

New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
On-Line Meeting
Thursday
March 18, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM

Attendance: Executive Committee meeting-March 18, 2021

Officers

President - Jack Mahoney, Vice President - Curtis Barton, Treasurer - Joe Brouillard,
Secretary - Carolyn Weiser, Past President-Lois DeBlois

Unit Representatives

EMBA -Paul Harris, Brenda Montague; CMBA- Shirley Wagner,
CBA-Sonja Smith, Michael Wavada; RIBA- Marshall Williams, NHBA- David
Lawrence, VBA- Mark Oettinger, MBA- none, WMBA- Peter Samsel

Absent: Vicki Angus -CMBA, Daniel Morgenstern MBA

Invited Guests

District Director- Robert Bertoni, Tournament Manager-Sally Kirtley, DIC/Tournament
Coordinator- Peter Marcus

President Jack Mahoney welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He praised Frank Merblum, Peter Marcus and Bob Bertoni for the enormous work all had done to get the GNTs ready to play on BBO. There were many problems inherent, as we will be running 3-ways and 4-ways as well as Swiss.

B. Montague made a motion that the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held November 20, 2020 be accepted as sent. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The reports, as sent to the members of the Executive Committee are as of December 31, 2020.

The Operating Income Statement shows a tournament income of \$2,969. This is due to the profit of \$5,145 at the Presidential Regional. We had a loss for all the other tournaments, even though they were not held, because of prepaid expenses and fees that were not refundable. The Grass-roots Fund was \$3,388; down \$15,045 from 2019. The m Operating Expenses as listed are self-explanatory. Total expenses were \$3,211 leaving a new income for 2020 of \$2,969.

P. Marcus queried if it was correct that we were required to pay for Bulletin adds for the tournaments we were not allowed to hold. S. Kirtley answered in the affirmative.

President Mahoney asked if there were any questions and asked for a motion to accept the report as presented. C. Barton made a motion to accept that was seconded by B. Montague. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer Brouillard continued with the Statement of Financial Position. We currently have net assets of \$180,629. The National Fund has \$104,929. The District is in good shape. We had moved NABC money out of market positions into CDs in anticipation of the 2019 Providence NABC. Three of the four CDs have matured and the money is in cash, paying no interest. When Covid hit, there was a run up. I anticipate another run-up when the Covid crisis is over. Unless there is objection, I would like to take 50% of the money and invest it in two Fidelity funds, Fidelity Puritan Fund and Fidelity Balanced Fund, which earned 20% in 2020. Fidelity Puritan Fund and Fidelity Balanced Fund invests 50% in bonds and 50% in equities. Both are conservative funds. Both earned between 20 and 22% last year. If we need the money, they can be converted to cash in 3 days.

President Mahoney asked if this would require a motion. Treasurer Brouillard stated that he considers this within the usual and customary function of the Treasurer, therefore, no motion would be required. President Mahoney asked if there was any objection to the Treasurer's plan. There was none.

The IRS 990 Report has been completed. If anyone wants a copy, let me know and I will send it. There has been a big change in that all 990s are now filled out electronically. This has made the job much easier. I will send it along in the next few days. The deadline is May 15.

Tournament Manager's Report - Sally Kirtley

Update hotel contracts for Regionals

We have two tournaments left in 2021, if the ACBL allows us to run Warwick and Mansfield. A list of 2021 and 2022 dates and tentative sites were sent to the members of the Executive Committee. The hotels are starting to come back. We originally scheduled the Senior Tournament over Passover and Easter. We have found another hotel, in Southbridge, that is happy to have us. It is a bit smaller, but more centrally located. It should work for the Seniors.

B. Montague made a motion to accept the report as presented. Seconded by P. Harris, and so voted without dissent.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Curtis Barton

C. Barton asked S. Kirtley what the consequences for the District would be if Warwick & Rhode Island were open but the ACBL refused to allow us to play. S. Kirtley answered that under those circumstances we would have a good argument for damages. We have a good relationship with the hotel. P. Marcus questioned the fact that the ACBL has said that we can have Sectionals in August, but not Regionals.

We will discuss the effects on our Regional schedule with the 2022 NABC moving to Providence. We may find ourselves cancelling Nashua again. We also need to discuss whether we should go back to the dual tournament for Marlboro. It might work in

2022. That hotel is big enough to hold two separate tournaments. The rest of 2022 looks good.

We will also have to discuss our policies and procedures regarding Covid. We may require vaccination certification. There is also the question of those under 16.

President Mahoney stated that we should require vaccination and put that fact in our advertisements. C. Barton asked if we would turn any non-vaccinated players away. President Mahoney continued that we cannot have a half policy. P. Marcus added that the cards can be laminated at Staples and can also be photographed on a cell phone. C. Barton asked B. Bertoni if the ACBL has any guidance. District Director Bertoni stated that more complete guidance will be forthcoming in a short time. But that he expected that anyone above 16 would be required to have vaccination certification.

