

New England Bridge Conference

Minutes Executive Committee Holiday Inn Mansfield, MA November 10, 2012

Attendance

Officers: Ausra Geaski, President; Mark Aquino, Vice President; Richard DeMartino, Treasurer/District Director; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Erwin, Past President
Unit Representatives: James Rasmussen, Dean Panagopoulos (EMBA); Phyllis Bausher, Allan Clamage (CBA); Bruce Emond (CMBA); Lois DeBlois (RIBA); Wayne Burt (NHBA); David Rock (WMBA)
Invited Guests: Joseph Brouillard, Co-chair Providence NABC; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager/Co-chair Providence NABC; Peter Marcus, Director
Absent: Wayne Hersey (VBA), Richard Budd (MBA)

Opening Remarks - President Geaski: The meeting was called to order at 4:50 pm. Key items which need to be addressed in this meeting include a decision on the event schedule for future regionals and progress in planning for the 2014 NABC in Providence.

Secretary's Report - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, Warwick, RI, September 1, 2012; seconded and so voted.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

The Warwick Tournament ended with a small loss compared to a substantial profit last year. The overall table count was 36.5 tables higher than last year but additional expenses, including room expenses and hospitality, offset the gain. We began contributing to the National Fund in 2012 versus none in 2011. Additionally, the Director fees were up partly because we used more TA's, who are training to become Regional Director. This is necessary as we have lost several directors and others are nearing retirement age. President Geaski asked if there was any saving using TA's or in caddies because of electronic scorepads. Director costs did not provide any savings but Caddy expenses were down. Until we get to Cromwell with only three start times we will not see any savings in Director costs and sessions worked. This site, with the number of small rooms, has been difficult for the Directors and increased the number of Directors we have to use. R. Erwin asked if the TA's were replacing Directors or for training. No TA replaced a Director. President Geaski noted that Head Director, Peter Marcus is trying to get the best mix to save money. J. Rasmussen asked about the increase in comp rooms. H. Pawlowski explained that there will never be a 100% comparison year to year because of the mix and how the rooms are now broken down. We did fulfill out room block obligation. A. Clamage asked where the microphone, an additional expense, was used. It was in the ball room during the Gold Rush events.

Treasurer's Report – Richard De Martino

The Fall Regional ended with a small loss. The total loss on tournaments for the calendar year is almost \$14,000 higher than last year at this time. The decline in our finances is a secondary problem which can be fixed by raising the table fees. The real problem is that we are losing players. At the Senior Regional this year there were 200+ fewer tables than at the same site and same time last year. Our biggest challenge is finding out why people are not coming to our tournaments. In 50% of the country Units run the Regionals. Others do it as we do. He added that his full report is available on line.

Peter Marcus – Super Gold Rush

A Super Gold Rush was proposed to be added to the calendar in lieu of the Masters in 2014 when D25 hosts the Fall NABC. We would use the original sanction to institute the Gold Rush Regional which would begin on Thursday and end when the NAP Finals begin. It would not affect any Sectional. The masterpoint limit would be 2000 which is the top of the NAP B flight. The A flight NAP Qualifying would be on Saturday with the Finals on Sunday. All non-NAP events would be open to any player under 2000 masterpoints from any district. The NAP would still be open only to District 25 players. The Tournament Committee approved option 1 for 7:30 Thursday through Saturday. (see chart in Addendum) R. DeMartino asked if there was another option for the non D-25 players on Sunday. On Sunday the Flight A players have no other option. This is a one time only event and if we have events other than the NAPs for the >2000 we would be compromising the event and changing the marketing strategy. D. Rock made a motion to accept the schedule for the super Gold Rush event to replace the masters in 2014 using the schedule approved by the Tournament Committee with option 1 for the 7:30 events. B. Emond seconded the motion. So moved.

