2021 season went relatively well with little controversy. He noted that many umpires are beginning to age out, currently have 5 active umpires, spring had 3 junior umpires that helped with majors and minors. We need to push to get additional umpires.

Concessions – Due to COVID, concessions was limited this year with only pre-packaged items being sold. We did purchase a new cheese warmer for the nachos that will save on waste and on clean up.

Equipment – Nick Wilt reported that he coordinated equipment and uniform distribution for spring and fall for all the teams.

Coaching Coordinator – Adam Kurtz note that we finally got the relationship off the ground with PCA, with approximately 60 coaches plus about 15 online completing the coaching clinic. He reported that we did another year of coaching surveys with 67 returned versus 45 last year. They also did a survey of the Coaches/Managers regarding the Board with about 22 completed. We have renewed the partnership with PCA. The current goal is to focus on the parents to help them understand how to be supportive fans, which will hopefully help the coaches and managers.

General Membership - Amy asked if there were any additions from the General Membership. Sue Johnson added with regard to tournament play that she saw many of the teams play and they made her proud to be from the community as the kids were positive and represented the community well. Amy noted that over the years when the BRLL teams have traveled the kids have behaved well and that the hotels and communities visited appreciated the behavior. Our tournaments are also well received by the teams attending, which is a true testament to the state of our league. Even though we, as a league sometimes have challenges, we are appreciated. She thanked the volunteers.

Review of Constitution – As it had not been done in a while, revisions to the Constitution were put forth. Under the financial section, it was asked if we followed the processes outlined. It was noted that many bills are paid electronically, but that when physical checks are required they need dual signatures.

Following this discussion it was brought up that at the August meeting it had been determined that in order to avoid conflict with how voting would be conducted we needed to complete the elections for the 2021-2022 Board first.

The ballots were provided. Thirty four of 36 eligible to vote did so, although some chose not to elect anyone for a particular position. The results of the election were presented to the membership with the following results:

President: Ryan Yamagata – 22 votes
Vice President of Baseball: Adam Kurtz – 22 votes
Vice President of Softball: Chuck Higgins – 32 votes
Treasurer: open
Secretary: Susan O'Neill – 33 votes
Umpire in Chief: Bill Machen – 33 votes
Coaching Coordinator: open
Concessions Manager: Cassie Hayter – 20 votes
Equipment Manager: Nick Wilt – 34 votes
Field Maintenance: Chris Ohler – 33 votes
Grants/Fundraising: open

Information Officer: Jana Wagoner – 28 votes

Player Agent: Cassi Russo – 33 votes

Safety: Sue Johnson – 34 votes

Laura moved to adjourn the meeting. Adam seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

The next scheduled meeting is Sunday, October 17 at 6 pm via GoToMeetings. The link will be provided.