

New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes

Executive Committee

New England Bridge Conference

September 3, 2011

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick, RI

Attendance

Officers: Robert Erwin, President; Ausra Geaski, Vice President; Richard DeMartino, Treasurer/District Director; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Roy Green, Past President

Unit Representatives: Bill Hunter (M. Aquino, alt.), James Rasmussen (EMBA); Phyllis Bausher, Allan Clamage (CBA); Bruce Emond (CMBA); Joseph Brouillard (S. Erwin, alt.) (RIBA); Joseph DeGaetano, (NHBA); Wayne Hersey (VBA); Richard Budd (MBA); David Rock (WMBA)

Invited Guests: Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; Peter Marcus, Director

Absent: M. Aquino (EMBA), S. Erwin (RIBA)

Call to Order

President Erwin called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

President Erwin observed that this had been a difficult tournament. Hurricane Irene caused power outages that forced us to cancel Monday's schedule. Many reservations were cancelled. H. Pawlowski was commended for doing an outstanding job responding to the situation. She used the capabilities of the new website to keep the players informed of the tournaments status in a timely manner.

Secretary's Report - C. Weiser

A motion was made by R. Budd to accept the minutes of the Sturbridge meeting of June 25, 2011 as e-mailed. Seconded and so voted.

The secretary requested approval for the posting of the web version of the minutes on the District 25 website. R. DeMartino cautioned the board regarding potential problems inherent in *posting the minutes on the web*. Unanimous approval was granted for the posting of the web-minutes on line.

Treasurer's Report - Richard DeMartino

A comparison of 2010 and 2011 was provided. For a variety of reasons, we show a loss of \$3,836.63 for the year to date. The figure is deceiving. We have had over \$7000 in unusual expenses. We spent approximately \$4,500 on bidding boxes, \$1,800 on the new website, and have paid an additional \$600 for the third place NAP finishers to attend the Nationals. The proposal to raise our rates will allow us to collect for the National Fund and offset some of the losses at our Regionals. It is important to note that our cash assets remain at a comfortable level - near \$57,000.

We made \$7,687 at the Summer Regional. H. Pawlowski will discuss the specifics of finances for the Summer Regional in her report.

District Director's Report - Richard DeMartino

The next Regional will be the first meetings I am unable to attend since I became District Director because I must leave Mansfield early to be in Seattle at the ACBL Board of Directors meetings that begin on Sunday.

The new ACBL CEO will take over November 7, 2011. I am optimistic about the changes in ACBL management and the strong marketing background he will bring to the position. Previous searches have been conducted by the Board. This time CEO search committee had the advantage of the expertise of Bob Blanchard and Steve Beatty, both of whom did a magnificent job. . Over 80 candidates were reviewed, and following telephone interviews, 12 were brought to Las Vegas for personal interviews, and subsequently, the number was reduced to four.

The updating of ACBLScore now has a project manager. The project manager was one of the applicants for CEO. The new ACBLScore should be out within a year. Its design will facilitate the work of club directors and also will be more user-friendly. It is planned that using data inputted from the new ACBLScore, every player will be able to see a single screen that shows every event in which they played, not just their total points for the month.

The first reading of the Strength of Field motion was passed 17 to 8. We are trying to develop a formula that will work for both Swiss Teams and Pairs. Frank Hacker is currently supporting that effort. Most players will not see a major change. At present, the increased point awards are bringing players to levels where they have difficulty in competing.

Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock

The Scheduling Committee recommends that the Executive Committee rescind its previous motion to harmonizing start times for events. H. Pawlowski stated that this will create a huge problem feeding so many players at the same time, in some of our venues. With the entire schedule at 10:00AM and 2:30 PM, smaller hotels will be unable to serve everyone within 45 minutes. This hotel had staff available to open two concierge stands; however, most do not. P. Marcus recommended that we leave the start times as they are now and view the scheduling problems as an event issue not a start time issue.

Following a general discussion, D. Rock made a motion that:

“event start times be returned to the previous schedule”. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Another issue under discussion is the number of events. Conducting two small games at the same time appears counterproductive. The Committee is looking at alternatives. D. Rock added that the Committee discussed the possibility of combining two side games and making the combination a part of a main event. The committee is in agreement that the District currently has too many concurrent, small events.

P. Marcus suggested a Pairs game at 10AM and 2:30 PM with side games at 1PM and 7PM. If players come at 1PM, staff will sell two one-session entries at one time so players will have their entry and can take their time returning from dinner. There would be two individual sessions.

R DeMartino added that there is no simple solution, but it is important that we do not keep changing the schedule.

