



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes

Executive Committee
Keohane Senior Regional
Sea Crest Beach Hotel
April 28, 2018

Attendance

Officers: Lois DeBlois, President; Jack Mahoney, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary Absent: Robert Bertoni, Past President
Unit Representatives: Robert McCaw and David Diamond, EMBA; Carol Seager, CMBA; Michael Wavada, Thomas Floyd, CBA; Paula Najarian, RIBA; Sarah Widhu, NHBA; Daniel Morgenstern, MBA; Peter Samsel, WMBA - Absent: Brenda Montague, EMBA; Esther Watstein, Allan Clamage, CBA; Wayne Hersey, VBA
Invited Guests (non-voting): Mark Aquino, District Director; Curtis Barton, Finance Advisory Committee Chair; Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager trainee; Peter Marcus, Director; David Metcalf, Director; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; Mike Wavada, Communications Committee, Webmaster

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

President welcomed Sally Kirtley who will be participating in all meetings.

As there were no corrections to the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held at the Presidential Regional on February 17, 2018, they were accepted as sent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

Looking at the Operating Income Statement, we almost broke even in Cromwell with a small loss. We received \$822 from the ACBL as our portion of the REACH event. We had non-tournament income of just over \$1,000. For expenses, we had the NAP stipend and a few other normal expenses. The NAP stipend was listed for the March 31, 2017 report as it was paid in April. Therefore, we have a net loss. As of March 31, it (the NABC Fund) was down ½%. As of Friday, the markets made a bit of a turn around and are up for the year.

Our total assets are adequate. District Director M. Aquino reminded the Executive Committee that Jay Whipple, President of the ACBL, is a great proponent of the REACH Program and I (M. Aquino) have been a great adversary after talking with you (the board) which I believe was the collective decision, but I am surprised to see \$820. I would like to know what your feelings are when we get into discussions with Jay. Tournament Manager, H. Pawlowski commented that the \$800 is a drop in the bucket. C. Seager

asked how the number is derived. M. Aquino answered that it is based on the number of clubs and tables that participated as a percentage of the total to be distributed. He recommended that she ask J. Whipple. M Wavada asked if there were any more REACH events scheduled. Mark was unsure.

C. Seager asked if any money was transferred to the NABC Fund since the last meeting. Treasurer Brouillard answered that with the attendance here he would hold off on any transfer at this time. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented was made, seconded and approved.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

H. Pawlowski provided a 3-year financial report for Presidential Regional at Cromwell stating 2017 was an anomaly. 2016 and 2018 are very similar in table count (981 and 1013) and revenue. These are more realistic in terms of expenses and revenues. We made a profit in 2017 for various reasons. The weather was good; table count was up 100 tables. 2018 staff rooms were up \$1100. We lost a few comp rooms as room pickup was down. Director rooms were down \$170. The Comparison between 2016 and 2018 is much more realistic. Breakeven is about what we expect, and it shows how sensitive table count is. R. McCaw asked why there was such a huge difference in director costs. P. Pawlowski answered that Director P. Marcus gives us a gift as he charges us only \$1.00 per session. This saves a great deal of money. M. Aquino asked what this gift would total? At \$200 per session for fees, it would be approximately \$10,000 per year. There are other gifts that we received too.

Here (Falmouth) we are down 145 tables. I have tried to talk to some of the locals to find out why the attendance was so poor. One perceptive view thought there were less commuters, that the weather was so bad in April that the Snow Birds that have a choice of not coming back, stayed away, or possibly the Sagamore Bridge constriction was another factor. Some even had problems with the Bourne. The rain here did not help. Some did not play today as it was sunny at home and they left. The other disaster was the expanded Gold Rush (0-1250 rather than the 0-750) cost us a huge loss in table count. There were few higher than 750. D. Metcalf reduced the strats. Instead of B-C-D, the top was D and had E and F below. The babies are our bread and butter.

