

*New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League*

**Minutes**

**Executive Committee**

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Warwick, RI

August 30, 2014

Attendance:

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

Unit Representatives: EMBA: David Aronson, Dean Panagopoulos; CMBA: Bruce Emond; CBA: Allan Clamage, Esther Watstein; RIBA: Lois DeBlois; NHBA: Wayne Burt; MBA: Dick Budd; VBA: Wayne Hersey; WMBA: Robert Derrah

Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Joseph Brouillard, Co-chair Providence NABC;

Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager/Co-chair Providence NABC. Bob Bertoni, Scheduling Committee chair, Linda Robinson, Chair Finance Committee

**Call to Order- President Aquino**

President Aquino called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. President Aquino thanked Helen Pawlowski and Joe Brouillard for the tour of the Convention Center, the site of Waterfire, and for a very good NABC meeting Friday night. All concerned seem to have a good handle on everything. He wished Don Levy all the best in his new life in Florida and thanked him for his work as Treasurer. He also thanked David Rock for his work as Vice President and Tournament Chair, which will end on December 31 with the election of a new Vice President.

**Secretary's Report** - A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting at Nashua, NH, June 21, 2014.

**Report of the Audit Committee** - Linda Robinson

Copies of the full Audit Report were handed out to the Executive Committee. The current and former Treasurer, the Tournament Manager, and other District volunteers who handle District funds are individuals of the highest integrity and keep excellent detailed records. No recommendation for change should be taken to imply otherwise. The report was summarized in five recommendations. The Tournament reports should have been reported so that the Executive Committee has a sense of what the tournament made before disbursements to such accounts as the NAP's. The District should have a District credit card for the use of the Tournament Manager so that she is not expending personal funds. A review of the legal status and filing requirements for the organization is recommended. The District Handbook is a great resource and should be maintained. The Audit Committee is looking forward to working with the new treasurer.

Discussion followed. R. DeMartino recommended that we not make any decisions on this at this time. L. Robinson stated that if we make the changes recommended we will be able to see what a tournament actually cost after expenses. The desired format of an internal financial report should be made by the organization not by the individual giving the report. M. Aquino agreed that it probably does not make sense to accept or reject the

report at this time but to review and consider it when the new treasurer comes on board in January. D. Aronson stated that the idea of a credit card is a good idea. Having money go through the Tournament Managers account is not a good idea. R. Budd made a motion that District 25 secure a credit card that the Tournament Manager can use for District expenses. Seconded. Discussion followed regarding the means and methods to secure a card. D. Aronson made an amendment to the motion, to review the procedures and have H. Pawlowski report to the Executive Committee at the next meeting. The motion as amended was called and passed.

#### **Treasurer's Report- Don Levy**

Don Levy thanked the Executive Committee for their good wishes added that he has enjoyed doing the job of Treasurer and wished that he could have continued.

The total loss for the year is over \$15,000 . This compares with a prior year gain for the same period of just over \$8,000. All tournaments have been down. As of July 31 the total in our operating accounts was \$22,000 less than the amount we had as of December 31, 2013. President Aquino asked if the Treasurer had any recommendations. Don responded that 98% of District finances are tournament driven. The rest is window dressing. If we cannot increase attendance, we must either raise fees or cut expenses. President Aquino added that we cannot continue to lose money at this rate for much longer and we must change something soon.

R. DeMartino stated that in 1995 or 96 we decided that we needed \$25-30,000 in reserve. With inflation that amount is closer to \$40,000 today. He added that he believed that we actually needed between \$40-50,000. The Treasurer keeps the books; the Executive committee makes the decisions. President Aquino continued that we must begin to look at every expense.

D. Levy continued that he had reviewed all procedures with Joe Brouillard. All bills have been paid. We have new checks. The insurance bond has been paid for 2014-15 was paid in August and was \$513.00.

