

Minutes  
Executive Committee Meeting  
Radisson Hotel  
Nashua, NH  
June 23, 2018

*Officers:*

Lois DeBlois, President; Jack Mahoney, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Bertoni, Past President

*Unit Representatives:* EMBA- Neil Montague (B. Montague alt.) absent - Robert McCaw, no alt. CMBA- absent - Shirley Wagner - no alt. CBA- Michael Wavada; Sonja Smith, (E. Watstein alt.); RIBA - Paula Najarian; NHBA - Sarah Widhu; VBA - Wayne Hersey; MBA - Daniel Morgenstern; WMBA - Peter Samsel

*Invited Guests* (non-voting)- Mark Aquino, District Director; Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager Trainee; David Metcalf, Tournament DIC; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; Jay Whipple, President- ACBL

**Opening Remarks**

President De Blois called the meeting to order and welcomed Bob Bertoni back. There was a good round table discussion this morning with ACBL President Jay Whipple. We had several players ask some significant questions of Jay and his knowledge and ability to answer was impressive. I would like to turn the meeting over to him.

**Jay Whipple- President, ACBL**

President Whipple thanked District Director Mark Aquino for the invitation. It was a nice excuse for me to come back to the area where I attended Philips Exeter Preparatory School. I am from Florida, District Director for District 9. According to ACBL live, District 9 has the second largest out of district attendance for this event at about 4%. I suspect this is due to the return of the snowbirds.

We are working on many things at ACBL. We have gone through a traumatic time with our change of leadership and we have lost a lot of momentum. We have a very good team in place. The person in charge now is Joe Jones, the CFO, who knows the operation and has the respect of the team there and things are running very smoothly in Horn Lake. Of course, we have lost some of our momentum, but the board is focused on the same things we have been focused on for a long while. Our #1 priority is membership, #2 is membership and #3 is membership followed by technology and volunteerism. But, membership is what it is all about. Unfortunately, we have not made much progress and have not found a way to make any inroads.

Membership involves two things: new members, our new membership is about 12,000 each year, and membership retention. We are not doing well with retention. We have a group of us doing independent work and discovered there is a lot of work we can do in this area but we cannot do it without local help and grassroots support. It involves really hard work, calling people who have lapsed. We want to find out why they have lapsed. We are hearing that is "not fun," some do not like the competitive environment, and that "people were mean to me." If we can predict those who will not renew before they lapse and contact them earlier, we may be able to retain them. A surprising number of members

that lapse have less than 2 points. Having less than 5mps seems to indicate that the player is not interested or engaged in bridge. It is a lot easier to retain than generate new members.

The other pet project we have been working on is the College Initiative, which again requires grass roots support, asking people to find people inside these educational institutions who can act as coaches, know the ropes, know how to get facilities available, maybe even generate classes for credit. We have been somewhat successful. We have gone from 15 teams to 30 teams ready to participate in the College Bowl in Atlanta. We need to have internal people at the college. The ACBL pays a \$1,000 stipend to a coach and also provides all the necessary materials. We have made some progress, but not enough.

We need to find a way to engage volunteers on the grass roots level to help us and to do this work. If we are to keep this association growing and healthy, we need to engage people who say they are interested and transition from the social world to competitive bridge. Engaging younger people, high school perhaps or college is an example. They may not continue for a while as they pursue careers and families, but it is an investment in the future. You had 70 players with less than 50 MPs here. In D-9, we are lucky to get that many with a regional 3 times your size.

General discussion of possible ideas followed.

A question was asked regarding potential alignment with Blue Cross or United Health. President Whipple was unsure but suspects either have a lower probability than AARP. District Director Aquino noted that the ACBL has initiated corporate sponsorships, especially for NABCs. President Whipple continued that other groups are also having membership issues. The Country Clubs of America are also seeing this as their members get older and they drop out. Country Clubs are interested in bridge. They are willing to spend money on bridge. We are not the only group having these issues.

President Whipple one method that has been tried is placing old Bulletins in locations where individuals read magazines. We all have piles of old Bulletins. We could add a flyer or a free entry.

We at the Board level really appreciate having independent voices. The best individual we can have as a new board member is someone coming in who does not have an agenda. Mark (Aquino) has been an asset.

