



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes Executive Committee Cromwell, CT February 14, 2015

Attendance:

Officers: Mark Aquino, President; Bernard Schneider, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Ausra Geaski, Past President

Unit Representatives: EMBA: Robert Bertoni; CBA: Dean Montgomery (alt. for Esther Watstein); RIBA: Lois DeBlois (alt for Maureen Fahey); NHBA: Sarah Widhu (alt for Wayne Burt); MBA: Richard Budd; WMB: David Rock

Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; Peter Marcus, DIC

Absent: EMBA: David Aronson; CMBA: Bruce Emond; RIBA: Maureen Fahey; NHBA: Wayne Burt; VBA: Wayne Hersey

President Aquino opened the meeting at 6:15 as many of the attendees arrived late. He wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and congratulated the committee and chairs for their organization and planning for the Cromwell regional.

Minutes - Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made to accept the Minutes from the Newton, MA meeting of the Executive Committee of January 4, 2015, seconded and so voted.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

Treasurer Brouillard made a motion that was seconded and so voted that the Committee continue in Executive Session. The Executive Committee returned to open session.

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Treasurer Brouillard stated that we have no outstanding invoices. We had a loss in Newton of \$4,965.40, which was \$1,849.19 less than last year. Our current working capital is \$59,794.32. The format has been modified and the reserve for a future NABC has been moved to restricted funds. President Aquino asked if the differences with previous Treasurer, Rich DeMartino, had been reconciled. Treasurer Brouillard responded that L. Robinson (the chair of the Audit and Finance Committee) is happy. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the current format for future reports. We continue to lose money in Newton. J. Brouillard suggested that it is probably time to cut our expenses. We have increased rates twice in the last few years and there is no upside left. He outlined a number of possible suggestions for consideration and possible action by the board. His suggestions included possibly suspending or reducing some current stipends, reducing the number of current comp rooms, eliminating the Executive Committee dinner, reducing where possible, director costs, costs for duplicating boards, and taking a fresh look at any nice-to-have items such as Bridgemates, that have been increasing our tournament expenses in recent years. On the other side of the coin, Joe suggested that above all we need more marketing. A. Geaski asked if he would recommend eliminating tournaments. Answer - yes. H. Pawlowski stated that we need to educate this group to what costs can be changed and what cannot. She suggested that Peter Marcus is best

qualified to determine the staffing. As it turns out, P. Marcus just entered the meeting, and he affirmed that there are times when we are somewhat over, and others when we are somewhat under staffed. This can occur when we introduce new events for which there is no history, such as the horizontal Swiss. Estimates have to be made. J. Brouillard asked if there is a ratio of tables per director that we can use as a guideline. Peter advised that currently we are going by a 15-18:1 ratio. Every director gets a different pay rate. There are also session, hotel, per diem, and travel costs. President Aquino added that he has been suggesting we look at ways to cut our expenses for a long time; but that this may not be the forum for this discussion. Some things, such as the meal, may be easy, but reducing or eliminating stipends are different and perhaps inappropriate in the light of our standing agreements. H. Pawlowski added that there is less flexibility on the ACBL side, but that she constantly tries to manage hotel costs, as at this hotel with coffee and breakfast. We have to look at past attendance. This year we issued a \$4.00 chit with every paid entry that had to be used by 11:00, which provided better risk management. The Executive Committee must recognize that there are food and beverage minimums and that rooms are part of our contractual obligation. P. Marcus stated that all the directors are "part-time". They can say no to any request as they are not salaried employees of the ACBL. If we start sending them home, they will not come and we will be forced to import directors from greater distance at greater cost. He went home Wednesday to save money. This saved 2 days salary as well as the room. President Aquino asked if the current system for the duplication of boards was cost effective. P. Marcus noted that this would require us to purchase about 60 sets of boards. We would have to pay to have them stored and transported. D. Panagopoulos has made a capital investment on the board. The cost of the machine is a small part of the total cost. We cut back on the number of boards we used today. R. Budd stated that we should eliminate the Individual as it has been a loss for a number of years. A. Geaski stated that there are many possible suggestions. Some expenses are fixed and some are variable. We need to get a committee together to review everything. President Aquino stated that he would like to take this as an action item. He will get together with J. Brouillard and develop a group to determine what can and cannot be cut. H. Pawlowski stated that what we have are publicity and revenue problems. D. Rock asked if the money spent on the Executive Dinner is part of the hospitality budget. H. Pawlowski answered that every dollar spent becomes part of our Food and Beverage Contractual amount. \$10,000 food and beverage must be spent somewhere. If we renegotiate the food and beverage amount down, the room rate will go up. The important task is to fix the revenue part. There might be a way to save some expenses in the interim. A committee will be formed to review these concerns and make recommendations.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

H. Pawlowski reported that table count has gone from 674.8 in 2013 to 469 in 2014 to 544 this year. It should be noted that there was a snowstorm in 2014 that greatly reduced the number. We are still not up to our 2013 figure. Our loss was almost \$2,000 less than that is 2013.

