

New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Delegates Meeting

New England Bridge Conference

June 25, 2011

Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA

Attendance: Present:

Robert Erwin, President; Ausra Geaski, Vice President; Richard DeMartino, Treasurer and District Director, Roy Greene, Past President

EMBA- Unit 108-17

Present: Jane Adams, (C. Borrás alt.) Bob Bertoni, Frank Caine, Carole Carlson, Lowell Eubanks (Elin Schultz alt.), Vincent Grande, (M. Ayyagari alt.), Polly Goedicke, Michael Howard, William Hunter (F. Lombardo alt.), Don Levy, Brenda Montague, Neil Montague (B. Gorsey alt.), Shome Mukherjee (M. Aquino alt.), Dean Panagopoulos, Adam Parrish, Richard Saval (I. Musick alt.), Mark True.

Absent: Mark Aquino, Murthy Ayyagari, Cecilla Borrás, Bob Gorsey, Frank Lombardo, Irene Musick, Elin Schultz,

CMBA - Unit 113 - 2

Present: Bruce Emond, Harris Jacobs

Absent : none

CBA - Unit 126 - 12

Present: Phyllis Bausher, Larry Bausher (B. Gischner alt.), Debbie Benner, Allan Clamage, Betty Corbani (J. Stiefel alt.), Sandy DeMartino, Ausra Geaski, Judy Hess, Bunny Kliman (J. Gischner alt.), Joan Martin, Sonja Smith,

Absent Burton Gischner, Janet Gischner, Joyce Stiefel, Bill Watson

RIBA - Unit 145 - 4

Present: Joe Brouillard, Lois DeBlois, Suzanne Erwin, Bill Shockley (G. Charon alt.)

Absent: Grace Charon

NHBA - Unit 150 - 4

Present: Wayne Burt, Joseph DeGaetano, Bruce Downing, Robert Eachus (D. McGuire alt.)

Absent: Daniel McGuire

VBA - Unit 175 - 3

Present: Wayne Hersey

Absent: Frank Hacker, Phil Sharpsteen

MBA - Unit 189 - 4

Present: Richard Budd

Absent: Timothy Goodwin, Jill Stirgwolt (one yet to be named)

WMBA- Unit 196 - 2

Present: Helen Pawlowski, David Rock

Absent: none

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**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by President Erwin at 8:30 am.

**President's Report –**

The Senior Regional at Hyannis was a success. The table count at Sturbridge is running about 100 tables below last year, which was a record. The District launched a new website on June 19. Bob Bertoni of Megahertz Computers has developed the new site. The Website Committee met Friday between sessions and training is on-going. The Website Committee will become a standing committee and will continue to review suggestions and make improvements. Anyone with ideas or recommendations is encouraged to contact the Website Committee via the website.

The Audit Committee met on Thursday and reviewed the financials for the District. It reported that the books are in exceptional shape. The complete, final report from Chair, David Aronson, has yet to be received. After much discussion, the Committee reported that it does not believe an annual District budget serves a useful purpose.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by David Rock, met. He will make his report during this meeting.

After careful consideration, a request by District 3 to move its Regional to the same week as our Fall Regional in Warwick was denied.

After a long discussion, the Executive Committee voted to remove the bylaws changes from the agenda of the Board of Delegates meeting

The Executive Committee voted to increase table fees \$1.00 starting in Warwick. The increase will initially be divided equally between the National Fund and the District. The District Treasurer will monitor the National Fund and when we have sufficient funding for the scheduled Fall 2014 North American Bridge Championships (NABC) in Providence, we will divert the remainder of the increase to the District.

Tournament and Scheduling Committees met yesterday and will report later in this meeting.

**Secretary's Report – Carolyn Weiser**

Waterbury Board of Delegates Minutes were previously sent via e-mail.

*A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Delegates in Waterbury on November 14, 2010. So voted.*

**Treasurer's Report - Richard DeMartino**

District 25 has not raised its fees in over five and one-half years. Overtime expenses have gone up and will continue to do so. District 25 is required to raise part of the money for the Providence NABC in 2014. Our tournaments this year to date have lost almost \$4,000. We are at the end of a cycle and it is usual to see losses occurring just before we have to raise fees.

Regarding a District budget, it is too difficult to estimate how much each individual tournament will bring in or lose. Pressure would be on Helen to make changes to meet individual tournament budgets. The District has two financial goals: maintain a minimum balance in the bank as a reserve and bring in sufficient income to cover non-tournament expenses. The non-tournament expenses (e.g. bonding, NAP and GNT stipends) require us to make a total of \$2,000-5,000 on tournaments each year. Based on this goal, the Audit Committee did not feel a tournament-by-tournament budget would be useful. Our current cash assets represent what we

are really worth. It appears as if we could afford to wait to raise fees, but if we have other expenses, such as electronic score pads, this will quickly disappear.

