



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
Warwick, RI
September 5, 2015

Attendance: Mark Aquino, President; Bob Bertoni, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Ausra Geaski, Past President
Unit Representatives: David Aronson, Brenda Montague, EMBA; Alan Clamage, Sonja Smith (E. Watstein alt.); Maureen Fahey, RIBA; Sarah Widhu, NHBA; Wayne Hersey, VBA, David Rock, WMBA (Absent: Esther Watstein, CBA, Bruce Emond, CMBA, Richard Budd, MBA)
Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager, Peter Marcus DIC and Marilyn Wells

President Aquino called the meeting to order at 5:40. He thanked Bob Bertoni, Helen Pawlowski and Mike Wavada for the publicity for Warwick as well as all those who were part of the Expert Panel.

We have begun a new initiative, the A-team, with the goal of improving decorum and broadening the participation at our Regionals. We need to increase A-flight attendance and create a fun atmosphere among our top players. We also want to create a learning environment for our up and coming players.

A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to accept the Minutes from Nashua, June 27, 2015.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

We transferred sufficient funds from the Grass-roots Fund to Sturbridge to cover the losses. The District paid \$4800 for the GNT players' stipends. Money was transferred from the Grass-roots Fund to make up the difference in the needed stipends.

Linda Robinson compiled a comparison of the 1999, 2008, and 2014 NABC financials including budgeted amounts and final expenditures. In almost every category, Providence came in under budget, except in promotions. The Executive Committee authorized payment of travel expenses to those who went to other NABC's to promote Providence. S. Widhu asked why there were not more vendors in Providence. H. Pawlowski answered that the ACBL handled vendors and charged for the spaces. Total expenditures for the 2014 NABC were \$10,000 less than 1999 and \$30,000 less than 2008.

President Aquino asked if we are allowed to solicit sponsors for our Regionals. R. DeMartino will investigate, but doubted that there would be a problem.

A. Clamage asked if the ACBL was satisfied with the profit. J. Brouillard answered that Wendy Sullivan said that the figures were confidential but that the ACBL was satisfied. R. DeMartino added that the director cost allocations are different than at Regionals. The costs are not hidden but the number comparisons are not perfect.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

"B"'s Needs Committee Report - Ausra Geaski

We had an issue with the microphones at the Expert Lectures. There was no microphone for the Expert Panel session. On Friday, a microphone was obtained but Bobby Lavin opted not to use it. B. Bertoni noted that it was difficult to hear A. Levin in the rotunda. D-25 needs to establish a policy for

availability of a microphone. We also need to know what costs we would incur if the hotels provided one.

The purchase of a microphone would be a one-time charge. B. Bertoni did some research and found that one that would cover the area for 50 people would cost about \$200. One for 200 people would cost about \$500. H. Pawlowski added that different hotels have different policies. Some provide them free and others charge up to \$50 per use. Discussion followed. H. Pawlowski stated that if we buy one, we can use this to augment those that a hotel might provide free of charge. A. Geaski reminded the Executive Committee that any microphones purchased would have to be transported. M. Fahey noted that her son is in the business and she would find out what his costs would be.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the purchase of a microphone for the District at a cost of \$250 or less.

The committee approved the 2nd Pro-Am for Cromwell. It needs guidance as to whether we want to do this twice a year. There were actually more pros than am in Nashua. We need to know as any decision would affect the schedules that have already been finalized. C. Weiser added that other locations should also be considered and perhaps it could be rotated among the Units that wanted to do the work and advertising necessary to make it a success. A second Pro-Am will be considered for Warwick next year and discussed further in Mansfield. This would allow a rotation of the event among tournaments and would not impact the schedules that have already been approved and are ready for publication.

The B's Need Committee started discussions on how to maintain player interest with the introduction of the ABC/DEF games for those moving out of the Gold Rush events. The group will be working on the development of an overall strategy to publicize this and encourage those players who are moving up in the ranks to move into higher events.

A recommendation was made in the meeting to include a session on the Rules of the Game as part of the Expert Series perhaps by a tournament director. The committee will follow up on this.

