

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
February 17, 2013
Crowne Plaza
Cromwell, CT

Attendance

Officers: Ausra Geaski, President; Mark Aquino, Vice President; Sonja Smith, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary

Unit Representatives: EMBA: David Aronson, Bob Bertoni (D. Panagopoulos alt.); CBA: Allan Clamage, Sandy DeMartino (P. Bausher alt.); RIBA: Lois DeBlois; NHBA: Wayne Burt; WMBA: MBA: Richard Budd; David Rock

Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager/Co-chair Providence NABC; Joseph Brouillard, Co-chair Providence NABC; Peter Marcus, Director-In-Charge

Absent: Robert Erwin, Past President; Dean Panagopoulos (EMBA); Bruce Emond (CMBA); Phyllis Bausher (CBA); Wayne Hersey, VBA

President Geaski called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM. She welcomed David Aronson as a new representative from EMBA.

President Geaski announced that Donald Levy had won the special election for District Treasurer. We were lucky to have two such well-qualified candidates. She thanked Sonja Smith for her work and her willingness to take on the position at such short notice.

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the Master's Regional in Mansfield, MA on November 10, 2012 as submitted. Seconded and so voted.

Treasurer's report – Sonja Smith

The Treasurer's Report, as emailed, did not include the GNT's as the figures were not available. H. Pawlowski added that those figures have been included in her packet. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as sent via email. So voted.

District Director's report - Richard DeMartino

The new President of the ACBL for 2013 is Donald Mamula, who he expects will do a fine job as President. Rich noted that the list of motions that would be introduced at the next meeting of the District Directors has not, yet, been submitted. He, therefore, had no issues to bring to the Executive Committee for discussion. He has been appointed chair of the Bridge Committee that will look into the lower attendance and concerns of the 750 to 3000 group. He will also be on the Strategic Planning Committee that will include the upgrading of ACBL Score. Anyone interested in being involved is asked to contact him.

Tournament Manager's report - Helen Pawlowski

Both the Individual and the GNT's showed improvement. Though table count was down 20 tables at the Individual, decreases in Director costs, ACBL fees, and Caddy costs accounted for the decrease of over \$1,000 in loss from 2012.

The GNT/Rainbow Weekend was a great success, particularly in the Newcomer participation, which was almost double that of 2012. The GNT's were up 12 tables. Together this reversed the loss we sustained in 2012. President Geaski congratulated Dean Panagopoulos, Sue Miguel, Helen Pawlowski, and Peter Marcus for their efforts.

Scheduling Committee- David Rock

The mix of Compact KO's and Swiss has not proved to be as popular as anticipated. The Scheduling Committee, after discussion, voted to recommend the decrease in the number of Compact KO's by one and an increase of the Swiss by one starting with the Fiesta Regional.

R. DeMartino asked if there was a specific recommendation on the days for the Compact vs. Swiss. He recommended that the Compact KO be retained on Saturday because of the fallout from the Friday night KO's. President Geaski reminded the Executive Committee that we had agreed to retain the new schedule for one year and this was only the first tournament. H. Pawlowski stated that any change must be made in time to advertise in Sturbridge. D. Rock will look at the numbers of the events with Director Marcus. President Geaski suggested that he look at the data and send an email to the Committee so that a timely decision can be made.

The Committee also discussed the problems of declining attendance and revenue. The general feeling of the Committee was that we would have to raise rates. President Geaski added that we have been losing money for some time. Attendance is a big issue, but we must stem the losses that we have seen at every tournament. The Committee discussed the impact of the money we have earmarked for the Providence NABC. Adjustments can be made in this if necessary at a later time, but the first obligation is the solvency of the District.

C. Weiser asked how the numbers were for this tournament. The combination of inclement weather and weather reports for additional snow kept many players away. H. Pawlowski stated that the room pickup was up 100 nights from last year. It would have been even higher except for cancellations that were weather related. We lost 75 rooms because of predictions of storms that also hurt our commuter numbers. We are in no risk of losing our comp rooms. We based our hospitality contracts on the higher number.

B-Flight Committee ("B's Needs) – Mark Aquino

The first meeting of the Committee was in Newton. There we discussed what the "A" players could do to help 'B' players, which included mentoring, giving lessons and presentations. The meeting in Newton, due to location, was dominated by EMBA players. The Presidents of each Unit were asked to send representatives to Cromwell. We needed to find out what the problems were around lower attendance of the 'B' players and make recommendations to help rekindle interest in our Regionals, as well as bridge in general. How to make this work will be the main thrust of Sunday's meeting. President Geaski reminded M. Aquino that we need to identify actionable items. W. Burt recounted an interchange with two Gold Rush players who were disappointed with the small amount of gold that the event paid. The gold Rush players expect more and more. S. DeMartino added that Stratified games are what a great many of the 750-3000 players want. The players are willing to play against the "A" players, but not exclusively. The A/X as a separate event is undesirable. M. Aquino added that we have had many meetings in the past. What we need is to identify individuals who will actually drive specific proposals. Currently we have a lot of discussion and little action. We also need to assess why some 'B' players are not coming. B. Bertoni suggested that stratifying by the average of a pair would be a great help to the "B" players. R. DeMartino asked why we were not already doing this as we had already voted to do so. The change will be implemented.