D. Benner commented that it would be easier if we had comparison columns on the various expenses. R. DeMartino answered that this is something he can do. A second comment from the floor requested additional detail on the tournaments. R. DeMartino answered that we can ask Helen to do this with her report. R. DeMartino asked for a show of hands from those who would like to see the detailed reports given to the Executive Committee. There was unanimous approval. More detailed reports will be provided at future Board of Delegates meetings.

### **District Director's Report - Richard DeMartino**

Motions are being prepared for the next for the upcoming ACBL Board of Directors meeting. No significant motions have appeared to date.

The ACBL has hired a project manager to work on the new ACBLScore. R DeMartino and Peter Marcus are on the committee, whose work was suspended pending selection of the new manager. Club managers and owners are encouraged to let the ACBL know what they want in the new version.

Masterpoint awards have been reviewed. In 2007, the ACBL started awarding points to KO's based on their strength of field. It has been suggested that the ACBL do something similar for pairs; however, the conditions are different. In KOs , there are a fixed number of teams. In Pairs games, size varies greatly. We are working with actuaries to see if a similar approach can be used for pairs. This will not apply to Nationals or club games.

R. DeMartino asked the Board of Delegates, "If the ACBL were able to find a formula for a strength of field awards for Sectionals and Regionals, did they feel it was a worthwhile effort." A concern was raised as to whether this would hurt the 299er events. R. DeMartino answered that this would tend to reduce the awards in some games. The total number of gold points might go down but the reduction would be slight. A show of hands showed approximately half of the Board supported this effort.

A question was asked if the ACBL is still working on a formula to balance "old points" versus "new points" for stratification. R. DeMartino answered that the ACBL is still trying to find an equitable way to reduce the points for older players, allowing them to play at a lower level.

### **Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski**

We made a profit at Cromwell and at the Senior Regional. As of this date, this tournament is down approximately 50 tables from last year, which is not unexpected as last year was a record year. Additionally, this year the Saratoga Regional ended the Sunday before our tournament began. Anyone desiring a detailed report should email Helen and she will send a copy.

Last Monday, Helen met with the new General Manager and the Sales Director for the Nashua property. Several Delegates from the northern tier expressed concern with the move to Warwick. Helen explained that the District has a two-year contract with the Warwick site. There are currently some maintenance issues with the Nashua site, but Helen has opened a dialogue with the site. If it can meet our standards, we will write a conditional contract to return to Nashua in 2013. Based on other sites visited, the Radisson site appears to be our best option.

President Erwin added that the reason we will not be at Nashua this year was in response to the hotel's financial difficulties and its transition into receivership. The Executive Committee felt we had to find an alternative. If we had agreed to stay in Nashua, and the hotel then became unavailable this summer, it would be too late to make other arrangements for the Labor Day

weekend and the District would have been forced to cancel our tournament. He clarified that it is the expressed intent of the District to return to the northern tier as soon as we can contract a suitable site.

New inserts are in all of our bidding boxes. We are recycling the old, salvaged inserts by making sets for 12-15 tables available to each unit. Representatives from the Board of Delegates were requested to take them with them, following the meeting. B. Montague noted that the cards need to be replaced, also.

### **Tournament Committee Report - Ausra Geaski**

The Tournament Committee met on Saturday with representatives from all the units present. Attendees were asked to stand. More volunteers are still needed.

A. Geaski stated the purchase of electronic score pads is under discussion. A show of hands was requested for delegates who support continued consideration. The clear consensus was in support. The estimated cost to purchase BridgeMate II would be in the range of \$18,000. It was pointed out that we will not recoup the costs through reductions in caddies and/or directors. This is considered to be a service to the players.

W. Burt asked if the units could piggyback with the District on this effort. A. Geaski replied that in other Districts, the Units lend to the District rather than the other way around. W. Burt added that he meant, could the Units piggyback on the purchase and save on a reduction of unit costs. A. Geaski said she would look into it. A question was asked if the pads could be borrowed by the units. A. Geaski responded the transportation, storage and insurance problems would make that impossible. A further question was asked as to whether they can be used to support team events. It was noted that some directors currently use them in team games.

A. Geaski asked for a show of hands by the Board to determine whether the group wants the District to pursue this. It was noted that the cost for this acquisition would amount to 25-30% of current District assets. It also represents a marketing tool. R. DeMartino added that if there is support, the Executive Committee will make a more detailed recommendation with the intent to buy. There was almost universal support from the Board of Governors for the purchase of BridgeMate II.

### **Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock**

The Scheduling Committee met in conjunction with the Tournament Committee on Saturday. There were four items with which we had to deal, but time constraints limited us to dealing with only two. We were unable to review the results of the poll taken by Allan Clamage at the Senior Regional regarding start times and the one taken at Cromwell regarding the preferred team formats for events ending on Monday.

The Scheduling Committee addressed concerns regarding mid-week KO's. The Top Bracket often has 5-7 strong Flight A teams with 2-3 other teams forced to play up to create an eight-team bracket. The lower-ranking teams are often outclassed and handicapping does not compensate for the difference. If these teams withdraw it means that the Flight A would have only 3 sessions not four. The DIC has the authority to do what he thinks is best in each situation. If, on some occasions the top bracket has only 3 rounds, so be it.

