



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

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
Warwick, RI
September 2, 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; Allan Clamage, Susan
Rodricks- CBA; Paula Najarian- RIBA; none- CMBA; 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, Michael Wavada, Communications Chair
Absent: Shirley Wagner- CMBA

President's Opening Remarks

President Bertoni called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. We have received no answer to our proposal regarding District 3 using Danbury for a Regional. Our offer was to have District 3 give us \$3.00 for every District 25 player who played at that Regional. The fee would be paid only once, regardless of how many sessions that individual played. Based on the attendance of District 25 players in the last two years (400 -410 players) this would amount to about \$1,200, or about 10% of their profits. District 25 players accounted for approximately 32% of the attendees. We have agreed to allow them to have the tournament site what is already under contract.

President Bertoni welcomed Susan Rodrick who is the new President of CBA.

Under New Business, I would like to Executive Committee to review our fee structure for players under 19 years of age. Currently our Student rate applies to all full time students under the age of 26. Life Masters pay full fee and Non-life Masters pay \$5.00, The ACBL provides for a Junior category for players under 19. I would like to Executive Committee to consider a reduced rate for this group.

Thank you all for coming and for your continued service to the District.

Secretary's Report -

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes from the Executive Committee meeting held in Nashua, NH on June 24, 2017

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

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Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Statement of Financial position shows a loss of about \$21,000, which includes a transfer of \$15,000 to the National Fund. Our Working Capital is down by approximately \$21,000, but I am still comfortable with our current total of \$47,531.

The Operating Income statement shows a year to date loss of \$21,547. This is, approximately, what we anticipated. The good news is that Monday we received a check from the ACBL for our portion of the Grass-roots Fund games that have been played in our District. These games are a win-win for the players in master points and for the District in revenue. District Director Aquino asked if this was apportion of the annual total or the total amount we would receive. R. McCaw asked how the formula works. H. Pawlowski stated that we pay the \$7.00 table fee and the players get the extra points. Treasurer Brouillard continued that there is a formula. We get about 80% back. RIBA and EMBA have run Grass-roots Fund games at their Sectionals. M. Aquino added that we use the money to support our GNT teams and NAP pairs. President Bertoni reminded those present that they should encourage their clubs to hold Grass-roots Fund games and to hold them at their Sectionals. S. Widhu noted that NHBA has been holding them at their Sectionals and that it adds a lot of points. President Bertoni stated that when run them we are investing the money and the cost is not really a loss. We did lose money in Nashua but we needed to do something to revive the KOs. KOs are what define Regionals. We did lose more than we expected, actually about double. We gave away about \$10,600 in entry fees, but many players stayed and played who would not have come. Our expenses are tight.

Treasurer Brouillard continued that the NABC investment account is at \$93,508 and has had an 8.3% return year to date for a total of 13.4%. We earned \$960 in August alone.

I have been asked by J. Jones ACBL Treasurer to provide Financial Statements. All of the Districts have been asked to do this in light of the difficulties some of the Districts and Units have experienced.

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

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

We lost \$9,709.86 at Nashua. The table count was up 13% but the revenue was down 5%. Expenses were up 26%. To some it might look as if we had a 40% increase in Director expenses but there were issues between 2016 and 2017 that make the comparison unfair. S. Miguel was ill in 2016 and we chose not to replace her, The Director staff ran very lean. We had to bring in directors from a distance this year.

Every decision that the Executive Committee makes has consequences. Caddy fees are up 30% for every tournament. We had 5-6 such items. More rooms had to be comped and we played more in free plays for fillins. Hospitality was also up because of the increased numbers playing.

Here the table count is high, though it is a bit disappointing today which is lower than Saturday last year. We are up 48-50 tables for the tournament.

We will have dates and sites for 18, 19, 20 and possibly 21 either under contract or on hold when I retire. We are under contract for all sites for 2018-2020 except for Mansfield which is only through 2019. Before we leave Mansfield we will settle that.

The Committee needs to think about the 2021 NABC which will run from July 15 to 25. This will have an impact on both Nashua and Warwick. We cannot expect our players to support and volunteer for all three. Warwick is 6 weeks after the NABC. We must decide before the middle of next year and cancel the hotels that need to be cancelled.

In Mansfield, I will ask this committee to approve and increase in table fees. P. Marcus did an analysis and believes that we need to raise the fee to \$16.00. I will request a move to \$15.00. H. Pawlowski noted that it has been the practice to increase table fees for the year before the NABC to help raise the necessary money. President Bertoni asked what the budget for the last Providence NABC was. It was \$105. Treasurer Brouillard reminded the Executive Committee that the concept is to raise enough money so that there is seed money for the next NABC. Last time the committee raised \$42,000 from sponsors. R. McCaw asked why if tournaments attendance is up 10% hospitality is up 30%. H. Pawlowski answered that when the evening games became legitimate; the players expected that some hospitality would be provided. They are up 80-110 people and coffee and something is provided. Discussion followed about the possible new rates. President Bertoni ended by saying that he is loath to break the \$15.00 barrier. Director Metcalf added that both our neighboring Districts (3 & 24) charge \$20.00 per session. D. Budd offered that if we think we will have to raise it twice, it is better to do it all at once. President Bertoni concluded that there would be a motion made in Mansfield.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Tournament Manager's report as presented.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Lois DeBlois

Our schedule for regionals through 2021 was passed out to everyone. I will continue to update it. We are going back to the half sheet flyers rather than the quarter sheets. We will continue to increase the player experience at our Regionals with stickers and a Welcome desk. This worked out well here at Warwick.

