

Woodstock Badminton Club
Board Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2016
310 Hunter Street
7:00pm

Welcome: Russell called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 7:00

Present: Wendy Clements, Carol Bossenberry, Marg Allen, Anne Lim, Russell Yeung, Don Syms, Robert Trohill

Regrets: Chris Ruland

1. Review of last Board Meeting minutes

The minutes were reviewed, no errors or omissions were noted. Wendy motioned to approve minutes, seconded by Bob, all approved, motion to accept passed.

2. President's Report

The arrangement with Southgate Centre needs to be reviewed for this coming season. At present, I believe that a SG member may come to the club and play either badminton or pickleball once a week for free. After that they will pay guest fees. There is a reciprocal arrangement where our members may attend one of their sessions (classes not included) per week at no cost.

The problem I see is that as far as I know, none of our members attend SG. What is more disturbing is that we encourage that if you play once a week, it is more advantageous to take a membership.

Memberships are where our bread and butter is. This is where our income comes from, not guest fees. We cannot plan our season based on guest fees. Allowing someone to play once a week for free is equivalent to giving away a membership. In fact, if you play once a week (this is common frequency for casual players) you are better off to take a SG membership and then come to the WBC for free. So you get 2 memberships for the price of one. Even if you come occasionally to more than one session per week, you are still better off to take out a SG membership. Not sure what their yearly membership costs but their website shows an all inclusive membership good until the end of the year costs \$85.

As far as I know, no SG member comes to badminton, only pickleball. I counted out some numbers on attendance. From February to July of this year, we have given away 58 sessions to SG members and received 12 guest fees (this number of guest fees may actually be high as it included several instances where this one person was listed as having paid guest fees but this was the only session listed for the week). We have given away \$406 to make at most \$84 on this arrangement.

My recommendation when I go talk to Chris Cunningham is that we discontinue this arrangement, at least in it's present form. We are losing money on this and there is no benefit to our members whatsoever. She may come back with a counter proposal but I don't see what she can offer us in return if none of our members are using their facilities now.

Also up for discussion is the fee structure for this coming season. I recommend that we keep the membership fees the same. Guest fees were lowered from \$9 to \$7 4 years ago. I recommend that we put it back at \$9. We need to encourage people towards taking a membership to stabilize our income. This is really equivalent to having no increase in guest fees for the last 5 years.

We need to revise the rental rates and process. I recommend that we increase the rental rates for both members and non-members. At present, we are ridiculously cheap. People who needs to rent the club for family activities will pay double what we are asking for right now. We also need to simplify the rental agreement.

a) South Gate Agreement

Carol submitted:

August 16, 2016 Membership Response to other reports

First of all in response to both the Pres & VP reports that I don't think this club could function without the pickleball members and the resulting income. We don't have the badminton membership numbers to support a badminton only facility. [See table below]

I don't believe we are at a place where the club could revert to an exclusive badminton facility nor would the suggestion sit well with current members and would increase the division between the two groups of players. We need to mend relationships not increase stress and discord.

I would suggest that we don't do anything about the agreement with South Gate which was recently clarified and renewed. The agreement with South Gate has in fact resulted in memberships over the past few years including my own. It is a good will partnership and is a good introduction to WBC.

There are people in Woodstock who didn't know there is a badminton club, that people played badminton regularly or had never heard of pickleball until learning that they could play through their South Gate membership (a full year membership to South Gate is \$160 Jan — Dec). In the whole scheme of things if we recruit 1 or 2 members a year from the South Gate members who have learned a new sport — in spite of there being no coaching or any other benefit to joining WBC other than love of the game — the club benefits.

Some of the South Gate members who play Monday eves are still working and don't have the opportunity to play more often. Others are involved in other recreation or go south for the winter. As their skill levels improve they become interested in playing more often.

WBC members have not used South Gate facilities because they don't know they can or what the process would be to go. Other than the partnership with South Gate and the Info Pickleball website that Dana & Scott set up a few years ago there has been no recruitment for pickleball members other than word of mouth or that people have played elsewhere and inquire about joining.

We have done very little to recruit new members for either sport other than the annual open house and that needs to be better advertised and better organized. The South Gate members are over 50. We need to recruit more adult and student members.

I feel we have not done a good job of keeping all our members informed of what is going on at the club. As publicity director in my first year on the board there was a monthly newsletter that went on the website and copies were left in the lounge. We need to do more to mend some of the gaps and ill feeling that occurred over the recent motion. Every member needs to feel they are part of an organization that values their membership.

