



New England Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
Sea Crest Hotel
Falmouth, MA
April 29, 2017

Present:

Officers: Robert Bertoni, President; Lois DeBlois, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Mark Aquino, District Director and Past President
Unit Representatives:

EMBA: Robert McCaw, Brenda Montague; CMBA: Shirley Wagner; CBA: Allan Clamage, Esther Watstein; RIBA: Paula Najarian; NHBA: Sarah Widhu; VBA: none; MBA: Richard Budd; WMBA: Peter Samsel

Invited Guests: Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; David Metcalf, DIC, Mike Wavada, Communications Committee/Webmaster

Absent: VBA: Wayne Hersey

Call to Order-

President Robert Bertoni

President Bertoni thanked Tournament Manager, Helen Pawlowski for securing this site. The player responses have been good. We need everyone to talk up Nashua. We need the whole Regional to be successful, not just the free KO. The attendance during the early week is critical. There is a lot riding on it. We hope that the full page add we took out in the Bulletin will help.

Secretary's Report - A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Cromwell, CT on February 18, 2017 as sent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

So far this year we are doing well. Our net assets are up about \$25,000 from where we were last year at this time. Our Working Capital is down, partly because we moved funds to the NABC account, which now is about \$90,000.

The Operating Income Statement shows a nice profit for Cromwell in 2017. As always, the weather was a contributing factor. Year-to-date Net Income is up by \$3,655.

District Director Aquino asked when we should be gearing up for the NABC. Treasurer Brouillard stated that we should begin when we are about two years out. We spent just over \$105,000 on the last Providence NABC. Expenses will be up as this is being held in the summer. We will need \$110,000 as a minimum. Our NABC investments are up 4.5% and the total return on investment is 9.81.

Our annual 990 was filed May 15, 2017. Copies are available should anyone wish to see one.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

District Director Aquino asked if we have a report on the Spencer lawsuit. H. Pawlowski answered that they settled and we have no liability.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Cromwell had its first profitable year in many years. We have made a steady improvement since 2014 and finally turned a profit. A lot has to do with table count. Until 2014, we were still contributing to the NABC fund. This year, the profit is all based on table count. We would not be successful without advertising, especially for the evening games that are up from 5-6 tables to double digits. The weather was very good. There was a decrease in the total complimentary rooms and total hospitality costs.

The Rainbow/GNT weekend at Sturbridge was a success. Director Metcalf will speak to the GNT's here. We were up 51 ½ tables this year. This does not include the 10 teams that played in the open flight today. I will discuss with J. Brouillard how he wants the Open GNT here calculated into the total GNT figures for comparison purposes. D. Budd asked if the figures would be difficult to separate. H. Pawlowski noted that here we have the Regional, Sectional and the GNT Open flight and it will be difficult to separate costs such as hospitality. H. Pawlowski will have these for Nashua. The impact was on Sturbridge. We had the exact same number of tables, 120, for the Rainbow weekend as last year. The GNT open flight was small last year. The table count chart shows a steady decline from 2012 to 2015. We appear to have turned the tide and there has been an increase for every tournament since then. We finally saw an upswing in 2016 of 5.3%. Peter Marcus will bring the figures to Nashua from across the country. M. Aquino added that he is on the task force with about 10 other people. Three to four are not Board members. We meet at Gatlinburg to discuss this problem. There is a major crisis across the country at Regional tournaments. There was a good presence at Gatlinburg from District 25, though Gatlinburg itself was down to 8000.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Lois DeBlois

The Tournament Committee met Friday evening. L. DeBlois apologized to the committee when it was realized that the wrong draft of the Mansfield Regional schedule had been shared with the group. The Scheduling Committee had the correct draft and approved it as it was distributed. The change between the two drafts involved the position of the Knock Outs. In order to keep the schedule consistent, it was agreed that putting the KO on Saturday against the B/C NAP was appropriate. There was a consensus that the downside of moving, or removing, the KO would be greater than the impact on the NAP's. I would like the Executive Committee to approve the schedule. A corrected copy will be sent via email to everyone.

B. Montague noted that there was some grumbling with no pair game today. She was turned away. L. DeBlois answered that we agreed to allow any pair to play one session as "Senior" whether they were or not to accommodate them.

Regarding the KO, President Bertoni stated that there may be an issue with those that play in the NAP cutting into the total. If we end up with less brackets in the KO, that is when it becomes very volatile. It will take some heavy promotion with the pairs and the KO's opposite the NAP's. We cannot afford to have a repeat of what happened before when players were forced to "play-up." We run the risk of having the KO's fall apart. H. Pawlowski added that we will be providing attendance figures by event for 3-year comparisons. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Mansfield schedule as described. The motion was passed.

Communication Committee - Mike Wavada

I have been sending out lots of emails and they seem to be bringing the players to the tables. President Bertoni commented that M. Wavada's database is second to none. P. Najarian added that the personalization is a great feature.

District Director's Report - Mark Aquino

I am excited about the 2021 NABC in Providence. We just had a board meeting in Kansas City. I sent out a long email regarding the issues. Hiring a replacement for Robert Hartman is on track. President Heller has appointed an excellent committee that expects to have someone by mid-May.

Many issues have surfaced in the aftermath of the disastrous turnout at the recent Orlando NABC. The total was 10,500 in contrast to the projected 13,500. This led to a loss of almost \$250,000. We have a contract with the same location in 2022. Negotiations are underway to attempt to get out of the contract.

The current ACBL Score is getting better and should be quite workable soon. President Bertoni is one of a number of ACBL Club directors who is alpha testing the software from the British program.

J. Whipple of Florida is trying to advance his on-line experiments. I think online bridge is great and Jay's innovations have a lot of practical benefit is used wisely. I do have some concerns, however, as I do not want to jeopardize our room commitments or other potential issues with on-line participation in Regionals.