Following a broad discussion of related concerns and suggestions, President Erwin reminded the Executive Committee that the schedule for Cromwell is the immediate problem.

D. Rock made a motion:

to *“eliminate the 1PM and 7PM pairs games on Wednesday and Friday and reevaluate the situation in Cromwell”*. The motion was seconded and carried, one opposed.

D. Rock reviewed the survey taken at Cromwell regarding team formats for Sunday. The preferred format was a Strati-flighted Swiss to be run at Cromwell. For Monday schedules, votes for Bracketed-Round Robin equaled more than the other two choices combined. In response, D. Rock made a motion that:

“for Cromwell we will hold a Strati-flighted Swiss on Sunday and a Bracketed Round-robin on Monday”. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

D. Rock next discussed results of A. Clamage’s survey regarding the event times at the Senior Regional. While there was a 2/3 majority for 10AM and 2:30PM (or 3:00PM), there were several concerns about the impact and a repeat survey with an additional question is recommended. The new location on the

Cape combined with multiple schedule changes could cause problems. A. Clamage expressed concern that an earlier start time would make it impossible for people to get to the game if they are driving in from a distance. The Scheduling Committee will continue to address this issue.

Tournament Committee Report - Ausra Geaski

As a follow-up to the electronic score pads issue, two options are the purchase or lease of BridgeMates for the District.

A. Geaski continued that the price quoted for buying the BridgeMates was based on the purchase of 300 score pads plus 10 servers. This total included 150 for the District and the remainder for RIBA and the Hartford Bridge Club. Further discussions with the company revealed that their previously quoted price applied only to sanctioned tournaments (not clubs) because Tournament Directors have more experience with the operation of these systems and need less assistance from the help desk. As a result, BridgeMate pricing for hardware for units not for the District would revert to the higher initial cost per unit. The total for the District would be between \$18-20,000.

K. Griffin and D. Metcalf have proposed purchasing the equipment and leasing them to us at \$1.00 per table, per session. They would be responsible for everything, including transportation and maintenance, with no additional costs to the District.

R. Budd asked if the cost analysis considered the savings in caddy costs. H. Pawlowski responded that there is no savings in caddy costs. R. DeMartino commented that if directors no longer have to enter the scores manually, we shouldn't need the same number of directors.

J. Rasmussen stated that EMBA has been leasing them for their Sectionals. As a result, EMBA has been able to drop one director and caddies for Friday night and one director and one caddy for Saturday. They use volunteers to help clean up at the end of each day. A. Geaski agreed that there is more savings at Sectionals as they do not have as many team games. H. Pawlowski commented that the District hires a troop of caddies who come for the whole tournament. They leave their other jobs for a week. As a result of past concerns for using underage caddies, we no longer use local caddies. The District has different hiring issues.

In ongoing discussions, P. Marcus suggested that reducing staffing by one director per session that will create a savings. R. Budd noted that leasing reduces the risk and the financial commitment to the District. J. Brouillard added that the Tournaments Committee received an email offering to lease BridgePads at \$.50 per table, but we would additionally have to pay the shipping and insurance both ways.

A. Geaski summarized that it appears to be the consensus of the Executive Committee that leasing is the preferred approach. Currently, the District has one proposal for providing this service. Solicitations for proposals will be posted on the website and in the Daily Bulletins at Mansfield. President Erwin asked if anyone opposed advertising for a one year leasing agreement. There was no opposition.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

The Sturbridge Regional was a success with a profit of \$7687.05. The extended schedule contributed to this total.

Regarding Warwick, we are under contract for 2012 with a guarantee of the ballroom space and the rotunda. The hotel has contracted to provide more internal space in the future and we will never have to use the tent again. For 2013 and 2014, the hotel has committed to six additional complimentary rooms for the District and the room rates proposed would be \$95.00 and \$99.00, respectively. This is one of the nicest properties that we use with the highest level of service of any of our sites. If the Executive Committee does not make a decision early, this site may be unavailable. The hotel can sell every room in the hotel with overflow from Newport. It is requested that the Executive Committee authorize contracting with this site for our fall tournaments for 2013 and 2014.

Regarding Nashua, the property was purchased by an investment company that intends to renovate the hotel. At present, there is no timetable for its renovations. Until the rooms have been renovated, there will be no further negotiations with this property. Nashua is available at other times of the year.

The committee should consider removing Sturbridge from the list of Regional sites. Sturbridge is a great geographic location for the District; however, the hotel is in need of serious maintenance with none scheduled. In the near future, it is recommended that the Executive Committee consider moving the Summer Regional from Sturbridge to Nashua. We only want to renew Sturbridge on a year to year basis.

