

*New England Conference of the American Contract Bridge League*

Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting

Newton Marriott

January 4, 2014

Attendance:

Officers: Mark Aquino, President; David Rock, Vice President; Don Levy, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Ausra Geaski, Past President

Unit Representatives: EMBA: Dean Panagopoulos, David Aronson; CMBA: Bruce Emond; RIBA: Joe Brouillard; NHBA: Wayne Burt; WMBA: Robert Derrah

Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Joseph Brouillard, Co-chair Providence NABC (and Alt. for Lois DeBlois)

Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager/Co-chair Providence NABC

Absent: CBA: Allan Clamage, Esther Watstein; RIBA: Lois DeBlois; MBA: Richard Budd; VBA: Wayne Hersey

President Aquino opened the meeting at 5:05 PM

A motion was made, seconded to accept the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee from Mansfield, MA, November 9, 2013. So voted.

**Tournament Committee Report - David Rock**

Recent events has shown that the Compact KO's at the top bracket are no longer a viable event mid-week. The Tournament Committee discussed various options including flighted; bracketed, which probably would not run; and having a Swiss opposite the CKO, which may or may not be legal. The decision was to eliminate the mid-week CKO as this event will not attract sufficient out of district players. The Committee recommends that we institute a Wednesday-Thursday primetime full "B's Needs" KO with the top set at 4000. We would replace the Gold Rush CKO with a Swiss Wednesday afternoon and add a Thursday Swiss for the losers. There would be only the pair event for the Wednesday Flight A players. P. Marcus reminded the Executive Committee that Gold Rush events are a great marketing tool. Under this plan we would be scheduling a Flight B KO on the day of the Gold Rush event. The next day the Gold Rush would be opposite a Swiss for losers. People with less than 500 points like to play with their peers. If we get rid of the Gold Rush name we change the marketing. We could try a 4-Session Gold Rush KO. R. DeMartino stated that we will have no attractive event for the A-players on Wednesday. P. Marcus continued if the "A's must play pairs we need a Gold Rush below that to produce the points that will attract the "A's". He suggested that Tuesday we have a Gold Rush CKO as we do now. Wednesday the "X" ("B's needs") KO opposite the A/B Pairs and Gold Rush Pairs. Thursday would be the final for the "X" KOs and an A/B Swiss and a Gold Rush Swiss. Friday would be Gold Rush and A/B Pairs (as we have now). This would make the "A/B" Pair game on Wednesday more attractive as they would get credit for the Gold Rush Pairs. D. Panagopoulos concluded that P. Marcus's solution was the most palatable and that a 2-day "B" KO was a good idea, particularly if it were paired with a two-day A-KO. R. DeMartino stated that a Wednesday KO is not working in any other District. P. Marcus added that if we give the "A" players a reason to play in a mid-week pairs event and they start coming back in numbers, we could ask them then if they wanted to return to a KO. We need to come up with a schedule. The earliest would be for Nashua. H. Pawloswki stated that we need to be two tournaments ahead for flyer printing. If we make a change at Cromwell it would not be reflected in the flyer. R. DeMartino pointed out that the only possible decision we could make at this meeting is for pairs. D. Rock summed the schedule up: Tuesday would be unaffected. Wednesday would be A/B Pairs, Gold Rush Pairs, and a 0-4000 2-day KO. Thursday the semi-finals of the "B" KO and an A/B and Gold Rush Swiss. Friday would be unchanged. A motion was made and seconded and so voted to accept the schedule change as presented.

### **“B”s Needs Committee - Ausra Geaski**

The Committee discussed the feasibility of inviting a professional guest speaker to attend a District 25 Regional and conduct guest lectures. We did this several years ago in South Portland with Mike Lawrence and it was very successful. We also discussed the pros/cons and logistics of taking photos of winners. We are working on returning the Leader Board and H. Pawlowski will have a suggestion box at all of our tournaments. This will make it easier for players to give us feedback. It will be publicized in the Bulletin. The Committee determined that having a “meet and greet” desk is very important with a registration desk and a “gift” such as a Regional Sticker. Sandy DeMartino will work on this. We also discussed the logistics and format for a “Pro-Am” game held as a Side Game on Saturday evening, much like the EMBA model. We will further investigate the logistics, viability and cost of doing each of these and report later.