Old Business - none

New Business -

Filling the vacant ACBL Board of Governor's position

President Bertoni stated that there is currently a position (2nd alternate) open for a representative to the ACBL Board of Governors. If filled, it would be for the next two meetings as the current term would end December 31, 2017. Papers for the next election must be filed by June 1. Unless there is an objection, Peter Marcus has asked to be appointed to the position. A motion was made, seconded and so voted that the Executive Committee move to Executive Session.

Director David Metcalf excused himself from the meeting and District Director Mark Aquino recused himself from the deliberations.

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After a motion was made and seconded, the Executive Committee returned to open session.

Peter Marcus will be appointed to fill the vacant position as the District 25 second alternate representative to the ACBL Board of Governors for the remainder of the term.

Recognition of Lisa Allison

We have a teacher nameg Lisa Allison who as part of New England Youth Bridge has up to 50 Oyster River Middle School students show up at the school library in Durham, New Hampshire to learn and play bridge. She also supplies lots of goodies. These students are part of the future of bridge and I would like to honor her at the next Board of Delegates meeting. B. McCaw noted that New England Youth Bridge is running a huge surplus, and thus a monetary subsidy would not be needed. It is a separate tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charity. Plans will be formulated to an appropriate recognition.

Formation of Tournament Manager Search Committee

H, Pawlowski will be retiring soon and moving to Hilton Head. Her last tournament will be Warwick-2018. She volunteered to work with her replacement at Nashua and Warwick in 2018, but not in the intensive manner that Bill Lenville used. In Mansfield, 2018 the new Tournament Manager will be “flying solo.” There is no manual for the job, as your need to be prepared to do “everything.” A committee will be formed to develop criteria, determine compensation, and review those who submit an application for the position for presentation to the Executive Committee. President Bertoni asked that anyone interested in being part of the Committee should contact him.

Sectional conflicts- RIBA-NHBA - Paula Najarian

P. Najarian questioned the last minute decision to allow NHBA to old a Sectional opposite RIBA on a date that historically has been one of RIBA’s weekends. This damaged RIBA. Apparently, there was a conflict with the venue and NHBA had to find an alternate site for its March Sectional. The decided to move it into April. RIBA did not know about this decision until December of 2016. Though ACBL guidelines were followed and the Nashua site is beyond the 75-mile radius determined by the ACBL, RIBA feels that this should be modified due to the number of closeness of all the Units in District 25. Both RIBA and NHBA draw heavily on EMBA for players at their sectional.

RIBA would like the Executive Committee to consider modifying the ACBL regulation and determine that the calculation of 75 miles be determined from the midpoint of the radius, not from site to site. President Bertoni interjected that it is not the distance perse, but the fact that NHBA, CMBA, RIBA and EMBA all depend on EMBA player participation to make their tournament successful. R. McCaw asked “who made the decision?” P. Najarian answered that it was L. Gillespie the Tournament Coordinator for District 25. He later apologized. S. Widhu, President of NHBA stated that NHBA feels that it has been pushed around by the GNT’s. April already has 4 tournaments and it is very difficult to find a weekend. The Board is in favor of keeping a March date. If we move it back a week, it frequently is the last weekend of the Spring NABC. L. Gillespie was here at the tournament but did not attend the Tournament Committee meeting at which this issue was first discussed. C. Weiser stated that it is part of the Tournament Coordinator’s job to step in and help Units find compromises when such issues arise. P.

Najarian said that she would be comfortable with the Coordinator taking a more active role in solving such issues.

Request by District 3 for permission to use Danbury, CT as the site of its October Regional - Mark Aquino

On March 29 of this year, I was contacted by Deborah Wasik, President of D-3 regarding their use of Danbury as a site for the October Regionals. She was under the impression that D-3 and D-25 had a tacit understanding regarding this arrangement. D-3 has a commitment with the Danbury hotel for 2017 & 2018. She was requesting permission to continue this for 2019 and 2020. The dates for 2019 would be October 14-12 and for 2020, October 12-18. In 2019, it will be the same weekend as a CBA Sectional, which is half way between Danbury and Hartford. Neither of these dates is more than a month away from our Regional. The issue also involves the fact that our NAP's are now held in Mansfield. We also are planning on having the A flight NAP finals at the Hartford Bridge club, also in October. In 2019, our regional is 3 weeks away and the NAP is two weeks. General discussion followed. A. Clamage urged us to agree to allow this as it was to the advantage of the western CBA players who seldom come to Mansfield. A motion was made to deny D-3 the use of Danbury for its October Regional. The motion was seconded and passed with a vote of 8-1 with 1 abstention. A. Clamage asked whether we would deny the uses of Danbury in 2018 if the hotel was already booked.

It was noted that D-25 gets nothing out of this tournament. If the regional was not in Danbury a percent would go to Mansfield or the CBA Sectional or the A flight NAP Finals. President Bertoni added that ours is the only District within the ACBL that allows another District to hold a regional within its borders. D. Budd added that as long as they have permission to use Danbury they will not look elsewhere. There are many other possibilities. E. Watstein reminded the Executive Committee that many do not understand CBA. To many CBA members, Westchester County is another State. It is a nightmare to get there. H. Pawlowski added that in the past there was an inter-district committee that tried to handle these issues. R. McCaw said that in principal he would say no. Hartford goes and that is 165 tables. H. Pawlowski pointed out that unless you say no, and shock them, there will be no negotiations. We are giving them enough lead-time. A motion was made to decline to give D-3 permission to use Danbury after 2018. The motion was seconded. The vote was 8 to decline permission and 4 against the motion. The motion carried.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, D-25