



EHMHA Annual General Meeting

May 24, 2026 8:00PM

Board Member Attendees: Brett Garden, Greg Heard, Evan Taylor, James Thompson, Katie Muise, Mike Norris, Gus Smith

Regrets: Tyson Spencer

Hockey Nova Scotia Representative Attendees: Garth Isenor, Darren Harvieux

Membership Attendees: Please see attached

1. **Call to Order and Agenda Review** by Katie Muise

2. **President Update** by Brett Garden
 - An update was provided on the pilot project involving the U11AA and U13AA divisions, which featured merged conferences and expanded competition areas. As a result, teams travelled to locations as far as Yarmouth. While the season involved increased travel, overall feedback from participants was positive. Based on the success of this, there is support for continuing for another season at the U11 and above divisions for levels A and above.
 - An update was provided on the First Shift program. EHMHA has successfully hosted the program for the past two seasons and has been selected to host it again next season. The program will accommodate 45 participants and continues to be well supported by volunteers. It was noted that the program has achieved a strong participant retention rate, with many participants continuing in minor hockey following completion of the program. Planning will be required to determine participant placement for the upcoming season, and volunteer support will be needed to assist with program delivery.
 - An update was provided regarding retail services at the East Hants Sportsplex. It was noted that Rinkside Sports is no longer operating within the facility, as the Municipality has chosen to assume responsibility for the space. The new operation will focus primarily on equipment sales and skate sharpening, with a reduced selection of apparel. It was further noted that Sportswheels has been selected as EHMHA's apparel provider moving forward.
 - An update was provided regarding discussions with neighbouring associations concerning potential boundary adjustments. Initial discussions generated interest among the associations involved; however, any boundary changes would require agreement from all affected associations. It was noted that boundary adjustments could provide benefits to multiple associations, including balancing player registration numbers and available ice resources. No changes will be implemented for the upcoming season, but discussions are expected to continue.

3. **VP Hockey Operations Update** by Gus Smith for Tyson Spencer

- An update was provided on player development initiatives implemented throughout the season. These included two-line games at various age levels and U7 intersquad games, which were generally well attended. At the U9 level, the focus was on introducing players to game concepts and rules, including positions, zones, and offsides, with the goal of helping players transition more successfully to U11. Feedback on the development opportunities was positive, and it is hoped that these initiatives will continue in future seasons.
- An update was provided on the association's tryout process. It was noted that independent evaluators were utilized to promote transparency and consistency in player evaluations. Coaches were selected after teams had been formed and were not involved in the evaluation process. The evaluators had strong hockey backgrounds, including experience at the university, Junior A, and Junior B levels and knew what to look for when evaluating the players. It was noted that the evaluators did not have prior familiarity with the players being evaluated.
- An update was provided on additional development opportunities available to players. Tommy Hunter offered power skating sessions throughout the season. Feedback on the program was very positive, and it was noted that participants benefited from Tommy's knowledge and experience.
- It was noted that the association continues to focus on increasing player development opportunities across all divisions and levels. While a number of development programs were offered throughout the season, scheduling conflicts resulted in limited participation by some U13 players in the power skating program due to overlapping commitments.
- An update was provided on coach development initiatives. Two coaches' meetings were held at the beginning of the season with the goal of engaging and supporting as many coaches as possible. Coaching resource books were developed for the U7 and U9 divisions and were made available to coaches throughout the season. The resources include approximately 40 progressive practice plans designed to support long-term player development by building on fundamental skills over time. Positive feedback has been received from coaches who have utilized the materials, and the resources were viewed as a valuable tool to support coach and player development.
- It was noted that the U15 B team captured the Provincial Championship during the season. The accomplishment was recognized as a significant achievement for both the team and the association. Winning a provincial championship is a rare accomplishment, particularly for a smaller association, and it was noted that EHMHA has not had a provincial championship team since approximately 2015–16.
- In addition to the U15 B Provincial Championship, several other teams experienced success throughout the season by winning tournaments and earning championship banners. Particular recognition was given to the U18 Black team for their strong performances and multiple victories. It was noted that these

accomplishments reflect the dedication and commitment of the players, coaches, volunteers, and families throughout the season.

- A question was raised regarding the possibility of expanding the coaching resource books to older age divisions, particularly given the number of new coaches within the association. It was noted that expanding these resources to additional divisions is being considered as part of future development plans.
- In response to a question regarding the development of the coaching resources, it was confirmed that the materials were created internally by volunteers within the association.
- A question was raised regarding future player development opportunities beyond skating programs. It was noted that in addition to power skating, puck skills development was also offered this season based on participant interest.
- A question was raised regarding communication of development plans prior to tryouts. It was suggested that a meeting be held during the summer to provide members with an overview of planned development initiatives.
- In response to a question regarding goalie development, it was reported that dedicated goalie sessions were held on Sunday afternoons and are supported by volunteer instructors and shooters. The program is expected to continue, although it was noted that increasing participation among goaltenders remains an area of focus for the association.

4. VP Administration Update by Greg Heard

- It was reported that association membership increased to 445 players for the season. Growth was attributed in part to strong registration numbers at the U7 level and continued success in introducing new players. It was also noted that six player releases were granted this past season. Despite these releases, overall membership numbers continued to increase, reflecting positive growth within the association.
- It was noted that challenges were encountered during the season with the call-up process for the U11 C and U13 C divisions involving Dartmouth Rec League. It is hoped that additional support and guidance from Hockey Nova Scotia will help address these challenges moving forward.
- It was noted that the U18 division experienced lower registration numbers at the start of the season, likely due to HERH tryouts. Registration later increased; however, roster limits impacted the number of additional players who could be accommodated following the initial registration period.
- It was noted that the association is exploring the possibility of offering a U18 A team for the upcoming season. Planning is underway; however, the feasibility of the program will depend on registration numbers and the ability to support a team at that level.
- It was noted that there were a number of new team managers this season. Additional support opportunities for new managers are being considered, including having the ice scheduler attend a managers' meeting to provide information and answer questions.

- It was also noted that some teams experienced challenges related to budgeting during the season. A dedicated session on team budgeting is being considered for future managers' meetings to help provide guidance and support.
- An update was provided on outstanding registration accounts. It was noted that the number of delinquent accounts has decreased significantly from 11 in the previous season to 1 this season. The association recorded approximately \$7,600 in bad debt for the year.
- It was noted that Logan Gehue coordinated a registration event in Sipekne'katik. The association also partnered with Rita Sack to assist with player sponsorship opportunities and to help connect families with available financial assistance programs. These efforts supported a number of families in accessing and participating in minor hockey.
- It was noted that Courtney Zwicker joined the association as Administrative Clerk midway through the season, following Jenn LeFrense, who served in the role during the first half of the season.
- An update was provided on discussions held at the Hockey Nova Scotia AGM regarding gender-based violence and the importance of fostering a safe and respectful hockey environment. The discussion emphasized the role that all participants, including men and boys, can play in supporting efforts to prevent gender-based violence within hockey culture.
- In response to a question regarding reporting protocols, it was noted that any concerns should be reported immediately. Hockey Nova Scotia's Risk Management team would then become involved and support the investigation process as appropriate.
- Additional information from the Hockey Nova Scotia AGM was shared by Garth Isenor. It was emphasized that parents should be aware of the supports and resources available to them and understand that assistance is available when concerns arise. It was noted that approximately 80% of complaints received by Hockey Nova Scotia related to maltreatment include incidents involving homophobic and sexual comments. Information regarding available supports and resources may be incorporated into future coaches' and managers' meetings.
- It was also noted that common concerns raised at the Hockey Nova Scotia AGM included limited ice availability, volunteer recruitment and retention, and risk management. Discussion highlighted the importance of encouraging families to view themselves as active members of the association and contributors to its success.
- A member expressed concern regarding the difference in development ice opportunities available to house league teams compared to rep teams. Concern was also raised that the introduction of a U18 A team could impact house league participation and competitiveness by drawing players away from existing teams. It was also noted that players seeking opportunities at higher levels have the option to pursue those opportunities through other associations where available.

5. **Financial Update** by James Thompson

- It was reported that the association concluded the 2025-26 season in a stronger financial position than originally projected.
- It was noted that The Board reviewed two proposed budgets for the upcoming season, including one budget that incorporated funding for a paid administrative position. Discussion focused on the association's long-term financial sustainability and the need to remain fiscally responsible in light of increasing operating costs.
- It was noted that registration fees were reduced for the previous season with support from the Municipality. However, rising costs across a number of areas continue to present financial challenges that must be considered during the budgeting process.
- It was noted that the association continues to face cost pressures in several areas, including ice rental costs, tournament expenses, and GrayJay fees. It was reported that GrayJay expenses exceeded the approved budget by \$4,992 during the season.
- It was reported that the association's development budget had been set at \$25,000 based on expenditures from previous seasons. Actual development expenses for the 2025–26 season were approximately \$5,000 which is significantly below budget. This reduction was attributed largely to the contributions of volunteers who supported and delivered development initiatives throughout the season
- It was noted that insurance costs increased during the season due to growth in both player registration and volunteer participation within the association.
- Two budget proposals for the upcoming season were presented to the membership. One proposal included a \$25 increase in registration fees, while the second included a \$75 increase in registration fees. It was noted that both budgets reflected increasing operational costs, including higher ice rental expenses and other rising costs faced by the association. The budget incorporating the \$75 registration increase also included funding for a proposed paid administrative position. The proposed role would have a broader scope of responsibilities than the current Administrative Clerk position and is intended to provide additional administrative support to the association.
- It was noted that the membership was not required to select one of the proposed budget options at the AGM. Greg Heard suggested that a Special Meeting be held during the summer to allow the membership additional time to consider the budget proposals and vote on a preferred option. It was further noted that proposed bylaw amendments could also be presented for consideration at that meeting
- A question was raised regarding the possibility of increasing the number of Board positions and redistributing responsibilities currently assigned to larger roles. It was suggested that additional Board members could provide increased representation and distribute workloads more effectively across the organization. The Board acknowledged the suggestion for future consideration.