**Website Committee-** President Aquino reported that the Website Committee discussed Fast Results that was discussed in a series of emails. It is very important for the Directors to be on board for this to work. P. Marcus stated that they are in favor of this with the understanding that the additional work must be minimal and that it would be done on a volunteer basis not as an additional duty. D. Metcalf has volunteered to talk to Bridgeweb regarding an account and the logistics of uploading the files. B. Bertoni felt that he could write the script that would make the automatic uploading possible. P. Marcus stated that the directors fully support this effort but that they need a specific list of what they are expected to so that they can verify that it is doable with reasonable effort.

### **Treasurer’s Report - Don Levy**

As emailed, the Treasurer’s Report reflects preliminary financials for District 25 through December 31, 2013 as this meeting comes for close to December 31. We have experienced a monumental turnaround from a substantial loss in 2012 to a gain in 2013. Expenses remained relatively stable from 2012-2013. We have outstanding Liabilities for the GNT’s; Nationals, from table fees. As requested, \$20,000 was transferred to the National Fund in November. R. DeMartino asked the purpose of this request. H. Pawlowski answered that the NABC Committee did not know that the ACBL was going to pay for awards. The ACBL paid the deposit on Waterfire and for the registration gifts directly. The Committee thought that they would have to pay the bill and be reimbursed. D. Levy asked if he should forward the \$30,000 that would be available when that note came due. J. Brouillard stated that the Committee would not need the money immediately. D. Levy will reinvest the funds for 3 months. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. So moved. D. Levy will see that Ausra Geaski’s name is removed from the checking account and that Mark Aquino’s name is added.

President Aquino told the Executive Committee that D-25 is being sued. A lawsuit has been filed regarding a fall at a Regional that occurred several years ago. It is being handled. This presents no pecuniary liability to anyone. It will be resolved. We do not know how important the storm will be to the bottom line for this tournament. H. Pawlowski stated the storm was devastating for our hotel pickup. We were not close to our requirement to begin with and by Wednesday we lost 40 room nights. Contractually we are obligated to pay for the function rental. We are renegotiating this and are working with hospitality to see what can be done.

### **District Director’s Report - R. DeMartino**

The report of the last board meeting has been posted on the web and there is little new to report since Phoenix. I regret to report that there has been some slippage in the ACBL Score target date.

### **Tournament Manager’s Report -H. Pawlowski**

Though the NAP’s again lost money, the loss was \$1,087.20 less than last year. Expenses were down as the 2012 was a split-site Regional as opposed to the one site this year. Table count was down 25 tables from 2012. The Masters saw an 80 table increase in table count, which is significant. This, plus the increase in fees turned a loss of \$5,174.68 into a gain of \$5,879.92 for substantial swing of \$11,000 +. Newton continues to fall steadily. This year will be atrocious. The Master’s remains stable at about 950 as does the Fall at about 1300. The Summer, though declining, was doing well, considering the site. We hope that moving back to Nashua will lead to an improvement. The site has been completely renovated. The “B’s” Needs initiatives, hopefully, will

help. We had snow for Cromwell in 2013 at the worst times of the day for attendance. President Aquino added that we need to focus on why the Seniors has declined so noticeably. H. Pawlowski added that the comparisons are of different hotels. The goal is for Regional tables between 950 and 1000. The Sectional attendance is very high. W. Burt questioned why we lost 70 tables between 2011 and 2012. R. DeMartino added that the Senior Regional is down 16% and Sturbridge was down 20% but we still do not know why. A. Clamage's survey fell apart as few Board of Governors representatives were willing to do the work and call. President Aquino reminded the Executive Committee that we already decided not to run the Master's this year. H. Pawloswki added that we are running a Super Gold Rush to 3000 mp event in conjunction with the NAPs in its place. A. Geaski added that Nashua is not really a new site. We should market it as "returning to Nashua" and emphasize that it is a newly renovated site.

