



## New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

### Delegates Meeting

New England Bridge Conference

November 20, 2011

Holiday Inn, Mansfield, MA

Attendance: (40... A. Geaski counted as officer)

Executive Committee: Robert Erwin, President; Ausra Geaski, Vice President; Roy Greene, Past President (present 4) = 31

EMBA- Unit 108-17 (present: 17)

Present: Ellen Alper (F. Caine alt.), Mark Aquino, Murthy Ayyagari, Bob Bertoni, Cilla Borrás, Carole Carlson, Lowell Eubanks (E. Schultz alt.), Polly Goedicke, Bob Gorsey, Michael Howard (F. Lombardo alt.) William Hunter (Irene Musick alt.) Don Levy, Neil Montague (B. Montague alt.), Shome Mukerjee (I. Musick alt.), Dean Panagopoulos, Adam Parrish, Mark True

*Absent: Frank Caine, Frank Lombardo, Irene Musick, Elin Schultz, Brenda Montague, William Mernin*

CMBA - Unit 113 - 2 (present 2)

Present: Bruce Emond, Harris Jacobs

*Absent : none*

CBA - Unit 126 - 12 (present 7-1=6)

Present: Phyllis Bausher, Larry Bausher (D. Benner, alt.), Ausra Geaski, Joan Martin, Sonja Smith, Joyce Stiefel, Michael Wavada (J. Hess alt.)

*Absent: Debbie Benner, Allan Clamage, Sandy DeMartino, Judy Hess, Burton Gischner, Janet Gischner, Bill Watson*

RIBA - Unit 145 - 4 (present 4)

Present: Joe Brouillard, Lois DeBlois, Suzanne Erwin, Bill Shockley (G. Charon alt.)

*Absent: Grace Charon*

NHBA - Unit 150 - 4 (present 3)

Present: Wayne Burt, Joseph DeGaetano, Bruce Downing

*Absent: Daniel McGuire*

VBA - Unit 175 - 3 (present 3)

Present: June Dorian (P. Sharpsteen alt.), Frank Hacker, Wayne Hersey

*Absent: Phil Sharpsteen*

MBA - Unit 189 - 4 (present 0)

Present: none

*Absent: Richard Budd, Timothy Goodwin, Jill Stirgwolt (one yet to be named)*

WMBA- Unit 196 - 2 (present 2)

Present: David Kowerski (Pawlowski alt.), David Rock,

*Absent: Helen Pawlowski*

Non-voting guest: Patricia Hanna (Patricia Taylor, Past President D-25)

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**Call to Order**

**President's Report** - Welcome. Before we begin the agenda I would like to recognize Stephen Rzewski who will present the Larry Weiss Award for 2011.

S. Rzewski reviewed the history of the Larry Weiss Award and the three criteria to be considered when giving this award: some degree of success in contract bridge during the year for which the award is made, some degree of association with New England bridge and notably, superior behavior and gracious presence at the bridge table. He emphasized that though there are many ways that one can associate themselves, special consideration is given to those who have involved themselves in their Unit or District affairs and have given of their time and energy for the good of bridge. This year's recipient is James Rasmussen who embodies all of the characteristics. He is a formidable player, who plays in most difficult events and an absolute gentleman at the table. He has been involved in unit governance as a Board member, Vice-President and President of EMBA. He has participated in many committees and currently represents his unit on the Executive Committee. He is currently working on a special project to introduce Bridge to Schools.

**President's Report** - Robert Erwin

We had our problems at Warwick, namely Irene. We had no power in the beginning and had many cancellations. H. Pawlowski worked with the Hotel and managed to keep us out of the red. The Minutes of the Executive Committee from Warwick will be posted on the web, as will the minutes from this meeting, once they have been approved. Many have requested more openness and I think this will promote this.

We currently our cash on hand is approximately \$6,000 below that of last year at this time. This can be accounted for by the purchase of new bidding box inserts, payment for our new website, and the new payments to the 3<sup>rd</sup> place NAP finishers. A new project manager has been appointed to work on the updating ACBL Score which is expected to be available by the end of next year. The Executive Committee voted to reverse its earlier decision to synchronize start times. This would only work in large hotels that had the staff and facilities to accommodate all the players at one time for their meals. This would be impossible for most of the hotels we use.

