



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes **Executive Committee** Holiday Inn Mansfield, MA November 20, 2011

Attendance

Officers: Robert Erwin, President; Ausra Geaski, Vice President; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Roy Green, Past President

Unit Representatives: Mark Aquino, James Rasmussen (EMBA); Phyllis Bausher, (CBA), Sonja Smith (A. Clamage alt.) (CBA); Bruce Emond (CMBA); Susan Erwin, (RIBA); Joseph DeGaetano, (NHBA); Wayne Hersey (VBA); David Rock (WMBA)

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

Absent: Richard DeMartino, Treasurer/District Director; Allan Clamage (CBA), Richard Budd, (MBA)

Call to Order- The meeting was called to order at 4:45 PM.

Secretary's Report – Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Warwick, RI on September 3, 2011, Seconded and so voted.

Treasurer's Report – Mark Aquino (for R. DeMartino)

We have a \$6,000 loss for the last year, largely attributable to purchasing new bidding box inserts and cost for the development of the new website. On the positive side, the Senior Regional did well as compared to the year before. The Individual remains our greatest disappointment, losing more than twice as much as it did in 2010.

District Director's Report – Mark Aquino (for R. DeMartino)

The District Director's Report will be available on the website after the meetings in Seattle.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Fall Regional - Warwick, RI

The Fall Regional in Warwick was the first time at this site and, as expected at a new site, resulted in lower attendance. Attendance was further impacted by Hurricane Irene. Table count was down about 100 tables, but the \$1 table fee increase allowed the District to show a small profit as compared to a loss the year before.

The facility was excellent, with the only significant problem being that the air conditioning did not initially work in the tent. The hotel has agreed to keep the room rate under \$100 per night and we will no longer be playing in the tents. Based on this, we have signed contracts for 2013 and 2014, in addition to the previous contract which included 2012.

Masters Regional – Mansfield, MA

Our room pick-up was 70 rooms below our contracted guarantee. After negotiations, the hotel agreed to use the additional \$2,000 the District owed, to provide hospitality for the players. There were many positive comments from players regarding the hotel, service and playing area. Helen felt that the room pick-up was down as a result of a larger than expected number of commuters, in combination

with the proximity to Thanksgiving. The hotel will let us renegotiate the contract for our required room pick-up.

Ms. Pawlowski stated that we have been offered the option of rescheduling one week earlier in November and that it would be advantageous to held the tournament earlier than this year to avoid the adverse effect of being too close to Thanksgiving and the Nationals. If the Executive Committee accepts this change, the District Scheduler (C. Weiser) will take action to change our sanction dates for 2012 and beyond. Because we are within a year of the 2012 event, we must obtain permission of District 3 and any Unit that has scheduled a tournament for that weekend before the ACBL will allow us to change these dates.

If the change is approved by the Executive Committee H. Pawlowski will adjust the room block for next year. We use all of the function space and the room rate will be higher by a few dollars. We ended up with no comp rooms this year, because we did not meet the contracted room pick-up.

A motion was made and seconded to *move the start date for the Masters Regional, beginning in 2012, one week earlier.* Approved unanimously.

Other Scheduling conflicts

The District 3 Rye Brook Regional had been in conflict with the dates for our GNT's in 2013 and 2014. For 2013, H. Pawlowski was able to reschedule to January 25-27 for the GNT's and the Rainbow Weekend. This change creates a date conflict with RIBA's most successful tournament. The Sturbridge Host has been unable to make available any early March dates. Delaying the GNT's further into the spring would make it difficult for the A Flight and Super-Flights to arrange their final matches. No other option appears viable at this time.

For 2014 we are working for approval to move the GNT/Rainbow Weekend to February 28-March 2. This change would require CBA to move its Hamden Sectional.

M. Aquino expressed concern that while the Executive Committee has approved this change, he believes this is the type of issue that should be brought to the Board of Delegates.

Tournament Committee Report - Ausra Geaski

Electronic Score Pads

It was previously reported that we had a proposal from a vendor to provide electronic score pads for our tournaments. Additionally, a request for proposals was placed on the District Web site. However, no formal responses were received and the original proposal has since been withdrawn.

The Executive Committee is on record that it supports using these pads as a player service. The players are in favor of them. And, the Board of Delegates has approved their purchase. However, the issues which must be resolved before purchasing them involve the on-going costs of handling and maintenance of the equipment. We will review options and associated costs in Newton. H. Pawlowski will look into the costs of having Taylor Rental add storage and transportation of the pads to our present contract. A second option is for us to manage the equipment and transport it. We can seek a new company or person who will charge a service fee.

Bridgemate II has offered to give us a free demo in Cromwell. The pads are not for rent or lease; if we like them, we must buy them. However, once we put them on the tables the players won't want to give them up, so we need to be sure to have our planning in place before we introduce them.

A. Geaski concluded that full financials and other issues related to the purchase of the Scorepads will be gathered and presented to the Executive Committee for a final discussion at Newton to enable a final decision there.

