

New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes

Board of Delegates

New England Bridge Conference

Mansfield, MA

Sunday, November 10, 2013

Attendance:

Officers: Ausra Geaski, President; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Erwin, Past President ; Richard DeMartino, District Director (non-voting) absent: Mark Aquino, Vice President; Donald Levy, Treasurer;

Delegates:

EMBA - Unit 108 (16 of 17) David Aronson, Robert Bertoni, Cilla Borrás, Lowell Eubanks (Bill Hunter alt.) ,Bob Gorsey (Frank Caine alt.), Polly Goedicke, Michael Howard, Grace Lombardo (Jane Adams alt.), Peter Lombardo, Neil Montague (Brenda Montague alt.), Dean Panagopoulos, Adam Parrish, Lisa Procter, James Rasmussen (Carole Carlson alt.), Jan Smola, Alix Taylor (M. Ayyagari alt.) *Absent: Jane Adams, Murthy Ayyagari, Carole Carlson, Jori Grossack, Bill Hunter, Brenda Montague*

CMBA – Unit 113 2 of 2) Bruce Emond, Harris Jacobs

CBA – Unit 126 (11 of 12) Larry Bausher, Phyllis Bausher, Allan Clamage, Sandy DeMartino, Victor King (Debbie Benner alt.), Joan Martin, Sonja Smith, Joyce Stiefel, Bernie Schneider (Burt Gischner alt.), Frances Schneider (Janet Gischner alt.), Michael Wavada, Esther Watstein (Watson alt.) *Absent: Debbie Benner, Burt Gischner, Janet Gischner, Joyce Stiefel, Bill Watson*

RIBA – Unit 145 (4 of 4) Joseph Brouillard, Lois DeBlois, Suzanne Erwin, Maureen Fahey

NHBA – Unit 150 (1 of 4) Sarah Widhu (Wayne Burt alt.) *Absent: Wayne Burt, Joe DeGaetano, Karen McCallum, Daniel McGuire*

VBA – Unit 175 (3 of 3) Frank Hacker, Wayne Hersey, Phil Sharpsteen

MBA – Unit 189 (1 of 4) Richard Budd *Absent: Kate Hewett, Dottie Kelleher, Allan McRae*

WMBA – Unit 196 (3 of 3) Robert Derrah, Shirley Derrah (H. Pawlowski alt.) David Rock
Absent : Helen Pawlowski,

President's Report - Ausra Geaski

President Geaski welcomed the Board of Delegates members and noted the many new faces. Both Vice President, Mark Aquino; Treasurer ,Don Levy; and Tournament Manager, Helen Pawlowski will not be able to attend. M. Aquino is flying back from a work commitment and expects to be here later in the day. D. Levy is in Florida attending his son's wedding. Helen Pawlowski's father died suddenly Monday and she is with her family in update New York. Thanks to those who stepped in to help, particularly Joe Brouillard and Peter Marcus.

Congratulations to the winners of the District D5 NAP's who will be representing the District in Dallas. All the names are available on the website. The Executive Committee met and is working through the financial matters and the attempts to increase attendance.

Secretary's Report - Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made by R. Budd, seconded and so voted to approve the Minutes of the Board of Delegates meeting held in Sturbridge, MA, Sunday, June 23, 2013.

Treasurer's Report - David Aronson

District 25 had a deficit in 2012. Because of increased fees, we are in better shape this year and show a current gain. Some of our upcoming Regionals are historic money losers and we have some financial obligations yet to pay. Our current cash assets are sufficient; however, this number may drop significantly when this tournament is figured in and outstanding expenses are submitted. The Fall Nationals Bank of America CD comes due in January. These funds will be transferred to NABC committee plus the National Fund Contributions. There will be additional contributions in 2014. If you have any specific questions, you can email Don, who will be back by the end of the week.

A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to accept the report as presented.

Election of Officers for 2013 - Election Committee - David Rock

The Nominating Committee approved the following slate of candidates:

President - Mark Aquino; Vice President - David Rock; Secretary - Carolyn Weiser; Treasurer - Donald Levy

All Delegates were notified in September of the slate of candidates. I have accepted the position of Vice President as a fill-in and will not stand for President in two years.

A motion was made, seconded to accept the slate of candidates for 2014; so voted without dissent.

President Geaski congratulated the officers and reminded the Board of Delegates that the District still has many issues to be resolved. There was great difficulty in finding someone to fill the Vice Presidents role. We look to this group to find someone who will reconsider.

District Director's Report- Richard DeMartino –

The National Board meeting is coming up. I am chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. The number 1 issue is ACBL Score. This is a massive undertaking and should be completed by mid-2014. We have good developers but, as of this week, they are about 6 weeks behind schedule. The existing system will continue to function simultaneously at least one year after the new system is complete. There will be testing done by clubs. Let me know if you are interested in being part of the testing.