There has been a decision to eliminate the 1 & 7 pair games on Wednesdays and Fridays. The scheduling committee will review and re-evaluate the schedule at Cromwell.

We are working on acquiring BridgeMates for our Regionals.

This year, Sturbridge had a \$7,700 profit.

We will remain at Warwick for another two years. The hotel has offered us a rate of under \$100 per room. The Nashua site still has problems. It appears it will be at least 3-4 years before we can return there as extensive renovations are still required.

A motion will be brought before you today regarding the reassignment of the ultimate authority in the District. D. Rock will speak to this. He will introduce a friendly amendment to that motion that was brought up at the Executive Committee last night. If it is passed and put in place, B. Hunter will speak to the amended motion which we than can discuss.

We have busy agenda but please try to keep your questions brief.

**Secretary's Report** - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes from the Board of Governor's meeting in held on June 26, 2011 in Sturbridge, MA as sent via internet. So voted, unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report** - Mark Aquino-

Rich is in Seattle. Everyone should have received a copy of his report via e-mail. Our bottom line went from \$67,542 to 61,850 at the end of 2011. This is roughly a \$6,000 decline, or about 10%. The decline can be accounted for by the purchase of the bidding box inserts, the new

website, and the decision to give the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers in GNT's \$100 each toward their travel to the NABC finals. The loss of over \$6,000 last year at the Senior Regional was a special case. We again returned to profitability this year. Even with the hurricane we managed to end up with a \$4000 profit at the Fall Regional in Warwick. The District needs to focus on the Individuals which is still a major concern to us as it continues to be our greatest disappointment. The loss in the GNT does not properly reflect the portion relating to the GNT's themselves as the Rainbow weekend was lumped into the same total. The finances for both will be reported separately in the future. In general, the District remains in good financial shape.

D. Levy was recognized. Using Guidestar.org I was able to view a copy of the New England Bridge Conference Inc.'s form 990 for year ending March 31, 2010. I noted a number of differences between the periodic reports that we receive twice annually and what appears on the 990. This does not mean that the reports that we receive are necessarily wrong.

Anyone can see for themselves by going to guidestar.org. The tax return shows gross revenues of \$15,800 are off by 40% for the year. Of course this does not include what is paid to the ACBL, though it does appear that the report underestimates income. The money held for the NABC should be on this report.

(A Parrish) Requests for more detailed financial reports have been made at every meeting that I have attended and we still do not get the information we have asked for.

(President Erwin) Please put your specific questions in a list and sent it to R. DeMartino. The Executive Committee meets again in January and Cromwell. We will push to make this information available.

Sentiments for more complete financial documentation were repeated by several other members of the Board of Delegates. What was given to the delegates last year in comparison form was requested including a breakdown of tournament income and expenses.

(R. Erwin) Specific information regarding the tournaments can be provided by H. Pawlowski who can be reached via e-mail.

(R. Bertoni) I make a motion that:

*The Board of Delegates shall receive the full financials for the District and that these financials shall include the all income and expenditures. The finances of the District shall be transparent and include the complete Treasurer's and Tournament Managers reports and that these be transmitted to the members of the Board of Delegates at each meeting, in complete form.*

(R. Erwin) That information was just handed to D. Levy. It is the information that our Tournament manager makes provides every tournament. The Treasurer's report, gives one line showing what is received from ACBL after they play the directors, fees, etc.

D. Levy) I call the motion. A vote was taken. The motion was called and Carried- Opposed 2 - abstentions- none

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

Rich is in Seattle, The report was posted on the website and the NABC report will be posted as soon as the meetings end.

### **Election of officers for 2012 -D. Rock**

The Nominating Committee met in Sturbridge and again in Warwick. The District Nominating Committee approved the following slate for 2012:

|                |              |      |
|----------------|--------------|------|
| President      | Ausra Geaski | CBA  |
| Vice President | Mark Aquino  | EMBA |

Secretary Carolyn Weiser EMBA  
Treasurer Richard DeMartino CBA

(M. Ayyagari) Is there a reason for not disclosing the names on the nominees on the website? What is the reason for not disclosing who the nominees were?

(R. Erwin) The nominees were disclosed in Warwick.

(C. Weiser) They were sent out to every Unit president and every delegate including the portion of the bylaws that regulates the process.

