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| A star logo with a white w in the middle  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | **Wasaga Beach Minor Hockey Association** |
| Town Hall Meeting re: Potential Amalgamation/Reorganization |
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* We have called this meeting in the spirit of transparency, although we’re all voted to be on this board, we felt this was an important topic that we wanted to bring directly to our membership for feedback before moving forward.
* We are NOT voting on anything tonight. The board just wants an idea of how our association members feel before spending more time pursuing this.
* We have had an amazing season: so much development, so much growth! We’ve doubled the size of our board. We’ve run 40 player development clinics and 12 goalie development clinics.
* Our Fill-a-helmet fundraiser has gone up again this year (as it has every year over the past three years). We raised over $11,000 this year!
* The Hockey for Hunger campaign managed to gather more than 3,000 lbs of food for our local food bank.
* We hosted our regular four Silver Stick tournaments, but we increased the number of teams this year to 8 and 10 depending on the age group. With the new twin pads, we are hoping we can continue to increase these numbers.
* We’ve held two out of three planned jamborees: U7 and U8 so far and U9 scheduled at the end of March
* We won the bid to host BOTH All Star games this year!
* Our year end banquet will be on April 13th, we’re looking for helpers to join this committee!
* Our AGM is scheduled for April 27th
* Lots of great development! (applause from all)
* Our board was approached by Collingwood Minor Hockey about a month ago. The president asked to come speak to our board about amalgamation.
* We’ve had amalgamation talks with other associations in the past, but it never developed into anything.
* The Collingwood amalgamation plan was to fully amalgamate with Clearview and Wasaga Beach making a new centre with approximately 1,000 players total.
* There has been talk in the news about Midland and Penetanguishene, and Oro Medonte and Orillia who have reorganized rather than amalgamated.
* Amalgamation is when two or more associations in close geographical area combine to form one new association to deliver all hockey programming.
* Reorganization is when two or more associations combine to from one new Representative entity, while maintaining their current respective Recreational programming (Local League).
  + If we choose reorganization, we would still maintain the Wasaga Stars identity for local league.
* Our committee did a lot of research and tried to come up with common themes of pros and cons for both options.
* A lot of centres have been amalgamating recently due to decreased registration and increased costs
  + We’re still feeling the effects of COVID in a couple of our age levels with low enrolment (U13 & U15), but this is not just happening in Wasaga Beach it’s everywhere
* Advantages:
  + Players playing at the level that is appropriate for them
  + Stronger, more competitive teams
  + Play at higher levels: A, or even AA
  + Larger pool of vols, etc. (see slides)
  + More coaches
* Disadvantages:
  + Losing identity: if we amalgamate, we would be a new centre and we would lose our name and everything that is Wasaga Stars
  + Start up costs: it is NOT cheap: each centre would put money together in a pool to pay for start up costs. Legal fees, new logo, new jerseys, etc.
  + Increased travel for games and practices: Clearview, Creemore, Collingwood, etc.
  + Increased competition: we may also see this with open borders too…
  + Rep teams (A, AA, BB, etc.) would be York-Simcoe Minor Hockey, which would contribute to further travel to York region, Simcoe, etc.
* Advantages for amalgamation and reorganization are very similar.
* Advantages for reorg:
  + Players can play at higher level, stronger, more competitive teams
  + Keep identity for LL but have new identity for higher level teams
* Disadvantages:
  + Start-up costs, higher potential registration fees, increased travel for games and practices, competition.
* This is by no means a comprehensive list: it’s just the most common themes we saw in our research.
* In our committee, we discussed several considerations:
  + Hockey registration has dropped post-COVID across the board, not just in Wasaga Beach
  + Many organizations have reorganized or amalgamated due to rising costs and lower registration.
  + Our registration for U5-U8 has just kept rising over the past few years. You’ve all seen the growth in the town, you know how many new houses there are. We’re seeing this reflected in our registration numbers.
    - We’re also looking to potentially reduce some fees to try to encourage more membership coming in.
