

**MARION SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**Minutes of Sunday, January 29th, 2023**  
**Ralphies Restaurant**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Marion Senior Softball Association was called to order at 1:05 PM by President, Gene Smithberger.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

**Commissioners in attendance were:** Don Bentley, Ed Slone, Buddy Lyles, Jeff Crummel, Steve Romshe, Jerry Fagan, Roger Smith, Steve Zonneville, Mike Winders, Bill Finnegan and Gene Smithberger.

**Absences:** Keith Thrush,

**Guests:** Mike Fleming, Larry Kelly, Sam Grisham

**III. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Steve Romshe moved to accept the minutes of the 12/11/22 meeting and Steve Zonneville seconded. Motion passed.

**IV. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Roger Smith reported \$3167.93 in the treasury as of 01/29/2023. In January 2023 our only expense was \$593.19 for 10 dozen softballs.

Ed Slone moved to accept the financial report and Bill Finnegan seconded. Motion passed.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

Gene reviewed the mission and vision for our MSSA league which is found on the MSSA website. He said there were about 120 players in the three leagues in 2022 and one of the roles as commissioners is to address concerns in a fair and friendly way. As commissioners we need to be united.

Don Bentley provided a handout of 5 different Designs from Visual Expressions for a new sign for the MSSA league to be mounted on the concession/scorekeepers building with the thought of mounting it a little higher than the existing sign. Buddy Lyles made a motion to use Design #

'5' and make a change to remove the word Association so that the lettering could be larger. Bill Finnegan seconded the motion and the motion passed. The sign should last 8-10 years. Don will proceed to order the new sign. Cost of the new sign is \$504.

We discussed requiring pitchers to use the pitching screen or wearing a facemask. Sam noted that with the composite bats, it's not uncommon for balls coming back to the pitcher at 110-140 mph which makes it harder for pitchers to protect themselves and now with no free foul batters will be swinging at most pitches to make sure they get on base. Steve Zonneville made a motion to require the pitching screen or wearing a face mask for the 60 and 65 league and highly recommending it for the 50 league. Bill Finnegan seconded the motion and the motion passed with 2 no votes.

### Rule 3E.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Sam Grisham was welcomed to our meeting and reviewed a proposal to create a "Hall of Fame" wall to remember some of our players – past and present going back to 1989 in Marion. Sam said we should be able to recognize players, coaches and sponsors from the past so we don't forget about them. Sam said we could build a wall on the north side of the building below the MSSA sign and he would donate the first \$500 towards building it. Criteria discussed to being nominated as a player, coach or sponsor was involvement for at least 10 years and accumulating 15 points. Points awarded: 1 point for each year involved in the league and 1.5 points for each recommendation. Thoughts were that only 10 recommendations per year to be awarded and reviewed and voted by the board members and maybe only do this every other year. The proposal was received very well by the commissioners and Gene suggested that Sam be appointed as a commissioner to implement this proposal. Steve Romshe added that this commissioner position also relieve some of the work Roger Smith handles now such as ordering and obtaining tournament shirts and trophies.

Ed Slone made a motion to appoint Sam Grisham as the Hall of Fame commissioner and Mike Winders seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Sam's contact info:

Sam Grisham

15844 Oakshade Lane

Findlay, Ohio 45840

Phone: 740-262-2548

Email: samnkelli1@msn.com

**Tabled Item:**

Buddy discussed that he is working on a cause and effect list for offenses to our code of conduct and should have it available by our next meeting. The list will be organized in three tiers based on severity. The goal would be to vote on and add to our rules.

Buddy said we need a lot of dirt to build up the 1<sup>st</sup> base area. Several suggestions were made and Buddy will pursue who to get dirt from.

**A change from the last meeting - Checks for league play for existing players should be sent to Bill Finnegan.**

**Important – The \$25 fee per league must be postmarked by April 1<sup>st</sup> to qualify for the \$25 fee. If received after April 1<sup>st</sup> then the fee is \$30 per league. This is required so we can have an effective draft which is being held on April 10<sup>th</sup>. If received late Gene has to work with each league commissioner to see if any coaches need players and has to determine which coach gets the players which causes a lot of work and possible unfairness between teams.**

**Contact info and Address to mail fees is:**

**Bill Finnegan**

**2426 Crissinger Rd**

**Marion, Ohio 43302**

**Phone: 740-387-8944**

**Email: Elgrande1954@yahoo.com**

**Tabled Item:**

Mike Winders reviewed that it is harder to get umpires and asked that we increase the umpire fees to \$30 per game which was approved by the commissioners. He also said he is planning on moving Kevin Lyons to Monday night and keeping Rick Schondel on Thursday nights.

Mike Fleming was welcomed to the meeting asked if he could share some concerns he has. He heard rumors that some players were blackballed by the commissioners after the 2022 season. He said if a person is asked to coach that the rules be reviewed with them. Also he felt that if we should talk with players and or coaches if we have an issue instead of meeting in private. Gene and other commissioners said we try to fairly address players concerns and we try to keep the league fun and fair. We did not blackball any players but we did address concerns and created a code of conduct that will be posted on our web site. Mike Fleming stated that most players don't know the rules and don't like to go to a website. Roger stated that 2

seasons in a row we printed and distributed MSSA rules ( which was a big expense ) and most players didn't want them when they were offered. We have a set of rules on hand in the concession building if anyone wants to review them. The web site is:  
<https://marionseniorsoftballassociation.com>

**Tabled Item:**

Gene discussed the need for coaches in the 50 and 60 leagues. Gene asked the league commissioners to check with and try to find new coaches if needed. He also discussed the need for checking with sponsors as we may need some additional sponsors.

In the 50 league Ed Slone said he needs 3 coaches

In the 60 league Jeff thinks we need 1 coach

In the 65 league with the new blind draft Buddy will work with Don and said he has people that will coach. Gene said coaches should call players to make sure they are playing this season and to get their player fees in by April 1<sup>st</sup> to Bill Finnegan.

Gene brought up creating a 70 league and possibly eliminating the 65 league and allowing players 68 and above to participate in the league. Gene said we could have the games played on Wednesday mornings. After some discussion Buddy made a motion to keep the 3 leagues as they are and to start a 70 pickup league on Wednesday mornings with no need to sign up and Bill Finnegan seconded. The motion passed.

Gene said he will put the new player registration form and violation of code of conduct on the MSSA website in the near future. He was waiting until after this meeting due to the possibility of a 70 league.

**Tabled Item:**

Jerry Fagan spent a lot time working at home on a new draft proposal. He presented and passed out an alternate proposal for substitute players. He said many players travel over a half hour and some over an hour away and would like to play a second game if they could. He showed on his proposal that players would be grouped into an A, B or C group based on where the players were drafted. While maintaining confidentiality the 1<sup>st</sup> round of 4 players drafted on a team would be in the A group, then players drafted in 2<sup>nd</sup> round 5-8 would be in the B group and the players drafted in rounds after 9 would be in the C group. Players would sign up to play and if they are needed and would only replace a player in the same group – i.e. If an A player and a C player didn't show up to play for a team then only an A player and a C player would be substituted for the missing players.

One concern that was brought up is that this may delay games while trying to get subs assigned while the current method doesn't have that issue. Another comment is that the current method works using players 6-9 on the draft list

Listed below is what Jerry's proposal is:

1. All players will be designated by the round they were drafted ( A,B,C )
2. All players will be listed in alphabetical order
3. If 3 games are being played
4. If for some reason no one signed the list to sub from one of the above mentioned groups ( A,B,C ) then the coach of the team needing a sub can drop down to the next level for a player. Picking a sub from a higher level will not be allowed.
5. Subs we used in 2022 can sign up under the B or C levels
6. A sub may play any position
7. A drawing will be held in the press box by coaches of the team(s) who need players from the sub list that night as has been done in the past.

Ed Slone discussed that we should allow senior bats also in the 60 league. Discussion about players spending hundreds of dollars for bats and if they could just use a senior bat it would save them money. Mike Fleming questioned why we can't use NSA or other association bats. Mike Winders said we use ASA, USA bats and senior bats only, based on the insurance provided by the USA association.

Jerry Fagan made a motion to allow senior bats in the 60 league and Mike Winders seconded. The motion passed with one no vote.

**Rule 4B.**

#### **Tabled Item: See last Paragraph**

Gene discussed a meeting that we had with the city parks department with Mike Winders, Gene Smithberger and Steve Zonneville in attendance. In attendance for the city were Cathy Chaffin ( Director of Public Service ), Tony Hartman ( Airport Operations Director ), Kenny Ballinger ( Interim Parks Superintendent ) and Larry Jordan ( Interim Parks Supervisor )

We discussed our plans for the 2023 season and the city discussed what they would be doing and some items of concern. Gene said we would continue as we did in 2022 doing additional mowing if needed and preparing the field. Gene said doing it this way we only had 4 rain-out games in 2022 vs. 9 rain outs in 2021. The city said the cost would be \$15 per night if we did that and that they would mow typically on Thursdays depending on weather and they would supply lime for marking the field.

1. The city needs us to be done by mid to end of October as they shut of the water in that time period. Electric would not be shut off.

2. The city said no chemicals are allowed to be used by our league such as RoundUp. The city does not have a license for chemical use and will not allow their use.
3. The city stated that Tony Hartman is the interim parks superintendent and requests for field use for practice and tournaments need to be sent to Tony. Tony's phone Number is 740-387-5370 or use the city's website to reserve fields or email. Tony's email is [thartman@marionohio.org](mailto:thartman@marionohio.org) and the cities website is: <https://lpac.recdesk.com/Community/Home>. An account must be created so this may not be useful for everyone.
4. We discussed the need for taller poles and new lighting and the city said it's a huge expense and they would desire to replace lighting at all the parks since new LED lights are more reliable and much cheaper to operate however it's a huge expense and only so much can be done each year. They did replace lighting at McKinley Park if we wanted to see how it looks. Each capital expense has to be approved by the city council and only limited dollars are allocated each year for capital improvements.
5. The city said they would replace both upper and lower doors at the concession building at the request of Mike Winders and that Mike Winders will give Kenny from the city a key to the padlocks we use.
6. The city parks dept. said they have a lot on their plate with only 5 persons to mow 700 acres each week along with all the maintenance of buildings and equipment that is under their responsibly including the water park, airport and senior center.
7. The city asked why we don't use Garfield Park instead of Kennedy Park and told us Garfield's electrical system is newer.
8. We asked if we could put a tarp on the backstop to stop the glare coming from the white paint on the new bridge. The city said no – that wouldn't be allowed.

Here is a list of items that we should be concerned about by moving to Garfield provided by Mike Winders.

1. Infield hasn't been properly taken care of for the past two years.
2. Many of our players can still hit the ball over the net.
3. The Liability, if any of our players hit the ball into the business in left field and a car on 309.
4. The press box hasn't been used for the last two years.
5. Per the Parks Dept they haven't allowed anyone to use the upstairs in the press box for the last two years.
6. The steps to the press box are unsafe.
7. Moving the scoreboard. The Rec League got a free scoreboard donated to them 3 years ago and the Parks Dept promised to put it up. The scoreboard has never been installed.
8. Moving the Senior League scoreboard from Bigford to Garfield and hiring someone to install it. The current scoreboard at Garfield is located on the first base side. The price for relocating one in center field at Garfield will be more expensive.

9. Don't trust the Parks Department in allowing our League to use the restroom in the Press box. They will force us to use a porta john.
10. Won't be able to serve food out the concession because of not having double sinks and will need to construct cupboards and countertops.
11. I don't think there is a hot water tank.
12. Will need to have a Food Service License.
13. Finding people to work in the concession. Workers will no longer be able to watch the game.
14. Left field and third base and short stop players cannot see due to the blinding sun in their eyes and there is concern about players getting hit with balls since they cannot see properly.

We discussed about moving and we all agreed that we want to stay at Kennedy Park. Gene said he approached Harbolt Electric about replacing the main pole mounted outside breakers at Kennedy and it may be a cheaper option than moving to Garfield.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion by Ed Slone was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 PM and Mike Winders seconded. Motion passed.

Gene stated that our next meeting will be scheduled for Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM at Perkins Restaurant. Buddy Lyles obtained the location for the group.

Minutes by Steve Zonnevylle