The contracts for Cromwell were renegotiated for 2021 and 2022. I will review them with Sally. The contracts for Nashua 2022 and 2023 will be signed before or in Nashua. We will not be going to Nashua in 2021 but we want to reassure the hotel that this was a one-year anomaly. Sally will work with the sales director here. We will negotiate the contracts for 2020 and 2021 with the right of first refusal for 2022. This will be a good learning experience for Sally. There will be a small increase in room rates. We will have 2 years at \$105. The typical increase is 3% a year. R. McCaw noted that we loss last year. Should we expect an even larger loss this year? D. Morgenstern noted that the hospitality was up (Cromwell) this year. H. Pawlowski answered that in the past the evening games were small. They are now 20 tables plus and they deserve hospitality.

President DeBlois asked if there was any information on the Non-Life Master regional for 2019. H. Pawlowski answered that she has negotiated with Sturbridge the changes for 2019 so we could add a Non-life Master regional by expanding the Rainbow. We hoped to add Wednesday and Thursday, but the Sturbridge Host was unable to comply for 2019 but agreed to Thursday through Sunday. We have the right of first

refusal and a guarantee for Wednesday in 2020. We could add the extra day if the 4-days are successful.

We used the GNTs /Rainbow as a learning experience for Sally. The total tournament was down 13 ½ tables. The GNT was only down 4 tables. The total Rainbow was down 9 ½. It wasn't a matter of table count; our expenses were higher. We went from a small profit to a relatively large loss. Revenue was down while ABCL Fees and Director expenses were up. The full report will be emailed before Nashua.

C. Seager asked if H. Pawlowski thought that the numbers were down (Falmouth) because there was no team game today (Saturday). D. Metcalf responded that it would not have mattered. We couldn't improve the numbers for Wednesday and Thursday by having a team game on Saturday.

Old Business

1. Table fees

We had talked about possibly raising entry fees. President DeBlois noted that she is compiling a list of table costs throughout the ACBL. Finding that every District is different, and the fees are too. When it is complete and after the Purple-Pass experiment, we will be in a better place to decide if we need to increase table fees.

2. Alternate Credit Card processing system

Bob turned the investigation of a Credit card system with Citizens Bank over to J Brouillard. He contacted the Merchant Services Department who said that they could setup a Credit Card payment system for us. They use Mobile Processing Solutions. This includes one Bluetooth enabled device that is paired with a smart phone and does not require Wi-Fi. Citizens would provide one device free with an additional charge of \$55 for each additional device that we purchase. Joe estimates we would need at least four devices. The fee for Master Card, Discover, and VISA is 1%, not the 2.75% that Purple Pass would charge. American Express is also 2.75%. Citizens would charge a \$20 per month fee, but could be turned on and off as needed. With the \$20 fee, we would get \$100,000 fraud protection. This is a more reasonable solution than Purple Pass.

General discussion followed. M Aquino asked if the ACBL could prevent their employees from utilizing our system versus theirs? Unlikely but would need to find out. It was noted that with Purple Pass, only one person could charge for a pair or team (but this would also be the same requirement by the Directors if we used our own system). R. McCaw added that we should make sure that a system based on cell phone use will work at our locations. H. Pawlowski noted that ballroom areas in many hotels are often difficult. D. Morgenstern queried whether Purple Pass was also cellular.

President DeBlois concluded that the reason we went through this exercise was to arm us for what we want to do after the "free" events. We will also be able to provide a reasonable explanation why we don't go forward if that is our decision. We can sit back and wait for Nashua and Warwick and revisit in Mansfield. We also hope that the ACBL will come up with a better system.

Bylaws – Paula Najarian for Allan Clamage

President DeBlois reminded the Executive Committee that A. Clamage has not been well. P. Najarian and L. Ahrens will continue to work on the Bylaw revisions. P. Najarian has had been in contact with A. Clamage via email. The Committee may have something to present in Nashua.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Jack Mahoney

V.P. Mahoney presented the Mansfield Schedule for 2018. The Committee agreed to change the published start time for the second session (of the pairs game) to 2:15. If more time is needed to handle lunch, the game can be delayed. The published time is only for those who plan to come for new entries.