The Committee also dealt with the issue of multiple starting times. We reviewed the start times of other Regionals of similar size. Of these, only District 3 and District 25 have multiple start times. (Florida does as well, but it still runs Senior events.) After reviewing multiple possibilities, the Committee decided to recommend synchronizing the start times at 9:30AM, 1:30PM, and 7:00PM. The only exception would be Friday evening with a start time of 7:30PM. The schedules for Saturday and Sunday would remain the same at 9:00AM, 1:00PM, and

7:00PM on Saturday and 10:30AM start on Sunday. This motion was passed by the Executive Committee and this schedule will begin in 2012. J. Adams noted that this will mean more people going to the concession stands at the same time and allowances will have to be made for this. D. Rock answered that H. Pawlowski will work with the hotels to address this concern.

## **New Business:**

### **Charity Committee - Sue Erwin**

The District Charity Committee met on Friday morning and discussed the possibilities for the distribution of the money allotted by the ACBL to our District. Several suggestions were reviewed. The ACBL would normally only prepare a maximum of five checks with a minimum of \$5000 each. This means that it would not be possible to provide a check for each of our eight units. After a thorough discussion, the Charity Committee unanimously voted to give a check to food banks in each state. R. DeMartino has arranged for the ACBL to provide six checks of \$5,000 each. S. Erwin will research how this can best be accomplished in states that do not have a central food bank system. In Massachusetts priority will be given to the tornado damaged areas of the state. While the checks will not be proportional to the membership of each state, the committee felt that this was the best solution, considering the constraints of the grant.

S. DeMartino made a recommendation that along with the \$5,000 that will be given to the food banks of the member states for the District, ideally each Unit should also conduct a food drive for its area. It is important that we give of ourselves not just the money allocated by the ACBL. Everyone was encouraged to take this suggestion back to their Units. If there were interest in doing this at a Regional, she volunteered to help work out the logistics. It would be more difficult at Regionals as individuals are coming from a distance and staying at the hotel. Sue Erwin stated that RIBA will do it and B. Emond added that CMBA has already done one.

### **Website Committee – Joe Brouillard**

J. Brouillard thanked the members of the Website Committee and especially Allan Clamage for their work. All the software was developed by Bob Bertoni, who did a great job and the District transitioned to the new site on June 19. The committee met subsequently and will continue making changes and additions to the site. The Delegates are encouraged to look at the site and let the committee know if they have any suggestions. We actually have two websites. There is a main D-25 website and a separate I/N website. The I/N website will include instructional information, videos and lessons as well as information and marketing specifically tailored to the I/N crowd.

If anyone has any suggestions they can contact the Committee at [joe@joebrouillard.com](mailto:joe@joebrouillard.com) or directly from the District website.

Bob Bertoni added that it was a pleasure to work with everyone. There will be many changes as the site evolves. The site is easy to navigate. Peter Marcus has done a terrific job with the recaps and David Metcalf has added District Bulletins. The website will never be complete; it will constantly be evolving as needs/interests arise and are met. B. Bertoni requested that members e-mail him directly at [developer@nebridge.org](mailto:developer@nebridge.org) or directly from the website. Bill Braucher remains the Webmaster. The calendar is a more easily updated and flyers will be attached to the listed games.

President Erwin added that before this new website was developed, every change had to go through the Webmaster and had to be manually added to the site. Now up to 50 authorized individuals can be give access to appropriate portions of the site so that changes can be made easier and in a very timely manner.

David Metcalf has asked that interesting hands be sent to him or the webmaster for inclusion on the website. A question was asked as to what software should be used for the hands. B. Bertoni recommended Bridge Composer that is available for free download from the web at BridgeComposer.com.

**Nominating Committee - David Rock**

The Nominating Committee met with representation from only five of our eight units. There were no representatives from New Hampshire, Maine, or Vermont. The Committee will meet again in Warwick. It may meet on-line before that if necessary. There are some potential candidates that are yet to be contacted.

**New Business-**

Wayne Hersey asked if something could be done to help the smaller units with their unit reimbursement monies from the ACBL. The new methodology that the ACBL holds reimbursement money until it reaches \$1000 creates a strain on the smaller units with cash flow problems. It was requested that inquiries be made to find out whether the ACBL would revert to the old format. R. DeMartino said that he would bring it up at the next meeting of the ACBL Board. R. Budd added that he had called and complained to headquarters and since his complaint he had received checks monthly. R. DeMartino asked that any unit that felt it had problems with the new system to send the information to him. R. Budd added that in a phone conversation with J. Baum he suggested that the funds be electronically directly deposited to the Units and he was told that that would be more difficult for the ACBL than sending checks.

With no further items before the Board, *a motion was made and seconded to adjourn.* So voted.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 am.

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25.