(R. Erwin) The nomination process is specified by the Bylaws. Notification of the nominees and the process was sent out as required. Anyone can put their name in nomination by submitting the required signatures from 3 units. The process is neither unrealistic nor onerous. If you want to change the bylaws as they relate to this matter, there is a process to follow. The requirement that the signatures come from 3 units was put in place to assure that a nominee from being too parochial. I think it is a good and fair process.

(D. Levy) I make a motion that the secretary be instructed to cast one vote for the slate of candidates as presented.

The motion carried: yes-20 against -9

### **Bylaws - D Rock**

As many of you know, this has been a contentious issue for many years. At Sturbridge Bob Erwin asked that a working group that included Wayne Hersey, Bruce Emond, Joe DeGaetano and me be formed.

(Erwin) You were first going to clarify whether the bylaws as we have were in error.

(D. Rock) What we found was that in the 1997 revision of the bylaws, that the Board of Delegates was given ultimate authority to make revisions to the bylaws. Whatever was intended in 1997 and subsequent revisions, the Board of Delegates was given the ultimate authority in that they elect the officers and approve the bylaws.

The group felt that it made sense that the Executive Committee that meets 5 times a year, rather than the Board of Delegates what meets only twice a year, should be given ultimate authority, with some limitations.

A motion that was sent to you was passed at the meeting of the Executive Committee in Warwick by a vote of 8-7. Since then further discussions have been held on how to make the motion more agreeable to the majority. Last night the Executive Committee approved, by a vote of 12- 0 with 2 abstentions that a revision be brought to the Board of Delegates as a friendly amendment to the original proposal. B. Hunter will speak to this.

There were two changes. The phrase, the Executive Committee shall have **the ultimate authority** with the following restrictions, was changed to read: *The Executive Committee shall have the **authority to manage the day to day District matters** with the following restrictions: And the second was that: (#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 was changed to read: upon **receiving a majority vote** of the Board of Delegates members or duly appointed alternates attending.*

(B. Hunter) I strongly disagreed with the original motion as it had been presented. Having the Executive Committee with the ultimate authority was clearly wrong. I do agree with the change

that the Executive Committee should have the authority to handle the day to day matters of the District. I also believe that the change from 2/3 vote of the Board of Delegates in number 4 be changed to a majority vote is clearly correct. I do believe that this reflects what came out of the meeting in 1997. I favor the change but could live with the original because of my tremendous respect for the four individuals who worked in the committee that was appointed. Too much time and effort has been spent on this and it had caused too much contentiousness and it needs to be brought to a close. It is important that we put this matter behind us whatever the decision might be.

(R. Erwin) Recognized Patricia Hanna (former Taylor).

(P. Hanna) I do not understand your decision to give away your power. Openness is so important. This system has worked. If you give away your power over daily operations, you need a list of what these daily operations are. This is not an EMBA issue.

(R. Erwin) I would like to clarify what Pat has said. Would the member of the Board present minus those from EMBA and CBA stand? (13 rose) Those from EMBA and CBA please stand? (21 rose) The two larger units represent approximately 70% of the membership. The breakdown of what we have here today is pretty close to that 70%. In the Executive Committee they make up 40%. 60% of the power in the Executive Committee is given to 30% of our membership.

(J Brouillard) I would like to speak against this proposal. The Conference is licensed by the state of Massachusetts. All corporations have an executive committee runs the day to day matters of the corporation but the executive officers report to the Board of Directors. No corporation would have this proposed limitation put on themselves. Item 3 has the proper verbiage, it not made moot by the passage of time. That allows the Executive Committee to do what ever they want, and since we only meet twice a year, we will have no recourse. Recent history has shown that the Executive Committee has come before the Board of Delegates for input on major issues such the decision to have pre-dealt hands and the purchase of Bridgemates. With this proposal they can do whatever they want and once it is done, what can the Board of Delegates do. If this is approved, the Board of Delegates should be disbanded.

(B. Bertoni) I would like to speak against this motion. I give the Committee credit for the work they did on the original proposal and the compromise. We are not broken and we should embrace what we have and be happy with what we have and reject the motion.  
General discussion followed.

(M. Howard) I call the question.