The Committee discussed taking over the responsibility for "Ask the Expert." We would try to use local experts. If we got commitments far enough ahead, we might be able to advertise them.

We also discussed the possibility of adding KO's here (Falmouth). P. Marcus noted that we used to have KO's at the Seniors, but that they were abandoned because of the decreased attendance. We might want to try a Swiss Qualifying with a KO final. We wouldn't be harming what exists. We could try a Thursday/Friday and a Friday/Saturday. V.P. Mahoney commented that we have worked to reestablish KO's as a New England staple. This is the only tournament with no KO. Some were disappointed that we did not hold any this year.

P. Marcus brought up the fact that the current start time on Wednesday needs to be changed. The current break time is too long. (1pm and 7pm) 1pm and 6pm seems better for the first day of the Seniors.

D. Diamond stated that the goal here is to increase attendance and revenue. Are we convinced that KO's would do this? Vice President Mahoney answered that he was not convinced either way, but it would make a better tournament. D.D. Aquino asked what whether teams did better than pairs or pairs better than teams. D. Metcalf answered that there are too many factors involved here to tell which is better received, including the weather and the bridge issue. P. Marcus added that it is always easier to get one person than three. Players like teams. This has been an element of the increase in attendance at our other tournaments, at the bottom and at the top. I do think they are a draw, but less so with Seniors. Consistency has value- New England has KOs. VP Mahoney added that he showed up here thinking that there would be KOs.

The Tournament Committee will bring the 2019 Seniors schedule to Nashua for approval.

Larry Weiss Award - M. Wavada

M. Wavada stated that there will be a Larry Weiss Award Winner this year. It will be given out at the Board of Delegates meeting in Nashua. The Committee was made up of 9 individuals, with at least one from every Unit. We had 13 excellent nominees. There were two ballots with each selecting 5. From this, we had 3 finalists. The process worked well.

Finance Advisory Committee - Curtis Barton

We talked about 3-4 important items. I will prepare actual minutes and send them to President DeBlois We may have to increase our prices. President DeBlois has developed a database of the various ACBL Regionals as to how they are run and what they charge per session. They are highly non-uniform in price and in how they are organized and run. Some are run by Units, others by Districts. This District is relatively compact. We are close to New York where the fees are very high. The *Daily Bulletin*

costs a great deal to write, compile and print. Alternatives have been analyzed. We could print the *Daily Bulletin* on Wednesday with the full schedule, including meetings etc. We would not need to print another. Game results are available soon after the event. These could be printed and put on a wall or projected there. We already have a winners list. If we did not publish a *Daily Bulletin*, we would save a great deal of money. This might make it possible not to raise rates. We also discussed Purple Pass. R. McCaw asked what the cost is for printing the *Bulletin*. H. Pawlowski noted that printing is not an issue as the hotels do it. We do have to supply the paper, which costs about \$100 per tournament. The Editor gets between \$700 and \$800 per tournament.

New Business

President DeBlois announced that ACBL President, Jay Whipple, would be coming to Nashua. We wanted to provide a forum where he could meet the players. We decided to use the Courtyard (the food area with tables across from the playing area) and extend the hospitality on Saturday morning. He will also meet with the Directors on Friday morning.

D.D. Aquino stated that he originally wanted an evening reception, but this would have conflicted with the evening session. The majority of players are here in the morning and we thought that it would be better to have it as a breakfast reception. President Whipple will contribute \$500 to this reception from his hospitality budget. President DeBlois added that an evening reception would cost more and serve less people. We will discuss the issue of Caddies in Nashua.

President DeBlois asked for a motion to have the meeting go into Executive Session with an automatic adjournment at the end of the Executive Session. The motion was made, seconded and so voted.

Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25