Mark Aquino spoke to the group about the "A-Team" effort that he is spearheading. The goal is to identify opportunities that would promote the attendance of A-players at D-2t Regionals. M. Aquino hoped to leverage some of the ideas that were successful in the B's Need Committee for the "A-Team" efforts. He would appreciate any feedback that the group could provide.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Table count was down 214 tables at Nashua, but at least we have stopped the hemorrhaging. The loss was \$3,500 less than in 2014.

We signed a contract for one more year. I reviewed the problems with the hotel. They have to find a better solution for the lighting issues. If we decide not to go back to Nashua, we have no current alternative. I visited Sturbridge and they are not planning to spend any money on the hotel except for the replacement of a non-functioning ice machine. Nashua has finished the refurbishing of the common space, which is not more lively and contemporary. I will recheck with the hotel in Marlboro to see what is available. Wolf Lodge will not work for us as they can only accommodate us before school gets out for the summer. The Cromwell hotel cannot accommodate us because of current bookings. D. Aronson asked if it was possible for us to move Cromwell to March. H. Pawlowski answered that it is not possible at our current rates. R. DeMartino added that we do not want to run a regional opposite an NABC. W. Hersey noted that Sturbridge was a great location and always made money. Perhaps it is work giving Sturbridge another slot. A. Geaski added that the players do not like the rooms and if we do not meet our room block, we will have to pay full rate for the playing space. H. Pawlowski will check with the hotel to see if the dates are free. Springfield is out as the hotel does not own the parking garage and the players will not pay \$13.00 a day to park. D. Rock added that the construction on I-91 through the downtown is still going on. H. Pawlowski offered that when the casino opens the older hotels may be more amenable to making a deal. She will continue to look. We have signed with Nashua for 2016. We have no other options after that. We will continue to try to find a new home for 2017 and 2018. Most hotels are already booked for 2016 & 2017.

Here we are up 112 ½ tables at this point, mostly on the shoulders of the Gold Rush and Gold Rush Swiss. We have players from Canada and New Jersey. This puts us up over \$6,000 from a successful 2014. R. DeMartino added that the lighting was not the only issue with Nashua. There were issues with the food space and restaurant.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Bob Bertoni

The Committee met and reviewed the schedule for Nashua-2016. We made a change to the already approved Cromwell 2016 schedule after reviewing the data for the past few tournaments. We removed the CKO on Thursday and replaced it with a Swiss. The attendance at CKO's has been steadily declining. There are problems with the CKO's if you flight and if you do not. R. DeMartino noted that the CKO's were successful here. B. Bertoni added that the numbers were significantly higher here than what is anticipated in Cromwell. The larger the pool of players the more likely a CKO will succeed. We need to try to avoid any issues. We corrected a typo for Hyannis as the Saturday Stratified Swiss is a Sectional event. We changed the start times to 1 & 7 on Wednesday as opposed to 7:30 with Open Pairs and Swiss. If the A players come they will have some place to play. The CKO on Friday was replaced by a 0-1500 Swiss. The rest are by average. Choice Pairs was a success. This will be our last year in Hyannis as we will be at the Seacrest in Falmouth in 2017.

For Nashua, we removed the CKO's except on Saturday. They were replaced by an ABC Swiss, Gold Rush Swiss and Choice pairs. We hope that the 0-4000 and Open KO will also be successful on Friday evening. We are trying a side game series in the evenings Thursday, Friday, and Saturday and Sunday morning.

We will write Conditions of Contest for the Directors that we hope will help the Directors when issues arise. Ultimately, we trust that they will have to make the best decisions possible. DIC P. Marcus reviewed the history and fallout of past KO problems. Abuse of the Directors cannot continue. The Directors do the best they can with the instructions as given. All the CKO's were flighted here and there were no issues in insufficient numbers of players appeared. When events are flighted there is never an issue. Conditions of Contest will help but they are guidelines.

B. Bertoni continued that the committee changes the Saturday 2nd session into a Swiss as the 0-4000 and open looked like a disaster waiting to happen. H. Pawlowski added that here if they were knocked out of a CKO they had a 2-Session Swiss. In Nahua 2016 they do not have that option as some will not want to play 3 sessions. Can they be moved in to the 2-session Swiss for 1 session/ P. Marcus explained that we do this all the time for pairs games even though we do not advertise it. There is functionally no difference. We do not want to put that a 1-session entry will be accepted on the flyer but if a team asked, we would accommodate them. We can announce this at the event.

The pros and cons of the Cromwell Horizontal Swiss on Wednesday and Thursday were discussed. Cromwell has a large commuter base and this would accommodate those who work. Ultimately, time will tell if this event is a success or failure. We should determine in advance what threshold we determine will be a success. Ten tables is a viable game. Six is marginal at best. We will need to track this over time.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the schedules for Cromwell, Hyannis and Nashua as presented.

Website Committee Report - Bob Bertoni

There was a disaster at the server level that affected all of the websites. Redundancies were part of the system but the failures were global. All of the issues have been resolved and all but the very oldest archived materials have been recovered. All systems are up and running. New safeguards and back-up systems have been purchased and installed. No charges have been or will be incurred by any client, but the costs are currently over \$25,000 and climbing.

Mike Wavada has been effectively using the bulk emailing capabilities that we added. We are getting more than our money's worth. We can target subsets of our membership. Of the 4000 emails that were sent out for the NAP's, 1990 were opened and 10% downloaded the flyer and an additional 3% went to the ACBL website. The full report was sent to everyone. The work M. Wavada does and

initiative that he takes is monumental. He has never asked for anything. R. DeMartino cautioned that others in the past have done such work and there are dangers in setting a precedent regarding establishing a salary for a position. P. Marcus noted that the importance of the website is growing daily. Even in a volunteer organization there should be a place for recognition. H. Pawlowski suggested a one-time set of free plays as a thank you, perhaps for an entire regional. D. Rock made a motion that Mike Wavada be given free plays for the Cromwell regional of 2016. This would be given out at the Mansfield Board of Delegates meeting. The motion was seconded and so voted.

District Director's Report - Richard DeMartino

My full report of the Chicago NABC meeting has been posted. The Chicago NABC was successful but the logistics were difficult and disappointing. There was no comparison to Providence. Discussion of cheating scandals marred the event. Between now and November lots will happen and action will be taken. There has been much discussion on Bridgewinners regarding the Mike Passell situation. Everyone should remember that an individual is presumed innocent until proven guilty. An investigation is taking place.

The final approval of the 2-2-2 plan was postponed until Denver, though there is little doubt that it will pass. We were supposed to make a decision in Chicago but the data needed for proper evaluation was not completed in time to allow everyone to digest it. The 2-2-2 plan is better for larger Regionals whereas the 3-3 is better for smaller regionals such as ours.

H. Pawlowski asked if R. DeMartino could speak to the decision of the Board to give the Summer 2021 NABC to Austin. Providence had sent in a proposal and thought that it would be accepted. R. DeMartino said he had no advance knowledge and such decisions are usually deferred to Wendy Sullivan. H. Pawlowski added that Providence should have been 2015 if the old rotation were followed. J. Brouillard stated that we would make a proposal for the Summer NABC for 2021 or 2022 with hopes of a favorable decision.

Old Business- none

New Business

Larry Weiss Award

The last person to get the award was Frank Hacker of Vermont. He has since moved to Florida. The committee is formed "when the last recipient feels that a notable potential recipient has been brought to his attention. It does not have to be given on any set schedule as long as all of the criteria have been met. B. Bertoni will see that someone will be appointed to chair a committee should a potential recipient be brought forward.

Old D-25 Trophies

D-25 has a number of old trophies, many in less than good condition being stored by the District Tournament Manager and Secretary. The secretary has requested that the Executive Committee determine what should be done with them. Discussion followed. A motion was made, seconded and so voted that the Secretary, after appraised value is determined, dispose of the trophies in the most financially advantageous way available.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 2