C. Barton continued that he and P. Marcus have been discussing the possibilities. They both are in agreement that we do not want to over promise game options and end up with sections that are too small. We have developed a slimmed down schedule for the tournament.

We also need to think about player incentives such as reduced entry fees, a Saturday night party or increased hospitality. Any thought from the Executive Committee members would be appreciated.

As of now, everyone above the age of 18 should be vaccinated by mid-April.

District Director's Report - Robert Bertoni

When the ACBL cancelled the Providence NABC we fully expected to go to the bottom of the list for a new date. When Washington cancelled, we were ready and able to move into that slot. Thankfully, Joe (Brouillard) is willing to stay on as chair. We are sorry to lose Lois. J. Brouillard interjected that L. DeBlois will remain as a co-chair for 2022.

Regarding the GNT, we have been working on a pre-registration system. P. Marcus has agreed to handle the registration and the collection of the entry fees, which will be collected after the play. All of the plans that were discussed had issues.

The games will be handled through BridgeBase On Line.

RIBA has held a unit-game. Sue Miguel managed to get all the entrants registered as members of her club for the day. I'm looking forward to it.

There are lots going on at the national level. I am the vice-chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee. We are developing a plan to transition back to normalcy.

I am also on the Tournament Planning work group. This group is looking at what will happen to the regionals etc. after the reorganization takes place. The ACBL has no plans at this time to limit the number of Regionals. The only constraint would be if they lost money. The rest of the ACBL does not run regionals the same way as we do in New England. In some areas they are run by Units. No unit/district would be happy if their regional was cut. If they cut them back in District 1, it would cause a way between the units. Districts 7, 9, 17 & 25 want to run what we run because they are a service to the players. There may be prohibitions regarding regionals held within 100 miles of each other with a narrow period of time.

The ACBL was in a tough place when Covid started. The Board gave management carte blanche. The MP inflation caused some issues, but in general they did ok.

Units have been able to offer Swiss at clubs. There has been success in RIBA. WMBA had 10 tables. There has also been one in Vermont and New Hampshire. This provides an opportunity for the players to become familiar with Swiss on BBO before they actually sign up for the GNTs.

I am finally on three interesting committees. We are very busy with meetings weekly.

Management is very proud of themselves. The ACBL made \$2,000,000 last year. J, Jones is a moneyman, not a bridge man so he ran the ACBL on that basis.

D. Lawrence asked about the future of cross-unit pooling when FACE-TO-FACE bridge returns. District Director Bertoni answered that New Hampshire will still be able to run its New Hampshire Pool. It is the pooling of clubs from different units that will stop.

B. Montague asked about the extra points for on-line clubs. District Director Bertoni answered that this is under discussion. The awards were inflated in the beginning to encourage players who had never played on-line to try it. When clubs reopen, we are trying to get the situation reversed. There will be a transition period. Nothing will happen dramatically. We will try to equalize the situation or give live clubs more masterpoints.

M. Wavada asked if the Conditions of Contest for the GNTs was completed, as there was a need to get the advertising out. The first qualifying is within a week. District Director Bertoni stated that Frank Merblum said he would get it to Lois to be converted to a PDF. The information will be forwarded to M. Wavada as soon as possible either from Lois (DeBlois) or the President. P. Marcus explained the format.

All the matches would be head-to-head matches and then you explained it in detail. Open & A & B would start with head-to-head KO's. Open and A- full day, B-1 session. Open, A and B will be seeded, Open by a committee, A and B by total masterpoints. There can be no 3-ways as BBO software does not support them. If the total number of any of these events is odd, the top seeded team will have a bye for the first round. All other matches will be traditional head-to-head matches or 4-ways. A 4-way is run as two head-to-head matches for the first half of the match. The two winners of these head-to-heads qualify to go on to the next round. The two losers play another head-to-head match, for the second half of the match, with the winner also qualifying to go on. Of a total of four teams, three go on to the next match. Flight C will be a Swiss. Every attempt will be made to keep the numbers even or a team will have to sit out each match of the Swiss. Lois will send the draft of the Conditions of Contest to Mike.

J. Brouillard asked that when face-to-face bridge returns at Regionals will the ACBL allow on line events that will compete with ours.

District Director Bertoni answered that the ACBL will be limited to a maximum of three gold point events per year and that must be at least one week after the NABC.

P. Marcus reminded him that there are regionals that are held the week after a NABC. These would also be affected. District Director Bertoni will look into it.

Old - New Business

Providence NABC - Joe Brouillard and Lois DeBlois

(J. Brouillard) When the 2022 Washington NABC was suddenly cancelled when the hotel went bankrupt, we were able to slide into 2022. We will have an on-line kick-off of the NABC Committee. We are all pleased that all the hard work did not go to waste. The dates, July 21-31, 2022, are already posted on the ACBL website.

President Mahoney asked if there were any questions. There were none.

A motion was made, seconded and so approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser

Secretary, District 25