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

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
Radisson Hotel
Nashua, NH
June 24, 2017

Present:

Robert Bertoni, President; Lois DeBlois, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Mark Aquino, District Director & Past President

Unit Representatives: Robert McCaw, Brenda Montague- EMBA; Shirley Wagner- CMBA; Allan Clamage, Michael Wavada (E. Watstein alt.) CBA; Paula Najarian- RIBA; Sarah Widhu- NHBA; Wayne Hersey- VBA; Richard Budd, MBA; Peter Samsel- WMBA

Invited guests (non-voting) Peter Marcus- Director, David Metcalf- DIC, Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager,

Absent: Esther Watstein, CBA

President's Opening remarks

We certainly put Nashua on the map. As of now, our table count is up 98.5 tables of which 55.5 are paying. We had 99 tables sign up for the KO. Both pairs and teams as well as room count increased compared to last year, which was a record year. If the trend continues, Nashua could equal Warwick. Then we can concentrate on getting Cromwell back to where it used to be. We used to have night games of 4-5.5 tables. Now we have 20 plus tables nightly in the super point series. It costs us a bit to run them but the increased revenue makes up for it. There have been a few glitches here, but nothing major.

H. Pawlowski commented that the hotel changer every bulb in the playing area. We had 99 tables in the KO's. The hotel staff went out of its way to be helpful.

Secretary's Report – A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, held at the Keohane Senior Regional in Falmouth, MA, on April 29, 2017

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

As the Statement of Financial Position shows, we are approximately \$24,000 better than last year even with the glitch in Falmouth. The NABC account has earned 6.4% through May, a total of \$9,324. We have no outstanding debt. The expenses are about where we expected them to be.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

As the Statement of Financial Position shows, we are doing better than last year even with the glitch in Falmouth. The NABC account has earned 6.4% through May. We have no outstanding debt. The expenses are about where we expected them to be. We have losses of \$4,382 to date, due to Falmouth. President Bertoni added that the losses were due, in part, to increased directorial staff as well as our moving the A-flight GNTs there, which put a financial burden on the District that amounted to a few thousand dollars. The table count was up, but we still lost money.

R. McCaw asked is the \$7,000 loss in Falmouth and the income from Sturbridge was reflected anywhere on the report. Treasurer Brouillard stated that a figure had been omitted in the report and that a corrected copy would be sent out.

President Bertoni asked Treasurer Brouillard to address the Audit Report, as the chair was not present. Ron Ouellet formed the Audit Committee. H. Pawlowski was present in person while participated by phone. The Audit Report concentrated on a review of procedures rather than of the actual finances of the District. Because income is in the form of cash, oversight should be a high priority. Many of the recommendations are already in practice or covered in alternate manners. Nether the good work or integrity of either Helen Pawlowski or Joe Brouillard was ever in question. He made two suggestions. He recommended that a third party approve any checks before they are written and that the cash record from ACBL Score be reconciled with the money received from the head director. Though the suggestions may be good for general usage, they do not apply to the specific parameters of our situation. DIC D. Metcalf explained that the financial sheet that is produced is generated from the ACBL Score program, which automatically generates the reports. These are based on the number of tables, which is necessary for any player to receive masterpoints. R, McCaw interjected that EMBA had an issue where a Director inadvertently made an error, which was corrected later, that could have been caught immediately if a second reconciliation was done on the spot. President Bertoni noted that the error was found and rectified, which is the important point. H. Pawlowski stated that the ACBL paper work is currently reconciled and reported in her tournament report. She will make the comparisons more specific in the future.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

We were up 98 ½ tables as of Saturday afternoon from last year, which was a good tournament. We should be pleased with the KO's and more with its effect on Friday, which was up 30 tables per session.