- In response to a question regarding the proposed paid administrative position, it was noted that a title for the role has not yet been determined. It was indicated that The Board is seeking feedback from the membership before finalizing the position and its scope.
- In response to a question regarding the jersey maintenance fee, it was explained that the fee is collected to support the repair and replacement of association jerseys as needed. It was further noted that the jersey maintenance fee is expected to decrease moving forward.

6. **Event & Tournaments Update** by Evan Taylor

- An update was provided on the Bannister Memorial U7 Jamboree. It was noted that a presentation was made to Angie Bannister in recognition of the event, which was very well received. Appreciation was expressed to the membership for their efforts and support in making the jamboree a successful event.
- It was noted that the association received numerous in-kind donations from local businesses throughout the season, which contributed to the success of our events. The association's primary sources of revenue from events included registration fees, sponsorships, and merchandise sales.
- It was noted that the association supported approximately 80 teams during the Ettinger-Smith tournament and benefited from the contributions of more than 100 volunteers. Appreciation was expressed for the significant volunteer commitment required to support association operations and programming.
- It was noted that planning for the upcoming season's tournaments and events is already underway, with several committees having begun their work in preparation for the 2026-27 season.
- An update was provided on the Player of the Game program. Through the support of a sponsor, selected players received recognition items, including a sports towel and beverage. Player of the Game recipients were also featured on the association's social media platforms throughout the tournament.

7. **Hockey Nova Scotia Update** by Garth Isenor

- Garth Isenor commented on the membership meeting held earlier in the season, noting the strong attendance and the opportunity it provided to hear and address member concerns. Topics discussed at that meeting included the availability of meeting minutes, suspension processes, and ensuring that established protocols are followed when concerns are brought forward.
- Garth emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication with the membership and continuing to listen to member feedback. He also acknowledged the significant responsibilities carried by volunteers and the importance of supporting them while balancing the many demands placed on their time.
- Garth introduced Darren Harvieux, the newly appointed Regional Director with Hockey Nova Scotia, who was in attendance at the meeting. Garth will be switching roles and will now be the Chair of Elite with Hockey Nova Scotia.

8. Volunteer Awards

- Volunteer awards were presented to individuals nominated by their peers in recognition of their contributions to the association. Ashley Yates received the Manager of the Year Award, Sean Borden received the Coach of the Year Award, and Tracy Stewart was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

9. Elections

- It was noted that Tyson Spencer and Evan Taylor had been nominated for the position of VP Hockey Operations. Due to illness, Tyson Spencer was unable to attend the meeting and subsequently withdrew his candidacy. As a result, Evan Taylor was acclaimed to the position.
- Brennen Hartling was elected for the position of Director at Large.
- For the position of Secretary, both Ashley Yates and Katie Muise had been nominated. Ashley Yates subsequently withdrew her nomination, resulting in Katie Muise (incumbent) being acclaimed to the position of Secretary.
- Krystal Kristiansen was elected for the Tournaments and Events Coordinator position.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:02PM

2026/27 EHMHA Board of Directors

President - Greg Heard (Acclaimed prior to AGM)

VP Admin - Mariah Allison-Sokolic (Acclaimed prior to AGM)

VP Hockey Operations - Evan Taylor

Treasurer - James Thompson (Acclaimed prior to AGM)

Secretary - Katie Muise

Tournaments & Events Coordinator - Krystal Kristiansen

Director-at-Large - Gus Smith

Director-at-Large - Brennen Hartling

Membership Attendees:

Mariah Allison-Sokolic
Catherine Bussey
Krystal Kristiansen
Brett Kristiansen
Rebekah Jeffries
Andrea Lavery
Jordan Falconer
Amanda Bonner
Jennifer LeFrense
Andre Leblanc
Tasha Ransome
Tracy Stewart
Brent Smith
Brennen Hartling
Meridith Taylor
Amelia Pennington
Kortnie Wadden
Joey Maclean-Foster
Genevieve Collings
Lindsey Day
Graeme Mahoney
Kyle Isenor
Courtney Zwicker
Kerry Mackeil
Corey Cole
Courtney Cole
Ashley Yates
Heidi MacDonald
Tina Traynor
Danny Hines
Jillian Saulnier
Megan Baylis
Chris Baylis
Tracy Skinner
Justin Ashley
Ashleigh Johnson
Carrie Potter
Kaelin Tingley
Lacy Rutherford
Doug Stone
Susanne MacIvor
Geoff MacIvor
Shelby Sharpe
Kate Ibbotson
Dean Ibbotson
Heather Gorman
Jillian Fage
Sean Borden