## **Minutes**

President DeBlois asked if there were any corrections to the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held at the Keohane Senior Regional in Falmouth, MA, April 28, 2018 as sent. As there were none, the minutes were accepted as sent.

## **Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard**

We are still in a good financial position. Total assets are approximately \$20,000 below where we were last year at this time.

The NABC Fund is doing well. We are on target for 2021.

We have no outstanding debt.

Our Operating Income Statement shows a loss. We took a huge hit at Falmouth. Total tournament income is down \$13,307 compared to the same time last year. We have a year to date loss of \$15,874.

The Officers and Board bond insurance has been renewed. The GNT stipends will be going out next week.

Yesterday a player in the 299er room had to be removed for being intoxicated. The woman he was playing with had been paired at the partnership desk. I authorized a free play for her.

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

### **Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski** Falmouth Senior Regional

A three page excel spreadsheet for the Senior Regional held in Falmouth was passed out. We were down 139 tables. 26 of these can be attributed to the fact that we did not hold the GNT A flight at Falmouth this year. Even with this, we took a big hit on the revenue side. We did well containing costs. There is a financial analysis on the third page. We tried to do with fewer directors. The number of directors was a bit rich in 2017, as we did not know what to expect for the GNT A's and it had been a bit lean in 2016. The directors did a good job sending staff home when they could. Comp costs have gone down each year. ACBL expenses were down. Hospitality was within \$800-\$900. In 2016, there was no cost for the Executive Committee dinner, which shifted this expense to the hotel. Almost all of the increased loss can be attributed to lowered table count. Mike Wavada will do an analysis of the table count and survey those who came in 2017 why they did not come in 2018. The fact that Passover came early may have meant that those who came north did returned to Florida because of the weather. The Cape players do not like Falmouth. There was also the traffic caused by the construction on the bridge. We instituted a schedule change introducing the "Not Your Average Gold Rush" which was not well received. S. Widhu noted that there was no KO in Falmouth.

Update- Nashua

It is tough to make any comparison with last year. Last year we gave away the Monster KO. We are down 31 tables overall, but up 76 tables today and we had a good number yesterday. There were 53 or 54 teams in the KO's today.

Tournament Sites

All of our tournaments have contracts in place. Here we have signed contracts for 2019 and 2020. We cancelled 2021 because of the Providence Nationals and have a hold for 2022. Sally (Kirtley) worked on that contract.

I am a little concerned with the room block commitment in Warwick in 2021 as it is so close to the NABC. We are renegotiating.

Sally and I looked at an alternate property for the Cape, the Cape Codder. Joe (Brouillard) and Peter (Marcus) also will go there and check it out. I will have more information in Warwick.

Caddies

S. Kirtley stated that she hopes that we have that problem under control. We have had a group of extraordinary caddies for the last 10-12 years and have not had to think about this. They have, on their own, managed to get replacements as caddies aged out or moved. My son is a "starving artist" who has starving artist friends. He will become the head caddy and will find caddies. He will not be able to be on site every day, but will be here for the heavy days.

General discussion followed regarding age requirements that vary state to state.

President DeBlois asked if there were any questions. J. Brouillard noted that we have lost (\$19,000) almost \$20,000 at the Cape in the last two years and asked if this is a viable tournament. N. Montague asked what the contractual commitment was in Falmouth. H. Pawlowski answered that we can cancel with one year and a day notice. We are committee for next year. Dealing with the schedule will help. We are not charged to make a profit on every tournament but we must cover our costs collectively. Winter in New England and unique locations are always problematic. Treasurer J. Brouillard suggested that this is something that the Financial Advisory Committee should discuss. President DeBlois added that we need a site that will attract more local people. D. Morgenstern asked what the penalty for early cancellation was. H. Pawlowski answered that inside the 270 days it would be a minimum of \$10,000. We are committed to 2019. Whether we continue in Falmouth for 2020 is the issue. President DeBlois stated that we will have some more information on this in Warwick.