The Senior Regional was 19 ½ tables, but the reservations were not up substantially. Without the 26 tables from the GNTs, it would have been less, as some of the players were not eligible for Senior events and, in all likelihood, would not have attended. TA and Director fees were up. We did not use any TA's last year; therefore, the increase was actually up \$3,200. Sometimes the financial report does not reflect true costs. Mark Aquino and Joe Brouillard stayed at their Cape homes last year, This year they did not. The cost of comp rooms was up \$4,000. The Executive Committee meeting was complementary. Last year, this year it was not. The \$7,000 looks like a big hit, but it was a much due to "gifts" rather than increased costs or lost revenue. Yes, we were over

staffed. Yes, we had the expenses of the GNTs, but there were other reasons. We probably should have lost money last year.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Lois DeBlois

The Tournament/Scheduling Committee met Friday night. We made significant changes in the schedule for the Cromwell Regional as our “normal” schedule has changed radically in the last year. On Thursday, we will lose the Midflight but add a second Thursday-Friday KO. We are trying to revive the KO’s in Cromwell. We hope that we can convince the players that in the KO’s they will be playing against their peers. President Bertoni added that if we can get a full KO schedule the pros and their teams will be attracted to our Regionals. This would have a long-term positive effect. Our ultimate goal is a Thursday-Friday/ Friday-Saturday/ Saturday-Sunday KO schedule. We do not have a consistent number of A-flight Teams to run this schedule, as we need to have a sufficient number to assure that lesser teams are not forced to play up. We are not ready for this step.

H. Pawlowski asked what drew the players. The consensus was that it was not that the KO’s were free, rather it was the excitement that it generated. DIC D. Metcalf offered that we need enough to make the bottom of the top bracket no lower than 14,000 and the top of the bottom bracket no more than 1,000. If we can keep this spread, it will work. P. Marcus added that when the bottom bracket was put by themselves, the buzz was great. President Bertoni continued that the Pairing Desk did an incredible job all week. It felt like an NABC. Pairing at Warwick and Mansfield will be a critical job. The first time is the hardest. Since it was a success, it will draw others and the numbers will grow. R. McCaw stated that the locals are important too as we need to reach critical mass. S. Widhu observed that we had many more CBA players here than usual. D. Metcalf offered that even the players who were knocked out and entered the pair game were happy with the KO experience.

H. Pawlowski cautioned that if we try the Thursday/Friday KO in Cromwell, success will be weather dependent. At least Cromwell has a large commuter base. We need to consider a second “Free” KO. P. Marcus reminded that Executive Committee that Friday was up 60 tables, mostly from the Swiss. We will see tomorrow if they stay after the KO’s. We gave away 153 tables but we were down only a total of 55 playing tables overall. Tomorrow will tell. There is a psychological difference between “free” and “free for the first session.” If they come, the odds are they will stay through Sunday, President Bertoni remarked that we should be willing to invest \$6,000 to make the KO’s work. If enough stay, we can actually break even. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Cromwell schedule as presented.

The GNT Split needs to be reconsidered. The Committee agreed that all the flights should be in Sturbridge as part of the Rainbow weekend. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to go back to the original GNT schedule with all flights in Sturbridge. P. Marcus added that every effort should be made to avoid any conflicts with the Team Trials or Gatlinburg. District Director M. Aquino asked that Tournament Coordinator L. Gillespie be consulted.

The Communications Committee met and discussed Convention Card stickers. It was decided that paper stickers were unappealing and cloth stickers were too expensive. The ACBL got us in touch with “Dome Tags.” (samples were shown) They were used at

the Washington NABC and at several Regionals. The Committee agreed that we should buy them for our Regionals, but only if we have true Registration Desks. We would buy sufficient stickers for all the Regionals for which the sites are already under contract. This would allow us to negotiate the best price. President Bertoni reminded the Executive Committee that having a real registration desk was a requirement for the purchase. Just putting them in a bowl for the taking was not worth the money. It can be done through a registration card or by checking player's names off a list. It can also be done by having a player's number checked off on a list. President Bertoni stated that he hopes that the Partnership desk here would become the standard for all our Regionals. H. Pawlowski added that W. Burt did arrange to have a standby available. It was suggested that J. Brouillard, Chair for Warwick, talk to W. Burt.

The icons for Warwick, Mansfield, and Cromwell were easy as their logos are already established. Nashua is undefined as of now. The name is probably the best choice. President Bertoni again reminded the Executive Committee that all of this is contingent on there being a full-fledged Welcome Desk. P. Marcus added that ACBL asks for a player's number more to make sure that multiple registration gifts are not taken than for any other reason.