Current members 126 Current memberships 104								
The student membership revenue basically pays the program costs so can't be factored into the % of players needed to sustain the club.								
Badminton members 38 = 38% / Pickleball members 23 = 23% / Members who play both sports 16 =								
	Adult	Couple	Senior Adult	Senior Couple	Student	Social	Family	Friday Family
	19	2 (4)	44	5 (10)	27	1	4 (17)	1 (4)
Badminton	15	1 (2)	17	2 (4)	27			
Pickleball	4	1 (2)	15	1 (2)				
Both			12	2 (4)				
I suggest we add a box on the new membership form for an indication sport played and a column in the membership database for more accurate numbers over the next season.								

Discussion:

- This was not about pickleball versus badminton. It was about was there mutual benefit for the Woodstock Badminton Club members and the South Gate members.
- Unsure on how many memberships were signed up from South Gate members that took advantage of the free sessions at the club. The sign up book did not give enough information, and data not captured from membership form
- Suggestion that we not dismiss the agreement but change it. Maybe to 1 or 2 free sessions per month. This would mean that a once a week casual player would not be

able to get and use the cheaper South Gate membership to play at the club to avoid the Woodstock Badminton Club membership.

- Create a sheet per guest. Each time the guest plays they would have the date recorded on their sheet. This would allow for better tracing to find out how frequently each guest was using the club.
- Suggestion about advertising more for the club – it was pointed out that this was not what the report dealt with

Motion use the sign in sheets to study the numbers for the next year, then reassess South Gate agreement. All approved. Motion passed

b) Guest Fee increase

- Suggestion to take it to an even \$10
- Suggestion to \$9 stating that going to 10 would be too much of an increase.

Motion to accept \$9 passed with all in agreement.

Marg motioned to accept report, seconded by Wendy, all approved, motion to accept report approved

3. Vice President Report:

Over the last number of years I have talked to different people about possibly volunteering to be on the board of directors to help out in the operation of the club. From them, I have received a myriad of reasons why it would be impractical for them to help. The one answer that I get the most when I ask is “the board meetings are too long and I don’t want to sit in a meeting for three hours”. Well, neither do I. If you look on Ron Cougler’s “wish list” or goals for the operation of the club you will notice that shortening the length of the board meetings was one of his items. Going forward, if we hope to attract new board members, effectively lessening all of our work loads, we need to strive toward more efficient meetings. Last season we were able to shorten most of the meetings to just over one hour by ensuring that each director submitted a report ahead of the meeting. When I say “ahead” of the meeting I mean at least a few days, not a half hour. Like the rest of us I’m sure that Don is a busy person that has other things to do so getting the reports to him as early as is reasonably possible will make Don’s workload easier to manage and will in turn give each of us the opportunity to absorb the information that has been submitted. If new information or items arise between the time the report is submitted and the meeting, feel free to table those items for discussion. Depending on the urgency of the items, we may defer discussion until the next meeting or proceed to deal with the item(s) at hand.

After the last informal board meeting that was held in July, I’ve been thinking quite a bit about some of the comments and suggestions that were made. Having two members that predominantly play pickleball sit in on the meeting provided some insight into different points of view. Both of these members seemed to be acutely aware of the fact that increasing pickleball membership has been difficult. Both provided suggestions on how they thought that the club could overcome these difficulties. The suggestions that stuck in my mind most were the ideas about changing the fee structure either by offering shorter membership options and or reducing court fees. Each suggestion was met with an explanation of either why we haven’t tried that method or why it hadn’t worked in the past. I have to admit that I was slightly offended when one of the ladies said that if we weren’t willing to try any of their suggestions than things will stay the same. It must be said that over the years most, if not all, of their suggestions have been attempted in one fashion or another. Some of membership options that we tried were very difficult to administer, bearing in mind that this is a volunteer based organization and others did not provide the required income to keep the facility operating. The most successful arrangement of membership structure to date, as far as administration and profitability are concerned, has been the annual membership. Four years ago, when the membership structure was changed to the annual configuration, the membership fees were reduced 20% across the board and the court fees reduced from \$9.00 to \$7.00 or a 28% reduction in an attempt to gain club exposure. Within two seasons our membership had more than doubled. In that four year period we have had one modest increase to our membership fees. Unfortunately our fixed costs have increased dramatically over the same period. I would propose that to keep pace with inflation and to encourage people to purchase memberships, we increase our court fees to the 2012 rate of \$9.00 while continuing with the same reasonably priced membership fees.