Analysis of comparative attendance at Regionals 2010 through 2012 - Peter Marcus

Peter Marcus identified the attendance loss in two specific areas: the 4 Session KO's which have essentially disappeared and the Compact KO's which have suffered. The 1 & 7 games became too small to hold. The KOs have been eliminated from the schedule except for Friday night. The new schedule should stabilize the decline. We had a 100% increase in Pair Games Friday and were up 50% on Saturday. President Geaski asked if we should do anything else. P. Marcus added that we are still losing players. The Wednesday PM Compact KO ended up with 5 teams when 7 of the original withdrew because they felt outclassed. The Friday Compact KO had 5 in the top bracket and 7 others. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The fewer flight A events, the few come. R. DeMartino added that the Hotel is fantastic but the mini-rooms are a problem. P. Marcus stated that the Gold Rush event has grown and the ballroom could not hold all the events. The list of those who came to our Regionals in 2010 & 11 but are no longer coming will be available before Newton.

District Director's Report – Richard De Martino

R. DeMartino asked for feedback on two motions coming up. He will, also, discuss this at the Delegates meeting. The League is concerned with the progress in ACBL Score. Communications from the President and CEO to the Board on this matter has been lacking. We need to decide whether we believe we need to find out why and help if we need it. J. Brouillard has suggested sponsorships for the Providence NABC. Any sponsor money would be added to ours. Rich will have a meeting in San Francisco to discuss how best to proceed.

Rich indicated that his tenure as Treasurer is coming to an end. He will complete the year-end report and the fiscal report, and then work with the new treasurer as long as needed to ensure a smooth transition. He will, also, be available to help the treasurer for the Providence NABC as needed. R. Erwin asked that the Executive Committee be on record as thanking R. DeMartino for his years of service as Treasurer. Applause followed.

Mark Aquino has been the GNT/NAP Chair since Rich became District Director. R. DeMartino thanked Mark for the fine job he has done on the NAP/GNT over these past years. Dean Panagopoulos will be the new NAP/GNT Coordinator. Dean has volunteered to try some creative approaches to increase participation in these events.

Tournament Committee Report - Mark Aquino

The Tournament Committee discussed how D25 could best meet the financial shortfall. Table fees were raised a year ago and it is perhaps too early to consider another increase. A big argument for making no change now is that we have just changed the scheduled start times starting in Cromwell. It would make it difficult to judge the impact of this change if we changed the fees at the same time. Mark asked Rich DeMartino if we can comfortably sustain operations over the next six months without an increase in fees. Rich indicated that there were sufficient funds and suggested that if we were to raise fees we must do it right and not make another piecemeal change. He will produce a report that will show the impact of an increase of \$1.00 and \$2.00 and work with the new Treasurer to have this ready for Cromwell. R. Erwin suggested that they also show the effect on our finances when the current diversion of money to the National Fund ends. R. DeMartino added that we can go the National Fund if necessary and do not have to continue the current contribution level. Rich can also have

an exhibit that will show the effect of discontinuing the current contribution level or cutting it in half. We took a middle of the road position when we raised the table fees \$1.00. We can increase the fee to \$2.00 but if attendance keeps dropping we will have a bigger problem. We could shift the full amount to the District and later, if needed make a contribution to the NABC fund. Four dollars per table would equal \$20,000 and wipe out the \$15,000 loss. We currently have enough money in the National fund for the upcoming NABC, but it would mean that we would have very little left as seed money for the next Nationals. The NABC needs to develop a budget before we can make any decisions. We started this NABC cycle with \$80,000 in the bank. A carry over of \$50,000 would be sufficient. In theory the NABC fund money is supposed to remain separate. The seed money is in a CD but with rates as they are it would not be beneficial to open a new CD. We are putting it in our account and keeping a separate record of the money. The NABC chairs will have a budget by June of 2013. If J. Brouillard is able to secure sponsor money for \$25,000, all of the problems regarding National funding would go away. M. Aquino stated that the chart showing how different Districts organize their Regionals is interesting, but it would be more helpful to see what they spent on each Regional and what their attendance was. Some Regionals are huge and some are tiny. A chart of the "per tournament" income would be very interesting. R. DeMartino stated that space rental for the Rye Regional will be doubling next year. Cost has forced the cancellation of the New Year's Eve Regional in New York City.

Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock

The Committee reviewed the question of start times at the Senior Regional as to whether we should change the 10:00 and 2:30. Two separate surveys showed that the players clearly favored the earlier start times. The Scheduling Committee recommends that the time be changed to coincide with the other Regionals: main event at 10:00 & 2:30 with a side game at 7:30. As for the Sectional tournament, the Committee recommends that the main events be at 2:30 and 7:30 with a side game at 10:00 AM as many of those playing in the Sectional are still working. D. Rock made a motion that the schedule for the Senior Regional be changed to harmonize with that of the other Regional. Seconded and so voted. This will be brought up to the Board of Delegates.

Nomination/Election Report- David Rock

The Nominating Committee met at Warwick and realizing that there would be a vacancy at either the Treasurer or Vice President position made two recommendations contingent on the outcome of the election. They recommended that Sonja Smith be appointed Interim Treasure to fill out the position that will be vacated by Richard DeMartino as of January 1, 2012. With the advice of Allan Clamage D. Rock made a motion that the Executive Committee appoint an interim Treasurer at this meeting and call a special meeting of the Board of Delegates in Cromwell to elect a new Treasurer. B. Emond noted that the election at Cromwell would be for a period of only eight months. D. Rock stated that the Bylaws require that if the period of a vacancy is more than 6 months that there must be an election by the Board of Delegates. The election of Mark Aquino and Ausra Geaski will be voted on tomorrow as originally scheduled. A. Clamage stated that R. DeMartino will work with S. Smith during the transition period. R. DeMartino will do the work for this tournament. Regarding her credentials, Sonja Smith has worked with a Credit Union for 8-9 years working on bank mortgages. H. Pawlowski stated that her attention to detail is phenomenal. President Geaski asked if any other candidates were proposed. A. Clamage reminded the Executive Committee that the Bylaws are specific on this matter. The rules of a quorum for a Special meeting are lower than for a normal meeting. He believes that 10% of the Delegates constitute a quorum. The Bylaws do not specify where or when but it must be at the "earliest" possible Regional. President Geaski queried if electronic voting would be possible. A. Clamage stated that his reading of the Bylaws suggested that we could do so. He suggested that there be a final review of the Bylaws before any decision is made. The Bylaws are clear on how alternate candidates can be brought up. Final notification of the names of all candidates must be sent at least 15 days before the meeting is held. R. Erwin suggested that any notice include the statement that those wishing to propose other candidates can refer to the Bylaws on the web for proper procedure. J. Rasmussen asked how the selection process was conducted. D. Rock responded that the Nominating Committee was apprised of the likelihood that there would have to be a candidate for either Vice President or Treasurer. Representatives were asked to go back to their Units and secure names of potential candidates for both positions. At the September meeting, no other names were

brought forth. President Geaski added that D. Rock will explain the process at the Board of Delegates meeting. D. Rock continued that we have 45 days to Newton. We could have the voting begin after then and other candidates would have time to submit their names by then. Candidates must complete the process as defined in the Bylaws at least 15 days before the election. The pertinent portions of the Bylaws should be sent to the Delegates. R. DeMartino suggested the time frame be from the end of Newton to the Tuesday of Cromwell. A. Clamage will check the Bylaws. R. DeMartino added that we do not historically have more candidates brought up. We have operated with the Nominating Committee putting up a slate of candidates. We do not want to encourage challenged elections, which can be divisive. R. Erwin made a motion that the Executive Committee accepts the recommendation of the Nominating Committee for the position of Interim Treasurer. Seconded and so voted.