The second issue is that people are being asked to play in events for which they feel they are not ready. When there is a Gold Rush event, the 750+ players are forced to play in the 0-3000 strat. We will be discussing this in Las Vegas. This District is also working on this issue. There is no simple solution. The best seems to allow more than two strats above 750, which is currently against regulations. We could change the regulations but the current ACBL Score cannot handle it.

The third is whether to increase the number of teams can play in the GNT Finals. Our District is number 2 in attendance. The number of teams we could send would be proportional to the number who participate in the District finals. This would mean that there would be 3 powerhouse teams from Florida. It will take some time to iron this out. Those who favor this think that this would get more teams to participate. This will mean that the event will have to be restructured. We would have to find a way to drop the field to 12 in 2 days. For "C" only all

Districts would be allowed to have one more team bring the total from 36-37. We would then have to drop the number to 4 teams with 2 hays to go.

Regarding the National schedule, changing on event is a bid thing. They are considering moving the Blue Ribbon Teams from Tuesday to the Friday after Thanksgiving. That Friday has always been reserved for the main pair's event at the Fall Nationals. This would change what event goes opposite which event. I have never heard a complaint about the Blue Ribbon Pairs event starting on Thursday. A show of hands, of those who attend the Nationals, was asked. Two voted yes. We currently have a 6 session Swiss (160 teams) vs. the Reisinger (50 teams). We are considering moving the Fall Swiss to the Summer. This may create another problem, as the Summer schedule is full. A show of hands, of those who attend the Nationals, was asked. No one supported this move.

An incident occurred here two days ago. A CKO was scheduled and advertised as bracketed. Most expect to play. There was a 5-9-9 split. Several teams, including mine, wanted to opt out to play in the pairs game. The Director did the best he could. I came on strong when I said you can't do this. I was wrong. I was very out of order. I apologize. I apologized to the Director. Call me if you thing that this apology is not enough. The problem we have regarding Bracketed Team evens is not easily solvable. Friday there were 3 highly qualified teams, and the rest were not even close.

President Geaski thanks R. DeMartino for his comments.

Tournament Manager's Report - President Geaski

If anyone wants copies for Helen Pawlowski's report, let Carolyn know. We did We did well in Warwick, due in great part to the increase in table fees. We were in a difficult position financially as we were losing money tournament after tournament. We will watch the numbers carefully. Attendance is still the main issue. We will do our best to give back to the players. Whether the numbers are up or not depends on today.

On the attendance side, we have a number of initiatives to see why the numbers are down and how we can increase them. On the financial side, I do not want to be too optimistic. we usually lose money in Newton and Cromwell can be a problem. We are moving the Summer Regional to Nashua and any change in site can create issues.

A Parish added that we all recognize the problem the issue is what we can do about it. President Geaski answered that the "B's needs Committee has been working on Unit and District level initiatives. We will discuss the survey later. Peter Marcus was asked to provide the data on player tournament attendance. He compiled a list for the last 10 years comparing those who came to tournaments in the past and those who no longer come. We have been drilling the data down. Bob Bertoni will help and will talk to this later. The Board of Delegates said that they would help by making personal contact with the players. We have a number of players who have never come to a Regional. At the Unit level, we need individuals to develop personal relationships and teach what the Regional events are. Some players do not realize that there are events for players of all levels. We need more volunteers to help spread the word.

S. Erwin added that some clubs do not announce Sectionals or Regionals as they resent the fact that they take players away. P. Lombardo noted that the club at which he plays will have a 15-20 table game on Monday at which he will get lunch. At the Regional Friday night, there was only 6 Tables.

All of this has been discussed at the "B's needs Committee meetings. Some initiatives have already been started. These include flyers at Senior Centers, classed to teach bridge, leaving

publicity at doctor and dentists offices, reminders send to club managers and directors. Please check the minutes on the website for the “B”’s needs meetings. We encourage you to submit your ideas and comments and to join the meetings. What you have said here reinforces what we have on the list.

Tournament Committee/Scheduling Report - David Rock

Some of what we did has already been discussed. We discussed the possibilities for moving a tournament to the northern tier. Both South Portland, Maine and Conway , New Hampshire were discussed. H. Pawlowski has been investigating sites.

Regarding the 751 MP player on days when there is a Gold Rush event, the current strats for the open event are not tied to this. The Committee recommended that in these situations the “C” flight of the open event be moved to 1500. (0-1500/3000/open).

The issue of CKO attendance was referred to by R. DeMartino. In every tournament at least on such event, an insufficient number of real “A” flight teams was fielded. Both the Committee and the Executive Committee looked at the options. We could make all KO’s flighted. This would eliminate A/B. We could eliminate the KO’s and replace them with Swiss. We have made no final decision yet. We did make it explicit that the Director in Charge had full discretion to make the best decision he could until the matter is settled.