### **Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Vice President - Jack Mahoney**

We had a number of discussions in the tournament committee regarding a number of issues in the Cromwell schedule. Lots of things are in flux. I will make the changes in the sheets (schedules) and will send them to you via email. The only other thing to discuss is the possibility of using the new Experimental KO format. I think that incorporating the new experimental KO format at the Cape would help a lot. President Whipple added that it has been well received where it has been tried. D. Metcalf continued that the first day is a two session Swiss. The top four go on to the KO round. All who enter are guaranteed that they will play all day. We can choose the size of the brackets based on the number of teams we have. District Director Aquino added that he believes that it will get its final reading in Atlanta, but is not sure. J. Whipple stated that sponsors like the event. They like to go to events where there are other sponsored teams. President DeBlois suggested that this might engage the players and save the Cape. D. Metcalf added that pros need a large field. We had only six pro and they may not come back next year.

### **District Director's Report - Mark Aquino**

I have written and proposed two motions in Atlanta meant to help improve attendance at the NAPs and GNTs. For several consecutive years, we have completely blown out of the water all the other districts with the number of C teams we field for our District Finals for the GNTs. The first motion would enable districts with at least eight teams competing in a B or C flight district final to send a second team to the NABC to compete in the GNT Flight B or C finals. The second motion would increase the point awards for District winners across all flights in the NAP and GNTs.

There is also a motion that concerns our upcoming 2021 Summer NABC in Providence as it affects the way funding decisions are made and controlled regarding NABC hospitality. I'm working with the motion sponsors and our NABC co-chairs to determine if we can achieve wording for a suitable proposal. I'm very thrilled that we have been successful in getting Providence selected as the site for the 2021 Summer NABC, There is no greater place than New England in the summer.

“Many thanks to Jay Whipple for spending a few days with us. Jay is a very successful entrepreneur who has successfully developed and introduced a number of great

innovations for our game.” He continued by saying that Mike Wavada does the number crunching for the District. Jay has immediate access to data that Mike might like to use. Similarly, Bob Bertoni has long advocated the elimination of the Daily Bulletin, and Jay has already developed a program that can do just this and it is immediately available.

There are some concerned regarding the support of local tournament volunteers at NABCs. The ACBL is trying to encourage collaborative involvement in hospitality, if a suitable proposal is submitted. There is no greater place than New England in the summer.

M. Wavada does the number crunching for the District. Jay has immediate access to data you might like to use. B. Bertoni has made a suggestion regarding the daily Bulletin. Jay has a program that is immediately available.

### **Update on the use of Purple Pass at Nashua**

President DeBlois asked DIC Metcalf regarding the acceptance of the players of Purple Pass. He responded that he felt that it had been accepted. President DeBlois continued that we spoke to Jay regarding what we can do after Warwick. It would be too expensive for us to continue. Jay Whipple answered that D-7 is using its own form of Bridge Bucks. These can be purchased all at once for one fee. The ACBL is subsidizing the trials here and at Warwick. D-7 actually makes money on the coupons. President DeBlois stated that we will have more information on this in Warwick.

Our Tournament Coordinator, Maureen Fahey, asked me to remind all the Unit Representatives that she needs their flyers in a timely manner. Unit Tournament Coordinators are asked to send them to her as soon as they are available. She is supposed to be copied on the flyers.

### **Old Business**

Bylaws Review- Paula Najarian

Allan Clamage and Bernard Schneider did a lot of work reviewing the current bylaws and determining possible updates. If the Executive Committee wants me to finalize the presentation, I will work with Linda Ahrens. As it will be rather time consuming, I wanted to be sure that the Executive Committee wanted it done before we did the work. S. Widhu asked if P. Najarian felt that it was needed. Yes, there are a lot of grey areas. He added some things that people have brought up. VP J. Mahoney offered to proofread.

P. Najarian made a motion that D-25 donate \$250 to the Longest Day. General discussion followed and as there did not appear to be sufficient support to pass the motion, P. Najarian withdrew her motion.

### **New Business**

President DeBlois stated that she had previously informed Mike Wavada that we would be discussing compensation for his district positions and it was his choice to leave or stay. Mike chose to leave the meeting.

A Financial Advisory Committee meeting was held in Falmouth. The committee proposes compensation for the positions of Database Manager, Website Coordinator, and Regional Bulletin Editor.

D. Morgenstern made a motion that the proposal regarding the new positions and commensurate stipends be accepted, effective in Warwick. The motion was seconded and so accepted.

A motion was made, seconded and so accepted to adjourn the meeting at 6:55.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25