H. Pawlowski reported that she needs to address the January scheduling conflict between Ryebrook and the GNT's. Sturbridge historically lets us use their space for our GNTs and NAPs because we hold the Summer Regional there. We could consider rotating these events among other sites, or consider holding them in a smaller hotel. If we leave Sturbridge on good terms, they may support future arrangements for these events. J. DeGaetano expressed the concern of NHBA if Warwick is approved for an additional two years, Nashua could not be returned to the schedule for 4 years at best. J. Rasmussen urged H. Pawlowski to find sites in Northern New England. Manchester will be contacted as a possible site for a Regional then than on Labor Day weekend,

H. Pawlowski requested that the Executive Committee authorize contracting with this site for our fall tournaments for 2013 and 2014.

A motion was made by J Brouillard that "*H. Pawlowski be authorized to contract with the Crowne Plaza for 2013 and 2014*". The motion was seconded and so voted. One nay.

Nominating Committee - David Rock

The Nominating Committee met today and approved the following slate for 2011: President, Ausra Gaeski; Vice President, Mark Aquino; Treasurer, Richard DeMartino; and Secretary, Carolyn Weiser.

R. Rock indicated that R. DeMartino has something to say regarding his upcoming term as Treasurer.

(R. DeMartino) My election to another term would allow me to compete the planning for the 2013 Nationals, which would be my third Nationals. I suggested to the Nominating Committee that when they meet next year they seek out the best person to become the next Treasurer and can make it known that I will not be running. I would work with that person in 2013. There is no question about my ability or desire to do the job, but I have always been willing to step down when the time was right. As far as I am concerned, this is very fair to me and very fair to the District.

President Erwin requested that the proposed slate and the election process/timetable be placed on the website. R. DeMartino added that it should be put in the Bulletin. R. DeMartino also cautioned the Executive Committee regarding the potential divisiveness of contested elections. He suggested that they should be avoided. President Erwin added that the Nominating Committee, in the future, should advertise on the website regarding nominations. R. DeMartino remarked that the expectation is that anyone who applied would have experience in their Unit or District boards.

President Erwin asked if the Executive Committee had any concerns about the Nominating Committee not bringing forward other qualified candidates for submission to the Board of Delegates. No other concerns were raised. A motion was made by D. Rock,

to accept the proposed slate. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Old Business

Bylaw Board of Delegates Powers Review Committee - David Rock

The Committee concluded that the current bylaws clearly give the Board of Delegates final authority on District matters. The Committee feels that the Executive Committee should have that authority but recognized that any changes to the bylaws must be ratified by the Board of Delegates. The Committee proposes that the Executive Committee have the ultimate authority and that it should seek input and opinions from the Board of Delegates.

It is proposed that the Board of Delegates, by a majority vote, should be able to require that the Executive Committee reconsider an action. Should the Executive Committee not do so to the satisfaction of the Board of Delegates the Board can, by a vote of two-thirds, can require the Executive Committee to rescind that action. This should be brought before the Board of Delegates in Mansfield for their consideration.

Roy Green expressed his belief that the Executive Committee was formed to take care of routine affairs. The Executive Committee is not truly representative of District membership. It should also be noted that EMBA, the District's largest unit, voted unanimously against this. It is inconceivable that the Executive Committee take action to "fix something that has not been broken for all these years. I am totally opposed to this change."

A motion was made by D. Rock and seconded as follows:

The Executive Committee shall have the ultimate authority, with the following restrictions:

- 1. The Executive Committee shall seek input and opinion from the Board of Delegates*
- 2. The Board of Delegates, by majority vote, has the authority to ask the Executive Committee to consider any new action*
- 3. The Board of Delegates, by majority vote, has the authority to require the Executive Committee to reconsider any action previously taken by the Executive Committee, if such reconsideration has not been rendered moot by the passage of time; and*
- 4. If after reconsideration the Executive Committee has not modified the action requested by the Board of Delegates, then, at a second Board of Delegates meeting, the action may be revoked or modified by initiative of the Board of Delegates upon receiving a two-thirds majority of the Board of Delegates members or duly appointed alternates attending.*

D. Rock noted that this proposed amendment in no way affects the current powers of the Board of Delegates to approve amendments to the bylaws by simple majority vote and to elect the officers of the District.

B. Emond added that, in accordance with these amendments, the Board of Governors retains the ultimate authority.

President Erwin called the vote. 8 For - 7 Opposed. The recommended change will be brought to the Board of Delegates for their vote in November.

New Business

R. Budd made a motion *that the meeting be adjourned*. Seconded and so voted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, D-25