

To the Members of the Richmond Hill Coyotes;

The Board of Directors of the Richmond Hill Zone Hockey Association releases the following statement:

On February 14, 2023, the last session of the mediation phase among the OHF Mediator(s), the OMHA and the Richmond Hill Coyotes concluded with a proposal for the Coyotes to change membership to the GTHL. The Richmond Hill Coyotes took the position that they were agreeable to any proposal to change membership acceptable to the GTHL, acting in good faith.

The Coyotes' Board was advised that a final position from the GTHL would be requested by February 24, 2023 and that the matter would be dealt with at the OHF Sem-Annual General Meeting this past weekend.

Through its lawyer, the Coyotes' Board requested copies of communications to and from the OHF and the GTHL and updates from the OHF, including the time of the Board Meeting so that the Coyotes could make their submissions as contemplated by the OHF changing Member Policy, on February 20, 2023 and February 22, 2023. None was forthcoming.

On Saturday, February 25, 2023, when it was apparent that the OHF would not be responding prior to the deadline, the Coyotes' Board instructed its lawyer to appeal decisions of the OHF in the conduct of the process to Hockey Canada. That appeal was filed later that day.

In particular, the Coyotes' appeal to Hockey Canada asserts at least four ways in which the OHF breached its own Changing Member Policy, described as follows:

A) Timelines:

The OHF failed to notify the GTHL in a timely manner.

The board was advised by the OHF itself that the OHF only forwarded the Coyotes application to the GTHL in January, several months after it was required to do so and after HOCKEY CANADA urged them to, in response to an earlier appeal by the Coyotes.

B) Engagement of the GTHL:

The OHF failed to engage the GTHL at the mediation phase as it was required to do so.

This is a legal issue.

The facts are not in serious dispute.

C) Conferring rights to the OMHA and itself:

The OHF appropriated the rights of the GTHL in this case during mediation to itself and the OMHA.

This is another legal issue.

The facts are not in serious dispute.

D) Giving a “take it or leave it” proposal to the GTHL

Despite repeated objections by the Coyotes, the OHF put a “take it or leave it “ proposal to the GTHL instead of allowing a process between the GTHL and the OMHA defined in the Policy itself to take place.

Again this is a legal issue.

In addition, the Coyotes’ appeal to Hockey Canada asserts that the OHF added one or more terms to the proposal which were unacceptable to the GTHL without notice to the Coyotes.

The appeal is pending before Hockey Canada. No determination has yet been made on the Coyotes’ assertions.

On Monday, February 27, 2023, as the Coyotes Board had anticipated several days before, the OHF took the position that the Changing Member Process was at an end because the GTHL did not accept the proposal put before it.

As a result of the OHF’s letter, there are currently two matters pending related to the Coyotes’ 2023-2024 season:

1. An appeal to the OHF Appeals Committee challenging the OMHA decision in December of 2022 (in the middle of the Changing Member Process) to dissolve the Coyotes’ AAA Zone; and
2. An appeal to Hockey Canada challenging the conduct of the OHF in the Changing Member Process.

By now this process has required four mediation attendances, one appeal to the OHF (OMHA Dissolution of zone), and two appeals to Hockey Canada (the stay of that appeal, and this most recent appeal of the OHF’s actions). Two of those appeals are pending.

In addition to these steps, the Board has instructed its lawyer to prepare injunction materials to seek relief from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in the event that either of Hockey Canada or the OHF is unable or unwilling to address the urgent situation facing the Coyotes immediately.

The Board
Richmond Hill Zone Hockey Association