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A chart of the contractual situation relating to our regionals was passed out. This included the locations, dates and rates for hotels under contract for Regionals, as well as the NAP's and GNT's; an also those on hold. For 2016, the Sturbridge Host is willing to continue with the Rainbow weekend and GNT's. Though the hotel is tired, but it is an ideal location. President Aquino will verify the sanctions with Tournament Coordinator, Luke Gillespie. We are holding Nashua for 2016 because of the difficulties we had last year. We tried to get Newton to give us dates in June, but they are not interested. They would lose too much in business rentals. We do need a home for the NAP's. D. Panagopoulos will discuss split sites with clubs. Hotels will not be possible. Sturbridge was willing to

absorb the loss when they had the Summer Regional. A hall might work. President Aquino suggested that we might merge the NAP's with a Regional. H. Pawlowski noted that merging it with a Sectional might be better. NAP finals must be completed between September 1 and December 31. We have two regionals in that period. R. DeMartino reminded the Executive Committee that the NAP is a premier event in this District. The Friday night KO and the NAP draw from the same group. H. Pawlowski added that D. Panagopoulos will investigate holding the NAP's with a sectional or at split sites. President Aquino will add this as an Action Item for our next meeting and will expect a concrete proposal at that time. D. Rock questioned whether we could do a Rainbow event with the NAP's as we do with the GNT's. H. Pawlowski will investigate this possibility with the Sturbridge Host Hotel. If we used separate dates for the A we could allow some to try their skill at the A level and, if they did not win, enter at a later date in the B level event. We might consider trying the Flight A at a Sectional and the B/C at a Regional. H. Pawlowski will have a written proposal from the Seacrest. We will need a decision on whether to move to the Seacrest for 2017-18-19 at Nashua. The property has been renovated and the rate would be \$99, provided we have a 3-year contract. I have reviewed the sample menu and had a good discussion regarding food and hospitality. I would be wise to move there as the stairs in Hyannis are not senior friendly. We are contracted through 2016 at Hyannis. We would sign a contract with the Seacrest for 2017-19. R. DeMartino added that the Cape is one of our most attractive sites. Would we consider having 2 tournaments there if we dropped the Senior? H. Pawlowski noted that we could not afford high season on the Cape. She did check with various casinos but the prices are prohibitive. She said she will check with Lincoln, RI and Fall River. The group rates per night for the two in Connecticut are \$159 for Sunday through Thursday and \$299 for Friday and \$399 for Saturday. The function rental would be on top of that. J. Brouillard added that there are none in Lincoln.

The net some of all the discussion was that the biggest single thing we could do right now is to discontinue the Individual. A motion was made seconded and so voted to drop the Individual as soon as our current contractual obligations have been fulfilled, which is 2016. R. DeMartino added that if we tell the ACBL that we have decided to end the Individual in 2015 it will help greatly with our maintaining the Senior Regional.

“B’s” Needs Committee Report - Ausra Geaski

The “B’s” Needs Committee met today. The Pro-Am event is the last of the goals set by the committee to be met. It will be held on Saturday evening at the Nashua Regional. It is important to promote it. We will use an email blast and hope that everyone on the Board of Delegates and the Executive Committee will be involved.

M. Waveda suggested that District 25 recognize the players who attend our regionals with a “Mini-McKenney” type race. There are two questions to be determined. Should this be open to anyone who plays in D-25 events or only members of D-25 and what should we name the award? The Committee feels that it should be open to everyone. A motion was made and seconded to create such a race and that it be open to any player who attends D-25 Regionals not just D-25 members. The motion was seconded and so voted.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Bernard Schneider- Bob Bertoni

The Committee reviewed the flyers for the Pro-am. The members of the Executive Committee need to be proactive in publicizing the Pro-Am event as well as participating in it. The newcomers are the most important players in the District. President Aquino added that the members of the Executive Committee should bring this to the attention of their Unit Boards and solicit participation from them as well.

The Committee hopes that H. Pawlowski will consider a way to keep Newton as a venue.

The flyers are not done yet. Sue Miguel has agreed to do them so that they will be in color on the web and black and white for printing. New events on the schedule will be noted in “bold.” We have added a horizontal Swiss in Warwick but not in Mansfield. We have also included more gold point events. Instead of the 2:30 side Swiss, we have included a full Swiss of 24 /24 boards. Our goal

is that those who have lost in the KO will still be able to get into a gold point event. We also wanted to try to find an event in which players who are still working could play. A motion was made to accept the flyers as presented. D. Rock made a motion that the Executive Committee table the motion, as most of the members had not seen these schedules before. This was seconded and so voted and the initial motion was tabled. H. Pawlowski asked if S. Miguel will do the flyer for Warwick at the Rainbow weekend, as Warwick must be advertised at the Cape. She will.

D-25 Logo - Bernard Schneider

B. Schneider introduced the possibility of a new logo for D-25. One has been produced for CBA and the one that has been circulated via email can be done for D-25 for approximately \$25.00. D. 25 needs better signage and branding. We should hire a graphic designer to develop one. No action was taken at this time.

District Director's Report - Richard DeMartino

There is nothing pressing at the time.

New Business

In the interests of time, President Aquino asked that we table the discussion of various feedback from Unit Representatives regarding Providence or potentially other sites for our next New England NABC.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:29.

Suggested Web Changes

(to remove) [replaced by]

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