GNT/NAP

The NAP table count was up 43 tables from 2010 in Cromwell and we ended with a small profit as opposed to a considerable loss the previous year. P. Marcus added that the number of entrants in A Flight was up, but that the B Flight was down, while the C Flight remained about the same. It is difficult to hold this activity in our District because of our geographical spread. It is clearly time to raise the B Flight above 2000 MPs, but this is not something we can control.

M. Aquino is concerned that the ACBL has been increasingly out of touch, particularly in regards to the results of the NAPs and GNTs. Mark has started a grass roots movement of GNT and NAP coordinators. They are going to have a first-ever GNT/NAP forum at NABC in Seattle. He has taken the initiative to try to improve the NAPs.

Club Games during Regionals

A question was raised regarding whether District 25 has, or should have, a policy regarding local clubs being open during a Regional. R. Green stated that the District does not have the power to tell nearby clubs to close, but we only have moral persuasion. Following a discussion, it was agreed to leave it as voluntary, without further action or review.

Sectional Scheduling Problems

C. Weiser asked the Executive Committee for help with several issues that have developed regarding the sanctioning of Sectionals. The ACBL has removed the limit on the number of Sectionals that an individual Unit can hold. This change has led to an increase in the number scheduled each year. This creates pressure on the smaller Units. EMBA is a feeder Unit for RIBA, NHBA, VBA, CMBA and to some degree, MBA. We currently have tournaments, often more than one, on very weekend of the year. District 25 needs to establish policies and procedures for scheduling to maintain equity among our Units. The policy should address the number of Sectionals which Units can schedule, the rate of adding new Sectionals for all Units and placing "holds" on weekends. One problem that has driven this issue is the declining attendance at the annual Schedulers meeting where inter-Unit conflicts were resolved in the past. The representation at the Scheduler's Coordinators meetings has been decreasing every year.

M. Aquino asked C. Weiser what she would you like. She replied that she would like a moratorium for one year and a meeting where the Unit representatives to sit down and establish policies and procedures that would be fair for all Units.

After discussion it was the consensus of the Executive Committee is that C. Weiser should call a mandatory meeting for Unit Schedulers for Newton on Sunday at 8:30AM. The meeting will set the schedule and establish ground rules. If a Unit fails to send a representative, it will not have a say in what is determined.

Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock

The Scheduling Committee has nothing pending.

P. Marcus said problems remain with the KO's. They are painful to direct and either the Flight A or B players are unhappy. The probable solution is that all KO's should be flighted/bracketed. The B flight players know they won't ever see someone with more than 3000 points. This may mean that the A flight may be only 5 tables. He proposed that all 4-session KO's be scheduled as Flighted-Bracketed A/B separate. B Flight would be less than 3000 MPs.

H. Pawlowski said that this could be implemented starting with Sturbridge or the Fall Regional. The schedule for the Senior Regional was just put on the web.

R. Erwin said that there are a variety of opinions. We need to have the Scheduling Committee review the matter and bring a recommendation with options to the Executive Committee.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommendation made by Peter Marcus that *all 4-session KO's be scheduled as Flighted-Bracketed A/B separate. B Flight would have no player with more than 3000 mps.* The motion was unanimously approved. D. Rock will bring the issue of the Saturday Pairs games to the Board of Delegates on Sunday.

Old Business- Charity Committee - Sue Erwin

Six checks in the amount of \$5,000 each were sent out by the ACBL Charity Foundation in mid-October. The checks went to a central food bank in each of the states in our District: Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire food banks and the Good Shepherd Food Bank in

Maine and the Western Massachusetts food bank that includes Springfield and Sturbridge. Some thank-you notes have already been received and forwarded to R. DeMartino.

By-Laws - D. Rock

At our previous meeting, the Executive Committee passed a motion to be brought to the Board of Delegates relating to ultimate power in District matters. Two additional changes have been proposed since our meeting, in an attempt to reduce conflict. These changes are as follows:

1. The phrase *The Executive Committee shall have the ultimate authority, with the following restrictions:* would be changed to *The Executive Committee shall have the authority to make all decisions regarding the day to day matters of the District with the following restrictions:*

2. #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 will read upon receiving a majority vote of the Board of Delegates members or duly appointed alternates attending*

David asked that Bill Hunter speak to this immediately after his presentation of the motion and the friendly amendment to the motion during the Board of Delegates meeting.

Concern was voiced about changing the motion without the changes being sent to the Board of Delegates two weeks before the meeting. R. Erwin clarified that this is not an amendment to the bylaws, it is a motion. It is appropriate for this body to voice its support or non-support for the proposed friendly amendment. He feels that we should vote on this and allow the Board of Delegates to bring the matter to a vote. This motion is a proposal made by David and his committee, that if passed will be sent to the Bylaw Committee to present as an amendment for the Board of Delegates to approve or disapprove.

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1 No vote, 2 abstentions. All others -For. The amended motion passed.

D. Rock restated that he will report to the Board of Delegates the results of the Committee's work and that the District Bylaws, as written, are correct. He will then report that the Executive Committee voted on a friendly amendment to the proposed motion as previously mailed. B. Hunter will then speak to the change.

New Business - none

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

President Erwin thanked all the members of the Executive Committee for their interest, support, and hard work over the past two years.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary