

New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes

Delegates Meeting

New England Bridge Conference

Sunday, June 24, 2012

Sturbridge, MA

Attendance:

Officers: Ausra Geaski, President; Mark Aquino, Vice President; Richard DeMartino, Treasurer & District Director; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Erwin, Past President

Delegates:

EMBA - Unit 108 (14 of 17)

Jane Adams (D. Aronson alt), Murthy Ayyagari, Robert Bertoni, Cilla Borrás, Lowell Eubanks, Polly Goedicke, (F. Caine alt,) Michael Howard, Grace Lombardo (Mark True alt), Peter Lombardo, Brenda Montague, Neil Montague (C. Carlson alt), Dean Panagopoulos, Lisa Procter (Don Caplin, alt.), Adam Parrish

Absent: David Aronson, Frank Caine, Carole Carlson, Donald Caplin, Tim Hill, Don Levy, Jan Smola, Mark True

CMBA – Unit 113 2 of 2)

Harris Jacobs, Bruce Emond

Absent: none

CBA – Unit 126 (9 of 12)

Larry Bausher, Phyllis Bausher, Debbie Benner, Allan Clamage, Sandy DeMartino, Judy Hess (B. Gischner alt), Joan Martin, Sonja Smith, Joyce Stiefel, Bill Watson

Absent: Burt Gischner, Joan Gischner, Michael Wavada

RIBA – Unit 145 (4 of 4)

Joe Brouillard ,Lois DeBlois, Suzanne Erwin, William Shockley

Absent: none

NHBA – Unit 150 (4 of 4)

Robert Eachus (D. McGuire alt) Wayne Burt, Joe DeGaetano, Kate McK (Bruce Dowling alt)

Absent: Bruce Downing, Daniel McGuire

VBA – Unit 175 (2 of 3)

Frank Hacker, Wayne Hersey

Absent: Phil Sharpsteen

MBA – Unit 189 (1 of 4)

Richard Budd

Absent: Dottie Kelleher, Allan McRae,(4th yet to be named)

WMBA – Unit 196 (3 of 3)

Robert Derrah, Helen Pawlowski, David Rock

President's Report - Ausra Geaski

President Geaski recognized the three new attendees to the Board of Delegates Meeting: Lisa Procter, Robert Eachus, and Kate McK .

President Geaski reported that since the last meeting of the Board of Delegates where the purchase of the electronic score pads was approved, a leasing option was presented to the Executive Committee which allowed the cost of the score pads to be spread out over several years. This option was approved. There has been favorable feedback from the players on having the electronic score pads at the Regional tournaments.

The Audit Committee met at Hyannis with Richard DeMartino and Helen Pawlowski. They conducted a full review of the District's finances. All were found to be in perfect order.

The GNT/Rainbow weekend had a successful turnout thanks to all the work by Mark Aquino, Peter Marcus, Sue Miguel and Helen Pawlowski.

Following discussions regarding the specific financial information requested by the Board of Delegates, Jim Rasmussen gathered a group that met at the Senior Regional that included David Aronson, Don Levy, Bob Bertoni, Dean Panagopoulos Carolyn Weiser, Helen Pawlowski and Richard DeMartino with information provided by I. Murthy Ayyaga, who could not attend. The group reached agreement about the level of detail which would be provided and the recommendations have been incorporated into the reports. It is important that this information not be left around the hotels as such information might make negotiations with the hotels more difficult. The NABC financials were not included as these are not actually funds that the District can use, but are set aside and held as seed money for the next Nationals.

William Shockley completed an in-depth analysis of the last two tournaments for the preceding 3 years which was reviewed with A. Geaski, H. Pawlowski and C. Weiser. After lengthy discussion it was recommended that a formal budget would not be the best method for financial oversight for the District. H. Pawlowski will continue to look for opportunities to save money before and during the tournaments. A Financial Planning Committee will be formed to look at long range planning. M. Ayyagari suggested that a budget might be helpful and the concept not dismissed without further review. Anyone interested in serving on a Financial Planning Committee should contact the President via email or in person.

There were questions as to who get stipends or complementary rooms while on District business at our tournaments. (See addendum) There are currently some savings realized in comp rooms where one person shares more than one position that is scheduled to receive a comp room, i.e. District Director/Treasurer, Bulletin Editor/Director.

A District Handbook has been coordinated by Carolyn Weiser that lists the duties for all positions. The preliminary booklet has been reviewed. The final copy will be posted on the website before Mansfield. The District could not function without volunteers and everyone is encouraged to become active at the District level.

District 25 is proud to be hosting the NABC in 2014 in Providence, RI. Lots of work will have to be done and by many volunteers if it is to be successful. The Executive Committee selected Joe Brouillard and Helen Pawlowski as co-chairs for the event which are volunteer positions. Both bring unique expertise to the endeavor. Their next charge is to choose Committee Chairs. They will provide reports on progress for the NABC at the Executive Committee and Board of Delegates meetings.

Secretary's Report - Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made and seconded and so voted to approval the Minutes of the Board of Delegates meeting held in Mansfield, MA on November 20, 2011 as sent via e-mail.

Treasurer's Report - Richard DeMartino -

A very productive meeting was held at the Senior Regional regarding the format of the financial reports made by the District Tournament Manager and Treasurer. The Treasurer's report will include two columns that compare the current tournament information with the previous year. This report is showing losses from the 2012 tournaments. One example is the attendance at the Seniors Regional which dropped by over 200 tables. The detailed expenses for each tournament will be provided in H. Pawlowski's reports.

We transferred our webhosting to Megahertz Computers which is providing us with better service and a better website at a lower rate.

Though District 25 does not have a budget we do have two goals: to make a modest profit each year to cover our fixed expenses and maintaining a reserve close to \$45,000. For the first time in many years the cash assets have fallen below that threshold.

It was agreed not to put the National Fund on this report as it does not reflect our worth. Although there is a good starting balance D25 needs more funds to provide the same level of hospitality as in the past. The district has started to collect additional monies for the NABC from table fees at its regionals.

There have been several large capital expenses in the last few years such as new bidding box inserts last year, electronic score pads and the cost for duplicating boards.

Every delegate was informed that detailed financials were available for every tournament upon request to the Secretary. Only one delegate made such a request. If any delegate wishes any specific financial information they should send a request to C. Weiser.

A volunteer is needed to act as Nationals Treasurer. Linda Robinson did a superb job at the 2008 Nationals. The only role for the District Treasurer is to keep track of our money and investments and to transfer funds to the Nationals Treasurer upon proper request. No money is transferred to an individual. Bills are paid directly to vendors. There will be a budget for the Nationals set by the Committee.

District Director's Report- R. DeMartino -

There will be a recommendation that full time clubs be treated differently than smaller clubs regarding masterpoint awards but do not expect that it will pass. After general discussion, a show of hands was requested of the Board of Delegates for those that supported such a recommendation. No one raised their hand.

Work on the strength of field masterpoint award formula which Frank Hacker has been working on continues. For example on Tuesday there were 17 tables and approximately 28 points awarded. On Thursday, with a much stronger field, the award was 18 points because on Tuesday they got the benefit of the other pairs game. With the work done by Frank Hacker we would no longer count the other game. This is a change that I support. It would have a slightly negative effect on the Gold Rush as their award would drop from 18 to 14 as the total number of masterpoints would remain the same. Discussions suggest that this would have no impact on the number of Gold Rush tables. This is the smallest change contemplated in 11 years. R. Eachus asked if it would affect the flighted teams. R. DeMartino assured the Board that in a normal game there would be no real change. If A is very strong they would get slightly more masterpoints than they do now. M. Howard asked if this would affect club games. R. DeMartino answered that this would be inappropriate for clubs and they would be unaffected.

Progress for the updated ACBL Score software is back on track. The new CEO had to be brought up to speed. Suggestions should be sent to R. DeMartino. The new system will provide many features for both the players and clubs. Unlike the current system that can only be modified by Jim (Leposhinski) we will be able to tweak the system as needed. We need the right people who can work full time as part of their job. I have been working with David Metcalf and Peter Marcus who are highly qualified and innovative.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Two years of financials are available with comparisons of the last two tournaments. Only one member of the Board of Delegates requested copies.

The Masters in November incurred a \$4,300 larger loss than the year before. The apparent large increase in director fees is due to the fact that we anticipated a huge loss in Waterbury in 2012 and at our request Peter Marcus cut the number of directors to the bone so that we were actually under staffed. In 2011 we went back to normal, so it is not an actual increase. We had to pay for 14 rooms as we did not meet our room block. The hotel agreed to print out Bulletin which saved \$600.

Newton was actually a success as the table count was up and our loss was smaller than the previous year. Some of the hospitality costs are contractual. The use of the function rooms and the number of comp rooms are intertwined.

The GNT was up 38 tables. The money taken out for the next Nationals led to the final \$81 loss.

We did not meet our room block in Cromwell, Many stayed elsewhere and we no longer get credit for those who stay across the street as they are no longer owned by the same company. The room block covers the ballroom playing area. If this trend continues when the contracts are renegotiated the room rate may increase or D25 may have to pay function rental. The ratio of rooms which are comped may change from 2-1 to 3-1 or 4-1. We had to buy back 15 rooms in Cromwell. M. Ayyagari suggested that the people who stay in the hotel should be rewarded in some way as they are subsidizing those who do not stay. This might encourage more to stay in the hotel. D. Benner added that at Worlds those who stayed in the hotel received a coupon that they could use as part of the entry fee. W. Burt suggested that it might be right to overhaul the fees we pay to play. If the numbers continue to decline and we continue to sustain these losses we could be

in a very difficult financial situation soon. Players sometime find lower room rates than the group rate. J Adams noted that it is possible to get a better rate for the same hotel on line. H Pawlowski answered that she checks the rates on line but that on-line rates fluctuate with supply and demand. A Geaski asked that members of the Board e-mail any suggestions to either H. Pawlowski or herself.

The Senior Regional was down 250 tables. The biggest issues going forward are the room pickup and the table count. F. Hacker offered that at Saratoga they charge \$14 per session. H. Pawlowski continued that our previous increase was from \$8-10. We had been doing so well that it was decided to split this last increase between the District and the Nationals. S. Erwin inquired why she gets email from J. Brouillard but not from the ACBL for our Regionals. H. Pawlowski answered that J. Brouillard is using an augmented data base. The ACBL does not send out e-mails if your e-mail is listed as confidential on their files. We need more club publicity for the Regionals. Everyone is asked to take flyers to their clubs when they leave as we no longer send them by mail. R. DeMartino added that we could solve the immediate financial problem by raising the fee \$2 but this is not the real issue. We need to get the players back. S. DeMartino emphasized that publicity is with us. If we advocate to club owners to publicize the Regionals and encourage others to come, we can get the players back.

We must decide where to hold the Summer Regional 2013. Referring to the handout you will see that we have no hotel commitments for June after 2013. We are in communication with the Nashua property which is under renovation. We can not sign a contract with them until the renovation is complete. Input from the BOD is needed as to whether we should move there or stay here. The Executive Committee supports a move. A show of hands indicated support for moving.

There will be no Masters in 2014 because of the Nationals in Providence. We had to add a year in Mansfield in lieu of the year they lost from the original contract. After 2015 we would be free to move to another location for one or several years, or return there. President Geaski encouraged the Board of Delegates members to email suggestions or comments to H. Pawlowski or herself.

Tournament Committee Report - Mark Aquino

I agree with W. Burt that we can not continue to lose money and I also agree with S. DeMartino that we have 8000 members in the District and we need to get more of them interested in coming to the Regionals. We have high overhead costs. It is difficult to get players to move from the clubs to the Sectionals then to the Regionals and then Nationals.

The GNTs were a huge success with 63 tables. The C flight was the largest in the ACBL. Congratulations to Dean Panagopoulos, Melody Bi, Bob Woodward, Dick Freedman and Steve Gladyszak, Superflight; Anton Tsyarkin, Walter Lee, Pam Miller and Jim Rasmussen, Flight A; Michael Lieberman, Alevtina Asarina, Leo Zelevinsky, Jay Tang, Robin Hillyard and Kim Gilman, Flight B; and Daniel Jablonski, Reid Barton, Vincent Fish and Emily Shen, Flight C; who will be representing District 25 in the Finals.

We had to find a last minute home for the NAP finals this year as we lost Sturbridge. The solution was to have a split-site final. Flight A will be held at the Hartford Bridge Club Saturday and Sunday. Flight B will be at the BridgeSpot in Woburn on Saturday and Sunday. Flight C will be a one-day event on Sunday held at both sites which might be very different in size and strength of field. After looking at other Districts and getting much feedback from a survey, players and directors it was decided to have the pair with highest overall score as the winner. The pair with the second highest overall score would be second. If both 1st and 2nd came from the same site, the 3rd place winner would have to be the highest placing pair in the other site. This way a pair from both sites would be guaranteed a place at the National finals. Discussion followed. H. Pawlowski added that this format would help market the event. It would only apply to C Flight and would encourage players to attend. The members of the BOD, by a show of hands, indicated overwhelming approval for the proposed prize allocation.

District 25 has an active group of volunteers but they cannot do all if the work. We need more players to become involved at all levels if we are to be successful.

Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock

We have a tremendous problem with attendance. We have too many events in our current schedule with too many starting times which leads to confusion and small game size. The number of players playing at night continues to drop. The KO's are dying. As the number of teams drops we do not have enough teams to successfully separate the fights. We have tried handicapping, but this did not solve the problem. The Committee suggests radical restructuring. We recommend that all start times be the same (10:00, 2:30 and 7:30) and that there be only one team and one pair game each session. Evening sessions would be a 299er and a side game at 7:30. The Friday night KO's would remain as it is. We will drop Monday night and the tournament would begin on Tuesday morning. Saturday would remain a strata-flighted event with no gold rush game on Saturday. A suggestion was made that those who come on Saturday might find a 10:00 start time too early and that we retain the 1 & 7 on Saturday. We checked the numbers for Saturday and the daylight pairs had 28 tables and the 1 & 7 had 17 tables. Not everyone who played at 10 & 2:30 wants to play then. H. Pawlowski added that we are trying to simplify the schedule. P. Lombardo added that he prefers 1 & 7 but that he felt that the 10 & 2:30 would be larger. Players want a large game. S. DeMartino stated that there is a possibility of a "choose two" event with the choices at 10- 2:30 and 7:30 but that if we choose that format we could not have a strati-flighted event. It could only be stratified.

We tried a Zip KO on Saturday night at 8:30. There were 18 teams. We would like to add it to the Saturday night and perhaps Thursday night schedule. President Geaski reminded the BOD that there would be no changes this year but are planning for next year's tournaments. Our final decisions must be made at Warwick. BOD members and players are encouraged to send their comments to D. Rock regarding scheduling.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Hyannis Survey Results - Alan Clamage

Sixty percent of those who responded wanted to change the start times and 30% wanted it to remain the same. Considerations seemed to be on distance traveled. Women slightly preferred having the morning free. A change in game times at the Seniors is being considered.

District Director Election - Ausra Geaski

Delegates were reminded that there would be a contested election for District Director this year between Mark Aquino and Richard DeMartino. Guidelines have been sent to each Unit President by the ACBL. There is a specific window for voting.

R. Budd made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55. Seconded and so voted.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25

Addendum:

Position	Stipend	Room	Other
Officers			
President	no	yes	no
Vice President	no	no	no
Secretary	yes	yes	no
Treasurer	yes	yes	no
Tournament Manager	Salary	yes	expenses related to D-25 events
D-25 District Director	no	yes	no
Committee Chairs/Coordinators			
Audit	no	no	free plays
Appellate	no	no	no
GNT Coordinator	yes	yes	no *at NAOP finals
I/N Coordinator	no	no	no
NAOP Coordinator	yes	yes	no *at NAOP finals
Nominating/Election	no	no	no
Tournament Committee	no	no	no
Tournament Coordinator	yes	no	no
Tournament Scheduling	no	no	no
Caddymaster (position currently handled by District Tournament Manager)			
Daily Bulletin Editor	yes	yes	no
Larry Weiss Trophy	no	no	no
Recorder	no	no	no
Seeding	no	no	no
Regional Tournament Chairs	yes	yes	no
Webmaster			
Site	no	no	no
Posting Results	no	no	no
Regional Staff			
Director in Charge	salary+	yes	expenses at regional +determined by ACBL
Directors	salary+	yes	expenses +rates determined by ACBL
Caddies	salary	#	no
Head caddy	higher rate	#	no #one room shared