NABC Providence- J Brouillard, H. Pawlowski,

J. Brouillard announced that all the Chairs are in place except Marketing and Publicity, a position for which we need someone with experience. (A list of the selections is in the Addendum) R. DeMartino asked why a Caddie Chair was needed as National brings in caddies. D. Rock responded that National did the main caddies but that local caddies were, also, needed. The Caddy Chair has evolved into keeping the caddy room stocked with food. President Geaski added that both chairs are doing a great job but that the executive Committee must be kept apprised of all decisions. R. DeMartino asked the Chairs not select people who are working just to get a room. The 2008 National was very successful in managing this. Chairs should not come excessively from one Unit. Both Chairs stated that they would make sure that positions were well advertised before they are filled. President Geaski suggested that this be done on the website and in the Daily Bulletin. M. Aquino cautioned that there may be potential conflicts when several individuals want the same job. H. Pawlowski said that there had been one but that it had been resolved when an alternate Chair position was suggested and accepted. Many of the current chairs are "first timers". President Geaski reminded the Chairs that a cross-section from all Units should be selected. H. Pawlowski answered that certain positions need to be filled with individuals who know the area and have contacts there. The Providence Visitors Bureau is doing the Restaurant Guide and Transportation. The ACBL is doing the printing. Pre-Tournament Tours and Gifts will be done by Bob and Sue Erwin as part of Tours. The Convention and Visitors Bureau will be working on the logo. The first organizational meeting will be in Cromwell, Saturday morning. We are trying to get corporate sponsors and are approaching Fidelity. Joe Brouillard is developing a proposal emphasizing the audience and target products. We need to know from the ACBL what we can offer a sponsor, such as a seminar room. A. Clamage asked if the ACBL could provide player profiles. R. DeMartino stated that such information is not available. The NABC is also looking at other potential sponsors.

Old Business

Update Nashua Raddison- H. Pawlowski

The Raddison in Nashua was visited Friday. Both the Sturbridge Host and the Raddison need a decision. The Raddison appears to be on track with their renovations. They are offering reasonable room and staff room rates. We can have 50 rooms at a \$25.00 discount. H. Pawlowski is confident the district can get good contracts for June 2014 and 2015. J. Rasmussen asked what the implication was with Sturbridge for the GNT's and NAP's. H. Pawlowski answered that they were happy with the expanded Gold Rush/NAP and were offering the ballroom and exhibition hall. M. Aquino asked what we were doing to insure Regional variety across the district. H. Pawlowski stated that Nashua was closer to Maine and that it would become a permanent fixture. Every time we move a tournament there is a temporary financial loss. We will be back in Mansfield in 2015 but could move this tournament on a yearly basis at that time. D. Panagopoulos added that the Executive Committee had already said that we would move one year North after the contract with Mansfield was concluded. H. Pawlowski stated that northern New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont are not as familiar to her and that she would appreciate help from local players with recommendations for sites.

Formation of Committee to support B-Flight players- Mark Aquino

M. Aquino has been discussing with Allan Clamage the importance of a Strategic Planning Committee. We need to balance the finances, geography, and meet the needs of our members. Susan Miguel does a great job with the C-Flight players, We need an advocate for the B's; those with 750 – 3000 MPs. President Geaski suggested that M. Aquino take this as an action item for the next meeting.

New Business

President Geaski reported that Joe Brouillard had resigned as Chair of the Website Committee. Bob Bertoni will take that position. The committee discussed the importance of timely updating of information on the web and the posting of game results. They will meet again in Newton. Joe Brouillard did a wonderful job as Chair and he has all of our thanks for his work.

President Geaski questioned whether the Executive Committee needs to meet in Newton. There are other committees that need to meet and could use the time. H. Pawlowski noted that we are committed to spend the money for the Executive Committee meeting as this is part of our food and beverage minimum. If it is cancelled the money would still have to be spent but would be reallocated to hospitality. After general discussion it was agreed that the Executive Committee would reconvene in Cromwell.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 6:45 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25