#### **Election 2015- Wayne Burt**

The committee searched for a candidate to Vice President to fulfill the remainder of the term for David Rock and for a Treasurer. The Committee will recommend Bernard Schneider as Vice President and Joe Brouillard as Treasurer. B. Emonds questioned that they were two different cases as one was leaving with over a year in their term (Treasurer) and the other's term would end on December 31. (Vice President). A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Joe Brouillard as interim Treasurer of District 25 until December 31, 2014. The Board of Delegates will vote on a new treasurer whose term will begin on January 1, 2015.

#### **"B's Needs Committee Report - Ausra Geaski**

A. Geaski was pleased to announce that almost all of the original action items of the committee had been accomplished. The focus of our meeting today was the Pro-Am event. The committee had originally wanted to hold the first Pro-Am in Cromwell on Saturday night, which will be Valentine's Day. The Tournament Committee voiced some concerns about that night. We also need to finalize the stratifications. For any chance of success, we would require the flyer be available at "The Egg. Because of the open items, the committee decided to postpone the first Pro-Am until Nashua. Members of the Executive Committee were asked for input. President Aquino suggested that a proposal with pros and cons for each option be sent to the members of the Executive Committee

before the Newton meeting. We want the first time to be a success. H. Pawlowski added that we would have time to get the information on to the flyer for Nashua if a decision was made in Newton.

Decreasing attendance is our main concern. The best way to increase attendance is to begin at the club level and with teachers. We need to get the players into the Unit Sectionals and then into the Regionals. The District needs support from the BOD members to champion these efforts within their Units.

#### **Tournament Committee Report - David Rock**

As The Scheduling Committee agenda was long the time was turned over to the Scheduling Committee.

#### **Scheduling Committee and Website Committee - Bob Bertoni**

B. Bertoni passed out a proposed schedule for Cromwell that had been reviewed and recommended by the Tournament Scheduling Committee. The goal was to address complaints that there were no games for A flight players. The strats had been changed to those previously approved. Strats are by average: 2500/ 1500/ 750/300/ 50. The new strat will give the players who can no longer play in the Gold Rush events a place to play. KO's will be Open and 0-4000. There is a lateral CKO Wednesday and Thursday evening that we hope will attract those who are still working. There is a Zip KO on Saturday evening where the Pro/Am would have been. A motion was made and seconded to accept the schedule as presented.

Discussion followed. Having three over three is expected to pass this November. R. DeMartino added that we have been given approval to try this once at the "Egg." M. Aquino stated that the schedule as presented seems to have addressed all of the concerns. R. DeMartino suggested that is we add a KO the first day we should run it by the Delegates first. We are currently running Swiss and pairs. W. Burt brought up the overlapping KO's at the Halifax Regional. R. Bertoni answered that if we could get enough teams we could try it here, but currently our numbers would not support it.

B. Bertoni noted that the website is currently down but will be back up tomorrow. We had get to get a new site host. President Aquino stated that many players had said that many players had stated that they like Fast Results.

R. DeMartino added that there are no Swiss on Tuesday and that this had been successful. The motion was called and passed.

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

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Table count was down 205.5 from Sturbridge last year. Gross receipts were down over \$11,000 and we went from a significant profit to a loss of almost \$6,000. Our expenses were up in hospitality costs and the fact that we had to bring in more directors from outside the District. Rooms for Directors and Staff were up because; though the cost basis was the same we had \$1,500 less in comp rooms. R. DeMartino asked what our commitment was to Nashua. H. Pawlowski stated that we are committed to 2015 & 16. There was a lengthy exit interview. The lighting will be fixed.

Here Tuesday's Gold Rush Swiss was down 14 tables but the Gold Rush pairs were up 35 to 46.5 tables. The Gold Rush can no longer be expected to pay the bills.

H. Pawlowski will provide B. Bertoni the ACBL session-by-session, event, and number of table's numbers for the last 4 years.