Regarding the Cape, we are committed to Hyannis through 2017. The Seacrest has contacted us. B. Emond stated that the major reason why those he contacted preferred the Seacrest was the difficulty that many experienced with the many stairs. H. Pawlowski reminded the Executive Committee that if we want to move more quickly look into it. The players like the location but not the hotel. It is a mobility issue. The Seacrest wasn't perfect either. There were issues at both hotels. The Conference Center will provide bellmen to help with those who find the stairs an issue.

#### **NABC- J. Brouillard**

We went to Phoenix to advertise Providence. We brought maps, shirts, posters, and video presentations. There was a lot of positive feedback especially of the video loop of Waterfire. The Providence Nationals is linked on the ACBL website. We have asked for some changes. Our website will be shown on the ACBL site in two places. Our website is very good and has great information. Please visit it and if you see anything that should be added, please let me or Bob Bertoni know. We brought two packages of schedules here and all but two were taken. We will bring more promotional information to Maryland and Florida. We intend to have an extensive email campaign. We intend to send flyers to everyone in District 25 email. The ACBL will use its email service to send everyone an email on May 15, which is the first day that reservations at the hotels can be made, and again in late August or early September. R. DeMartino said that from what he saw in Phoenix, the Providence NABC is light years ahead of the last two. The presentations will also be given in Dallas and Las Vegas. Transportation information is available on the website: ProvidenceNABC.org.

Regarding Waterfire, the details are relatively complete. We will have fire spinners. There will be a torch parade with 16 torches and a lighting ceremony. This will take place at dusk on the first Saturday, with Sunday as the rain date. It will continue from dusk throughout the evening. There will be a VIP reception at the Providence Visitors Bureau offices. Providence has its Christmas tree lighting in December and will see if we can coordinate the tree lighting ceremony with them. There will be a guest boat, for eight people, available in the evenings. The cost of Waterfire is \$25,000 plus \$1,000 for the fire spinners. RIBA made a \$2,000 donation. We would like to ask the other Units to donate \$2,000, or more if they can, toward defraying the costs. With a donation of \$2,000 or more a Unit can have one person take part in the Waterfire torch parade. Any donation is appreciated. Waterfire is Providence' signature event. we will be advertised on their website. The ACBL has committed \$7500 toward Waterfire. D-25 will be a sponsor. If a Unit donates it will be acknowledged on the official website. President Aquino asked how much had been raised from donations. Currently the real donations amount to \$7,000: \$5,000 from the Josephine Peche family and \$2,000 from the Rhode Island Unit. These have been deposited by Chris Soares. Alex and Ani have committed \$10,000. Treasurer Levy noted that the amount donated as recorded is \$2,500 short. It was acknowledged and corrected as a typo.

#### **Old Business**

Investigation of potential Regional sites in the north- H. Pawlowski

H. Pawlowski is going to Stow to check out a potential site. This would not be a permanent move. The Executive Committee committed to having one regional in the North every 6-8 years when long standing contracts completed. These are properties that we would use once and a while.

President Aquino stated that Linda Robinson is considering the position of Auditor for District 25. R. DeMartino added that Tournament Chairs are historically chosen by the President, though at times others have

been delegated to make the decision. A. Geaski added that she was not made aware of this. While she was President, H. Pawlowski found the chairs. R. DeMartino continues that the appointments are made annually by the President for the cycle from the Summer through the Summer. (because of flyers) H. Pawlowski added that past practice has been that the Chairs continue. In the past, I have made suggestions, but the President actually asks. The last replacement that was needed was for Warwick as the previous chair for the Fall Regional did not wish to continue at the new location. R. DeMartino added that the President picks all open positions. All Tournament Chairs are not doing a great job. President Aquino stated that he will ask the Bylaw Committee to look at any gaps in our bylaws relating to the rules and responsibilities. R. DeMartino suggested that everyone look at the Palm Spring Bulletin for the number of volunteers that are doing something. Their tournament is very welcoming. Additionally, why is this tournament still 1 & 7 while all the rest are morning and afternoon? This needs to be discussed.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 PM. So moved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Weiser  
Secretary - District 15