Regarding “0” Tolerance the decision was made that all “0” Tolerance infractions would be referred to the Director. A Director would refer the matter to the District Recorder for review. An announcement regarding “0” Tolerance would be made at the beginning of each event. This was enforced yesterday when a player was expelled.

Bob Bertonni has volunteered to take the multi-year player data that P. Marcus compiled and put it into Access from where we can generate reports as needed.

Larry Weiss Award - James Rasmussen

Larry Weiss was a long time expert described by Edgar Kaplin in the Bridge World as “the first gentleman of bridge.” After his death , his brother Stephen established the Larry Weiss Award “for Grace and Skill at the Bridge Table.” There were three criteria: some degree of success in contract bridge, which is subjective; some degree of association with New England bridge, which has been taken to be some involvement in NE Bridge activities beyond playing; and superior behavior and gracious presence at the bridge table. There are no established procedures but it has developed that the previous winner establish a committee including 1 member from each Unit who together establish a procedure and solicit nominations. The winner for 2014 is widely recognized and admired for pleasant and cheerful demeanor at the table. He puts his opponents at ease. His skill is exhibited by his achievement of the rank of Diamond Life Master and his consistent high placement in events. He is active in many District and Unit activities. is a long-time member of the Board of Delegates, is the Unit Tournament Coordinator, has run local Tournaments and edits his Unit Newsletter. This year’s winner is Frank Hacker of Vermont. Frank Hacker said he was thrilled to be on the trophy with those who had gone before and thanks everyone for the honor.

Peter Marcus asked if there were anything he needed to tell Helen or questions he could answer. The Swiss today will be 7 board matches for this tournament only. The matter will be sent to the Tournament Committee to make a general decision for the future.

Nationals Committee– Joseph Brouillard

The Committee has been working very hard. They had the one-year meeting with the ACBL last month, which was very productive. They toured the Convention Center, playing areas and the general area of Providence. We have started distributing promotional materials including bookmarks and post cards that you can take back to your clubs. If you are going to a Regional outside of New England or a National, please buy a tee or polo shirt and wear it to help promote our NABC. The bookseller has agreed to put a Providence NABC bookmark in every book he sells. All of this is on the website that Bob Bertoni has developed. The schedule is almost complete. When the ACBL approves it, we will link it to our website. If you have any questions or suggestions please see me or anyone on the Committee. R. DeMartino added that the last time he had a national the real key to success was getting our own people to come. Please remind all players that it is a good time for everyone, not just the pros. Let people know that Providence will be a great site. It costs less and the parking is less. It will all depend on the players. We need the clubs to support it. J. Brouillard continued that we are way ahead of the curve as far as preparation. All the hotels are reasonable. The lowest will be \$103 and the Omni, which is at the Convention Center, is only \$133. The Tee shirts are \$15 and the polo shirts are \$20. Please buy one and help promote and support the Providence NABC. President Geaski added that the Committee is doing a great job.

Old Business

Response Analysis of Player Attendance at Regionals – Allan Clamage

There is an alternate way to get to those players who played in 2012 but not in 2013. I have the questionnaire ready. This group volunteered. I have compiled a list of those who attended the Senior Regional in 2012 but not in 2013. This includes their name, telephone number, and masterpoint total. There are only 207 names. They will be sent to the unit Presidents and then to the unit Board of Delegates representatives. All the responses will be tabulated. If the responses are returned promptly, the results will be tabulated for Cromwell.

D. Rock added that using the composite list created by Peter Marcus we will identify those who no longer attend the Regionals. A named, and dated free play certificate will be email/mailed encouraging them to come back and play again. The Directors will welcome those who produce certificate. The follow-up will be handled by our national Good Will Chairman, Sandy DeMartino.

The District Secretary will handle the distribution of the Alan Clamage's list to the Unit Presidents and Secretaries.

GNT's - Dean Panagopoulos

Everyone is reminded that the District GNT Finals this year will be held in Sturbridge on March 1, 2014. There are 4 flights. A flight is >6000 and B flight to 2500. All matches will be completed that weekend.

Website - Bob Bertoni

Mike Wavada has added many new features to the website including ask the expert. Everyone owes Mike a debt of gratitude for all his hard work.

“B”s Needs - Ausra Geaski

Many ideas and potential initiatives were discussed. The status will be updated and distributed with the Minutes. Many of the ideas listed are already in the works. We need help in implementing other.

A. Parrish announced that “Bridgewinners.com is partnering with the ACBL so that players can purchase advanced National Pair event entries on line. This is a pilot project.

President Geaski thanked everyone for all their help in the past two years...
A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 AM
Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25