As of today, we are 80 tables down from last year. (1106.5 vs 1185) The Friday night KO's were A: 14 last year and 9 this year; B: 11 vs 9. This was the big event in the past.

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

### **Nationals Committee Report- Joe Brouillard**

We had a meeting at the Convention Center yesterday including a tour of the playing areas and hospitality lounge. Later we walked to the waterfront where Waterfire will be presented. All the hotels are very close and the room pick-up has been staggering. The Hilton and Omni are sold out for multi-night stays. The Biltmore has a few rooms left. Over 8900 room nights have been booked. The ACBL will open new properties for booking once the Biltmore minimum has been booked. R. DeMartino asked what we are doing for the I/N as their participation will make the difference between success and failure. J. Brouillard answered that there would be a mass mailing to the I/N Group. NABC Promotional material will be distributed to the Board of Delegates tomorrow for distribution. President Aquino stated that Joe and Helen have done a herculean job marketing this tournament. They have gone to Nationals with associates. A request for reimbursement of expenses has been received from those who went to promote the Providence NABC. The money would come from the National Fund, not from the general District account. The request is for about \$7000. Chris Soares indicated that there might be a requirement to pay taxes and 1099's may have to be issued. President Aquino committed to ensuring this matter was looked into and agreed to check it out first before reimbursement was provided. The money would be for their flights, hotel and a per diem. H. Pawlowski stated that the figures were based on what the ACBL gives her for meetings. President Aquino stated that perhaps this should have been discussed first, but the question is what we should do now. H. Pawlowski added that \$66.00 is the IRS designated amount. A motion was made and seconded to approve the payment of the reimbursement amounts as stipulated. The motion passed.

There was a motion to go into executive session. Executive Session ended.

Joe Brouillard continued that 81,000 emails were sent out in July. Clint Wright will send a packet to the top 50 clubs East of the Mississippi. Volunteers are needed for all areas. There is a link on the website with a form that can be filled in or printed. Please send the names of anyone interested to Brenda Montague. There will be another mailing in October for volunteers.

We almost lost Alix and Ani as our major sponsor, but Phyllis Chase worked very hard behind the scenes and got them back as well as being able to secure additional donations from other sponsors.

### **Charity Committee Report: Phyllis Bausher**

The Charity Committee decided to give the ACBL grant to support the homeless. We divided the \$30,000 between the 6 New England States. The recipients are: Maine- Preble House, Portland; New Hampshire- Harbor House, Nashua; Vermont-Good Samaritan Haven, Barre; Massachusetts- New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Boston; Rhode Island- Crossroads Rhode Island, Providence; Connecticut- Columbus House, New Haven. The checks will be distributed when all the paperwork has been completed and sent to the ACBL. We will attempt to find a way to announce this at the NABC. R. DeMartino said that possibly a way to have the checks sent to us so that we

could be part of the process. We could have a representative deliver the individual checks. P. Bausher will look into the possibilities of doing this.

**NAP Coordinator Update: Dean Panagopoulos**

The NAPs will be different this year as they will be part of the “Egg.” Flight A will have the qualifying round on Saturday and the finals on Sunday. Flights B and C will play only on Sunday. This is not a permanent change, but an experiment that we can evaluate later. Flight B has been raised to 2500. C remains at 0-500 non-life masters. The ACBL has increased the number of pairs that can be sent to the NABC for B and C to 4 pairs. A motion was made to give \$100 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place pairs that go to the NABC. The money would come from the Grass-roots fund money. The motion was seconded and so moved.

**District Director’s Report – Richard DeMartino**

As I will be giving the same report to the Board of Delegates tomorrow, to save time, I will defer my report until then. I will ask the Board of Delegates representatives for their input on the issue of on-line points.

Joe Brouillard was asked if the Convention Center parking fee included in-and-out privileges. It does not. The fee for overnight parking is \$18.00 per day. Valet parking does allow for in-and-out privileges but it is \$28.00 per day.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25.