The cost is \$.32 each plus set up. The larger the order the better the price. We would like to purchase 2000 of each logo, which would be enough for 3 years. If we negotiate for all 5 logos, we should be able to do even better. A. Clamage stated that he thought that the players would prefer stickers with the names of the cities. S. Wagner said that she loved the heart (Cromwell). We would like to get the order in, in time to have the stickers at Warwick. President Bertoni asked J. Brouillard if he would have the manpower in Warwick? J. Brouillard stated that he would.

A motion was made, seconded to allow a vote of the Executive Committee to approve the purchase of the Convention Card Dom Stickers via email. This would allow the contract to be signed in time to have the stickers available for Warwick. The motion was passed without dissent.

District Director's Report - Mark Aquino

M. Aquino stated that the ACBL has hired a new CEO, Bahar Gidwani, who is the co-founder and current CEO of CSR Hub. He will take over as of July 1st. He grew up in Columbus, Ohio and studies Physics and Astronomy at Amherst College before attending Harvard Business School. He is an avid sailor and is passionate about bridge even though he has less than 200 masterpoints. I think that his focus will be refreshing for those who own, operate, and manage clubs. He and his wife currently live in New York, but will be relocating to the Memphis area. Those who attend the Toronto NABC will have a chance to meet him personally. I invited him to this tournament and to Warwick. He said that he wanted to focus on the job, which officially begins on July 1. I look forward to working with our new CEO,

I have also been busy with the task force that is looking at tournament attendance, District 25 is out in front with innovations. Our GNT numbers are mind-boggling to the rest of the ACBL. J. Brouillard asked if M. Aquino had any idea of what he (the new CEO) wanted to accomplish or the directions he intended to pursue? M. Aquino responded that the new CEO wants better interaction with the Units and Districts. I think he intends to focus on 405 major issues including infrastructure and demographics. He

was to support the clubs. He is also concerned with professionalism. He has a steep learning curve ahead of him. He has had one or two interactions with members of the Board and seems very personable. President Bertoni added that he had spoken to him. He seems like an intelligent man and he is not unaware of the fact that District 25 has been able to increase table count over the last few years.

Old Business-

The President of District 3 contacted us regarding the use of Danbury after 2018. He said he or a representative would be here to discuss this at our meeting. No one has come. (copy of the email is attached as an addendum). They failed to ask for permission for 2017 & 18 because of the death Joan Gerard. They thought that permission had been granted. They offered to give us 7 % if their net profit, of which there is no guarantee. They suggested that they were doing us a favor by letting CBA join their STaC as this saved Unit 124 money. P. Marcus explained that the D-3 STaC is a grandfathered STaC that does indeed save the participating units money as the fee structure is allows them to charge clubs less for participating in the STaC. CBA gets the benefit of a “volume discount.” R. McCaw asked if D-3 lost Unit 126 would this mean that their costs would go up? P. Marcus answered that they would not as they would still be large enough. President Bertoni reminded the Executive Committee that you never make a deal on “net.” It could make a considerable difference if only 25 players who currently go to Danbury would come to Mansfield. Even 20 people, at 2-sessions a day, over 4 days would bring us \$2,240 to our bottom line. P. Marcus recalled that it is difficult for many CBA players to get to Mansfield and when D-25 tried to run tournaments in Danbury it was an absolute disaster. No one from D-25 went there. H. Pawlowski suggested that we ask them for a set fee for every D-25 player that attended. President Bertoni suggested \$3.00 per session/ per player from District25 and asked if the Board would support that. R. Budd suggested that we decline the request. There are alternative sites and D-3 will never look for them as long as they have Danbury. A. Clamage reminded the Executive Committee that the players from Fairfield County do not travel to tournaments. D-3 moved the tournament to New Jersey and it killed the tournament. The move to Tarrytown was also not successful. Few CBA players outside of Fairfield County will go to Danbury. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to allow D-3 to use Danbury at a surcharge of \$3.00 per District 25 player on a trial period of 2 years: 2019 & 2020. The motion passed with 12 voting for the motion and none against. President Bertoni will convey this to District 3.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded and so voted. The meeting adjourned at 7:25.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25