(M. Aquino) I have problem with what seems to be an emerging battle between the Executive Committee and the Board of Delegates. I can not imaging the Board of Delegates over-riding the Executive Committee and the Executive Committee has brought issues to the Board of Delegates for their input. The Committee has put together a friendly amendment that seems to spell out what actually exists. The Executive Committee has to have some basic powers in order to do its job.

(R. Erwin) The Executive Committee according to the current bylaws has the day to day authority. The questions was called.

Those in favor of the original motion as modified.... a vote against the motion would require no change in the bylaws. This is not an amendment to the bylaws. If we vote in favor of this motion,

the matter would revert to the bylaw committee to write an amendment in response to this motion to be incorporated in the bylaws and presented to the Board of Delegates for acceptance. If this motion and the friendly amendment are defeated, then it is gone. There will be no change in the bylaws.

Those in favor of this friendly amendment to the motion will raise their hands.

**Vote: Friendly amendment:** The Executive Committee shall have the authority to manage *the day to day authority to manage the day to day matters of the District* 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 a 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 *majority vote* of the Board of Delegates members or duly appointed alternates attending.

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.

The amendment failed 21 no, 15 yea

The vote on the original motion was called: (as sent out)

Approval of this motion would require a change in the bylaws.

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 a 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.

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.

The motion failed 29 opposed, 2 yea. The current bylaws are retained as they now read.

### **Charity Committee - Sue Erwin**

Charity Committee in Sturbridge decided to have the ABLC Charity Grant distributed to each of the state food banks. Checks in the amount of \$5,000 were issued by the ACBL Charity Committee and were sent to the state food bank in each of the 6 New England States in mid-October. These included the Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont food banks; the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Maine; the Western Massachusetts Food Bank that includes Springfield and Sturbridge.

### **Tournament Manager's Report - A. Geaski**

A. Geaski summarized the information provided to her by H. Pawlowski. Even with the problems caused by hurricane Irene the Fall Regional in Warwick was a success. The strong recover on post Irene table count of 1244 tables was considerable less than that in 2010 where we had 1349 tables. The raise in table fees accounted for the final profit. We have signed contracts for 2013 and 2014 at good bridge rates, with additional playing space and a guarantee that we will never use the tent again.

The NAP in Sturbridge had a strong table count of 146 as compared to only 103 in Cromwell last year. A small profit replaced a long time series of losses.

The Masters Regional in Mansfield saw poor room pickup and we were 70 rooms below our guarantee. This resulted in a loss of all our complimentary rooms and triggered a contractual payment of \$2,000 for function room rental. H. Pawlowski was able to negotiate and replace the direct payout for the purchase of an additional \$1600 in hospitality.

The table count was low on Wednesday but grew steadily. The players seem to like the site, playing areas, hotel service and location. This tournament will be held one week earlier next year. This would remove the conflict with the Fall NABC and the close proximity Thanksgiving.

(B. Hunter) Is there any update on when we will see a return to a tournament site north of Boston?

(A. Geaski) This needs to be addressed. Nashua is the ideal site but it still is not yet ready for rentals.

The GNT dates had to be changed because of a conflict with Ryebrook. We attempted to find alternative dates at Sturbridge but were unable to do so. The only dates available were in late March which would not allow sufficient time for the top fight to schedule their final match and have the results reported to the ACBL. In 2013 they will be held on January 25-27 and in 2014 on February 28-March 2. We will return to our usual weekend in 2014. B. Bertoni and J. Brouillard are helping with the publicity.

#### **Tournament Committee Report - Ausra Geaski**

A request for proposals from suppliers for the electronic scorepads was placed on our website and there were no responses. We are back to square one. The costs of storage and transportation are being investigated. Before the meeting of the Executive Committee in Newton I expect to have the comparative cost of the various methods put together for review. We can get a one-time free trial from the provider and this could be in Cromwell, if all goes well. The Board of Delegates has already indicated their unanimous support for the use of scorepads at our Regionals.

(B. Bertoni) As this is R. Erwin's last meeting as President of the District I ask the Board of Delegates to thank him for all his hard work and efforts on the behalf of the District. (applause)

(R. Erwin) Thank you all very much. I want to thank all of those who have helped and worked so hard for the District these past two years.

#### **Scheduling Committee Report – David Rock-**

The KO's early in the week been terrible. The Executive Committee voted that all mid-week KO's be flighted.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25