Now back to the pickleball problem. Since the last meeting in June, an open house was held July 11 offering a free evening of pickleball with lessons. The third week in September has traditionally been the club's open house which allows people to come in and play either sport for free. While I applaud the organizing members for their attempt to bolster pickleball interest, I struggle with the fact that this event was not sanctioned by the elected board of the Woodstock Badminton Club. However, this got me to thinking that since the Pickleball members have chosen to have their own identity, their own website, have now chosen to organize club events without board sanction and have expressed on numerous occasions that our membership rate and court fees are beyond what pickleball players are prepared to pay, would it not be better for them to investigate moving to a facility where they can manage their own club and set their own competitive membership rates and court fees? Publicly owned facilities such as a school gym or a community centre hall might be more economically suited allow Pickleball to grow in the city of Woodstock. As a privately owned and operated facility, we cannot possibly compete with publically managed venues. I also don't feel that we, as managing directors, can ask the majority of our members to subsidize a sport that they don't play by reducing fees for pickleball play only. This, by the way, has also been attempted in the past with limited results in increased pickleball membership and unlimited "feedback" from the badminton players. Same facilities, same courts, different court fees makes this a very hard sell. What also becomes a difficult sell is the fact that pickleball now occupies roughly 44% of available court scheduling while currently only about 15% of our members play pickleball. From a club management standpoint, this is a very generous ratio. So generous in fact that it is starting to be questioned.

From a board perspective, every opportunity to grow the sport of pickleball in our facility has been explored with the full cooperation of the club and in turn the club members, most of which do not play pickleball. Any notion that there has been bias against the sport of pickleball or its members is false. After at least five seasons of trying different methods to increase pickleball interest, it becomes clear that the Woodstock Badminton Club may not be the best fit as a venue for pickleball in this community.

Thank you to Wendy for acquiring the new refrigerator and arranging to have it delivered to our facility.

Youth Director Report:

Since the lesson season ended in May, we have signed four new junior members. This will help to fill the positions of the youth members that will be leaving this season to attend post secondary education.

I will be confirming a date for the start of the lesson season late in September. With a little luck, this year's lesson start should coincide with the "open house" week traditionally held the third week in September. When the date is confirmed I will have Don send an e-mail blast to the general membership.

This upcoming season is shaping up to be another success.

Discussion:

- a. Director wanted this on record after what happened at the last meeting
- b. Discussion on what our current membership consisted of – youth vs adult

Anne motioned to accept report, seconded by Marg, all approved, motion to accept report passed

4. Treasure Report:

Balance sheet

Carol motioned to accept the Balance Sheet, seconded by Anne, all approved, motion to accept Balance Sheet passed

Income Statement

Discussion:

- July had fridge added as an asset
- Discussion about where the cost of moving the fridge was added. Left where Wendy had put it

Anne motioned to accept the income balance, seconded by Marg, all approved, motion to accept Income statement passed

Budget

Discussion:

- Question on bird expense. It was explained that there was a large outlay last year, but one was not expected this year. However stock levels will be monitored to ensure that we do not run out.
- Explanation requested on why the cleaning supplies were not consistent through out the year.

Marg motioned to accept the budget, seconded by Carol, all approved, motion to accept the budget passed.

5. Rental Report

Discussion:

- Fees to be charged for rentals need to be increased. Upon review it was decided to go to \$100 per rental for members and \$60/hr for non-members to a maximum of \$300.
- Security deposit will be dropped in favour of a 30% non-refundable deposit.
- New form will be created that will include the shoe policy
- Russell will continue to post rentals onto the website calendar
- Review on club "closed" times
 1. Decided that term would not be used outside of the board members. It gave the impression that the club was physically closed.
 2. "Closed" times just mean that normally scheduled programs are not running, so club is available for rentals.
 3. It was determined that long weekends did not constitute "closed" days, since each of those days the club ran its normal programs.
 4. The only days that the club is closed for both programs and rentals is Christmas day, Boxing day, and New Years day. The exception to this will be if a member can be found to open the club for a rental on those days.
- Marg has a potential rental on Boxing Day this year. There were no volunteers to take the opening of the club among the board members. Marg was told to inform the applicant that the club was not available. Marg was told that the board backs her 100% on her decision about the Boxing Day rental.

Carol motioned to accept the rental report, seconded by Wendy, all approved, motion to accept the rental report passed.

6. Other Business:

Open house set for Sept 19 – Sept 25

Next Meeting:

13 Sept 2016

Wendy motioned to close the meeting, seconded by Carol, all approved, motion passed