  + We have premium ice time available to meet all of our needs at the beautiful new rink. I haven’t heard any real complaints; we all love it. We’re very fortunate: this is a great facility.
  + We could potentially lose the ice time discount that the town provides: if we amalgamate or reorganize, why would the Town of Wasaga Beach want to support our ice time if the players are not from this area?
  + We have a COSTCO and two brand new high schools coming to town.
  + With all this development, the housing and job prospects, there is going to be so much growth in this town, we think this will help minor hockey to continue to grow.
  + We have a longstanding and amazing relationship with our community: so many people remember playing for the Wasaga Stars and they all want to give to us whenever we do fundraisers such as Fill-a-Helmet.
  + We’ve all heard that Collingwood has reported to the media their dire need for ice time.
  + We have options: just because Collingwood proposed full amalgamation, doesn’t mean we can’t pursue reorganization instead.
* We just want to get some idea tonight how everyone feels about this prospect. IF no one is interested, we will tell Collingwood we’re not interested.

**Questions Period**

* Q: I don’t understand why if we amalgamate with anyone how are you reflecting that our costs will go up if there are more people involved? If we stay Wasaga Beach won’t our costs collectively go up?
* A: Costs COULD go up when we factor in the costs of amalgamation, such as the costs for creation of new logos, purchasing new jerseys, etc.
* Q: How many kids do we have now?
* A: 216; we are the smallest group out of the three groups
* Q: Has Clearview expressed an interest?
* A: Collingwood presented their amalgamation proposal to Clearview before presenting to us, but we have not heard feedback from Clearview yet. Keep in mind that Collingwood had not approached their own membership for feedback as of our meeting in January. Clearview is planning a survey of their membership to determine interest.
* Q: How long does the process take?
* A: We would have until November 2025 to submit an application to be considered for September 2026
* Q: Are we struggling financially as an org now?
* A: NO, our membership is up over last year, we sold out our community vendor spots in tournaments, sold out sponsorships, and have seen record fundraising this season. The philosophy is the more we can raise, if we can continue to grow the association, we can grow the development of our players and the game.
  + Some people think we may grow faster if we amalgamate.
* Q: IF we amalgamate or reorganize, then Collingwood will have a huge say over what happens to us and Clearview. With open borders happening, shouldn’t we hold out and see what happens since you can go wherever you want anyway?
* A: With open borders, it’s really hard to know what next year is going to look like. We’ve had players here trying to play at different ability levels and trying to clinch one of those three NRP spots.
* A: Next season hockey is going to be flipped on its head. Everything we’re used to seeing for player movement is gone out the window. We don’t know how next season is going to pan out. Each association is going to have to sell themselves.
* Q: Consideration Collingwood is doing a recreation master plan in which they are trying to build a multi-use facility with Blue Mountain. May pull in kids from Meaford, Thornbury, Blue Mountain, as well.
* A: At this point, Georgian Shores, Meaford, are not interested in amalgamation or reorganization talks.
* A: We went to the meeting from Collingwood to see what they’re going to take in for NRP next year, they said they’re going to take only about 30% from outside.
* Q: Did Collingwood explain why they were proposing amalgamation instead of reorganization?
* A: NO, we suggested reorganization as an alternative and we talked about it. They said they were open to that, but we do not know what that would look like. The president was open and honest and said they need more ice time.
* Q: My personal thought on this is maybe reg. costs coming down, having a new arena, etc. I think it would be in our best interest to not amalgamate. Maybe we can suggest to them that we take on some of their teams, like the girls’ teams. The other point is that having to go to Collingwood for practice would not work for those of us who work in places like Borden. There would be a good number of kids who wouldn’t be interested in this much travel. I don’t know if this is something in our realm to offer: maybe we can help support a girl’s team, take that over for a few years until they have their own ice time.
* A: Many families may be able to see through the muddy waters and see that we have a great program to offer, consistent ice times, a new facility, great coaches and volunteers, etc.
* Q: What about bench staff? What does it look like for amalgamation?
* A: We don’t know. IF we go to the table with other centres, we have a voice. We can say we don’t like this or we can come forward with our list of desires/needs.
* Q: We may want to look and see if they’d be willing to open their books as well to make sure they’re in good standing.
* A: This would absolutely be part of it, we would be a new org together so each of the associations that join contribute the same $$ up front.
  + Ex. Collingwood, WB< Clearview each puts in $20,000 as a loan
* Q: Open borders: Collingwood was saying 30%, has the board had a discussion yet about what it would look like for us?
* A: Yes, we have started those discussions but we haven’t finalized anything. We can limit the number of out-of-town players.
* If we choose to do spring tryouts, we can offer spring hockey. Mandatory that all minor hockey takes the month of July off. As of August 11th, we can start preseason development. August 25th, all teams that have been formed can start playing.
  + IF we choose to do fall tryouts, we cannot start until Sept 6th.
* We have just officially heard that we have been granted a U15BB and U18BB team for next season. This is a non-contact rep team playing in the York- Simcoe loop. They are creating an east and west loop to make for less travel than in previous seasons.
* Q: What’s our ranking right now?
* A: We’re a B centre. They focus more on tiers now: Tier 1, 2, or 3. We’re typically Tier 2.
* To offer context: we only have 15 players from our association that are NRP’d to other teams. We only have 15 kids who have left to play elsewhere.
* Q: Spring league: what’s stopping kids from trying out for other teams.
* A: If you accept a position on a team, you accept a contract. You cannot then accept a contract through any other team.
* Q: IF a player has made a spring team and still wishes to play LL in the fall, is that allowed?
* A: NO, this is only for REP teams and it just allows them an extra month of development for their fall teams.
* Q; If we were to reorganize: could we add B as well as other higher levels, A, AA, ex?
* A: Yes.
* Q: Has Collingwood ever approached us before we had the new arena?
* A: Not formally, no.
* Q: IF there are other amalgamations around us, and we still want to play B, aren’t we going to have to travel further and further to find other B centres as well?
* A: Not necessarily, most of the A centres still have B teams as well.
* Q: The room needs to be aware that we have two B centres that don’t exist anymore. As the others are talking and merging, we are losing B centres. The room should be aware that the Western Ontario Athletic Association all had centres chosen for them. If that goes well, you might see this expand to other regions.
* A: OMHA is not communicating a lot to us right now as to their long-term plans.
* Q: Can we not approach other centres like Elmvale and Clearview and leave Collingwood out of it?
* A: Yes. There is actually a pause on amalgamation at the moment, but we have been encouraged to get started if we are interested, because of the time it takes.
* We have an advantage as the centre with the new arena; we don’t have to cater to what others want. Anything we can do to keep costs lower, with the economy the way it is, will help with registration too. We have some of the lowest registration costs in Ontario.
* With the growth of the town, we could potentially see an explosion of registration.
* Q: So, the benefit would be better hockey for our kids, and that’s why we’re all here, but open borders might do that anyway?
* A: Yes
* Q: What’s stopping a coach from calling around and asking people to come play for them and offering incentives?
* A: That falls under OMHA’s increased tampering rules for open borders. Any coach approaching a child to play for them is tampering. Any parent approaching a coach and receiving an answer other than “here’s our website for tryout information: it’s tampering. The consequences are quite significant: fines, sanctions to associations, etc.
  + It’s going to become a tattletale system. They’re going to wait for someone to be upset and complain, and then this “hotline” will blow up and the tampering rules will really take effect.

**Informal Show of Interest**

* By a show of hands: who is in favour of continuing amalgamation and reorganization discussions with Collingwood and Clearview? Majority in favour
* By a show of hands who is NOT in favour of continuing amalgamation and reorganization discussions with Collingwood and Clearview: 2 people in favour
* By a show of hands: who is in favour of continuing amalgamation and reorganization discussions with another association such as Elmvale: Majority in favour