NABC Update – Helen Pawlowski & Joe Brouillard

Alan Applebaum has agreed to chair the Scheduling Committee. Phyllis Chase has asked that Megan DeOrio be made a co-chair of Sponsorship. A sponsorship proposal will be presented to Fidelity. This must be done on-line. John Gibbons from the Providence Convention Bureau reviewed the proposal and thinks it is well done and being offered at a reasonable cost to a sponsor. We are also looking into CVS Caremark, and a Providence international jewelry company, Alex and Ani. President Geaski asked if a National has had multiple sponsors before. H. Pawlowski stated that the committee is looking for multiple sponsors for 2014, particularly for individual events such as "Waterfire." Details will come after the meeting tonight and a draft of a comprehensive budget will be presented to the Executive Committee in Sturbridge.

The logo for the 2014 NABC, highlighting *Waterfire* was developed by the Warwick/Providence Visitors Bureau at no charge. Waterfire is a trademark for Providence and is an amazing spectacle.

Analysis of comparative attendance at Regionals 2010 through 2012 - Peter Marcus

R. DeMartino reviewed the chart he sent to the Executive Committee members that showed that an increase of \$2.00 would give the District an increase in revenue (of \$53,984) if attendance remained stable. We have the option of keeping the National Fund contribution of \$2.00 p/t or keeping the money in the District coffers. The original plan was to end the contribution at the beginning of 2014. H. Pawlowski reminded the Executive Committee that the table count estimate for the Providence Nationals still needs to be determined and will impact how much money will be needed from the district. The financial solvency of the District is of paramount importance and should be the first consideration at this time. We must make the difficult decision and stick to it for any increase. As expenses continue to go up for the Regionals, the cash-on-hand will go down. It was suggested that if we make any increase we need to leave it unchanged for five years. Reviewing R. DeMartino's chart, D. Aronson noted that D-25 as one of the lowest Regional entry fees. R. DeMartino added that even if we raise rates, we may solve the immediate problem but getting people here is more important. President Geaski emphasized that we have two issues. The immediate issue is to stop the bleeding, and then we can work on attendance. President Geaski asked DIC P. Marcus if he could provide the information needed on the players who no longer attend Regionals. It is a lengthy task but he will have it for the next Executive Committee meeting in Sturbridge. R. DeMartino added that we need someone who will receive the information and be in charge of deciding what will be done with it. B. Bertoni stated that \$2.00 is better than \$1.00 increase. If you go to \$2.00, you will lose 102% in table count for the year. If we increase the fee, we should increase the service level to those who are coming and make our customers feel more special when they are here. A. Clamage reiterated that we need the data on attendance with the names and contact information for those who used to attend and now do not. President Geaski continued that we need a common script so that we can tally the information we get from the calls. The Board of Directors will be used in this effort. P. Marcus estimated that it would be about 100 names and would take a large group to complete the survey.

The estimates for this tournament are that the tables will be down 150-175, even higher, from last year, adjusting for the 35 tables we had last year on Tuesday. We have saved money in that we have fewer directors and have saved on hospitality. Forecasts were higher but the weather and predictions of bad weather hurt attendance. R. Budd asked the Executive Committee to make a decision on the fees. R. Budd made a motion that fees be raised by \$2.00 per person/ per session starting at the next Regional. (Sturbridge). (\$14.00 and \$12.00 for the I/N) The motion was seconded and so voted without dissent.

President Geaski reported that the annual Audit is in progress. A meeting was held today. D. Aronson stated that the Committee would discuss ways to improve the process in the future. One hour between sessions is not enough. All went well for this year. President Geaski thanked the Audit Committee, H. Pawlowski, R. DeMartino and S. Smith for their efforts in completing the process.

Update on the Website and posting results- Bob Bertoni

The Website Committee met today. There are several issues to be resolved. Many postings are not up to date. We advertised for a volunteer to post results and need to have a pool of volunteers to ensure this happens on a timely basis. Many other issues were discussed, such as the I/N site which, also, needs to be updated. The job of Webmaster has expanded over time. We need to consider whether this should continue as a volunteer position or become a paid position. A. Clamage is going to compile a list of what specific tasks have to be done and we will assign individuals to do each. We need an "Editor-in-Chief" who will assure that content is posted. We will have more information and recommendations for the Executive Committee after the meeting in Sturbridge. D. Aronson added that we need volunteers to produce content.

Elections in 2014 will be held at the Board of Delegates meeting in Warwick.

A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25