District Director Mark Aquino stated that L. DeBlois has one a fantastic job. She is forward thinking. We are lucky that she will be a co-chair at the Providence NABC. President Bertoni added that she is an incredibly hard worker. A motion was made and seconded to accept the report as presented.

Tournament Manager Search Committee - Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made to accept report of the Tournament Manager Search Committee that was sent to the members of the Executive Committee with the following change: no salary will be stipulated. It will be replaced by "salary commensurate with experience." The job description will be sent to the members of the Board of Delegates, posted on the District website, and sent to each Unit President.

President Bertoni took a moment to present Mike Wavada with the Larry Weiss silver tray, properly engraved. He added that M. Wavada does an immense amount of work for the District with his databases and targeted emails. This makes a huge difference in any organization. They have been an asset in the successful turnaround that the District has made. We have had increased attendance in every tournament. Much of this has been due to Mike's work.

District Director's Report - Mark Aquino

My report from Toronto has been posted on our website. Orlando was a huge loss. Table count fell some 3,000 tables below forecast. This translated to almost \$250,000 lost in table fees. There were two Regionals in Florida that were run on either side of the NABC. The players had no real incentive to come to the NABC if there were intending to play in the Regional events. The ACBL negotiated a settlement with the Swan and Dolphin Resort to withdraw from the 2022 contract. We were facing a \$40/night rate increase. I endorse H. Pawlowski's suggestion that we adjust our schedule for 2021.

I have been pushing term limits. I have a proposal that failed by a 14 to 11 vote. A motion needs two-thirds approval to pass. I was hoping to send a message to the membership that we want a fluid organization not life time tenure for the Board.

The new CEO is very hard working. I am impressed with his desire to spend time in the office at Horn Lake rather than visiting Regionals. He is moving his family there. I went to Gatlinburg and was surprised at the number of staff members from Horn Lake who were there. I am on the Tournament Attendance, Clubs, and Volunteers Task Forces. The real issue is the decline in volunteers. Our increase in average age has been linear or 72 now. We need to be working on finding ways to assure that our organization can be sustained. The Code of Disciplinary Regulations has been rewritten.

Old Business-

Danbury update- President Bertoni

As of 3:00 today, we had not received a response. We will await their input and we continue to hope that a solution can be found. P. Marcus stated that he wanted to bring three things to the attention of the Executive Committee. He reminded the Executive Committee that D--25 was asking for a significant amount of money. Though it might not determine whether they run the tournament or not; D-3 was facing other financial losses due to other lost sites, including Saratoga, which has always been there biggest Regional, and Rye. Are we doing this because we are angry at our neighboring District for not asking permission or because we think that Danbury hurts our Regionals. The Fairfield County players do not come to our Regionals in any case. At some point, we may need something from them. A. Clamage stated that his analysis showed that only 6 individuals went to all three Regionals (Danbury, Cromwell, and Mansfield).

President Bertoni answered that there are limited numbers of bridge dollars that people will spend. There is insufficient time between the Regionals not for there to be an impact. Danbury is only 2-3 weeks before our NAP finals. If 20 people came it would have a big effect on our bottom line. R. McCaw reminded the Board that all of this had been hashed out before. President Bertoni added that when D-3 responds we will deal with it. We had a vote and only 2 individuals voted against the motion which passed 16-2. They make \$9,000 profit in Danbury. Our request for \$1,200 is not out of line. When D-3 makes a counter offer I will bring it to the Board.

New Business-

1. Establish a Youth Bridge table fee discount of \$7.00 for all District 25, ACBL member players under the age of 19, regardless of rank. This would encourage those currently unable to attend and help their parents in their effort to support Youth

players. Discussion followed and the Board expressed overwhelming support for youth bridge. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to establish a separate rate for players under the age of 19 and continue the structure for Student rate for players from 19 to 25.

Youth rate: under the age of 19
Life Master's pay \$5.00 p/s
Non-life Master's play free

Student rate: Under the age of 26
LM's pay full fee.
NLM pay \$5.00 p/s

2. Medical Response Emergency List - A suggestion has been received that District 25 should establish a method where by the location of emergency trained doctors could be established. It would facilitate their being called in case of an emergency. Currently it is the practice of the Directors to ask if there is a doctor in the room.

After discussion it was determined that there is no efficient process that could be developed and any direct involvement in determining a medical response to an emergency at a Regional would open the District to liability regarding the result. The Good Samaritan Law that protects medical personnel would not apply to nor protect the District in such situations. No change will be made in our current practice.

3. President Bertoni brought the fact that as the "B's Needs Committee has been disbanded, having completed its work. We have no one to take ownership of the lectures. Joyce Stiefel and Mark Aquino have coordinated the speakers but we need someone to circulate through the playing areas to remind the players that there is a lecture about to begin and where that lecture will be held. It takes less than 10 minutes on the days when lectures are being given, either Wednesday and Friday or Thursday and Friday (opposite the pairs games). They also need to remind the Directors to make an announcement before the game begins. P. Najarian agreed to take on the task.

4. Synrey Bridge proposal - President Bertoni stated that the District has received an offer from Synrey Bridge. They are proposing that they run a robot tournament that would give no masterpoints but they would provide free entries to Mansfield for the whole tournament to those who finished 1st to 3rd, with lesser numbers of free plays to those who finished 4th to 10th. This would be a great opportunity for our players. They would have a booth at Mansfield that would give information on their services what are directed at teaching and teachers. This is not a tournament for masterpoints. The ACBL has an exclusive contract with Bridge-base on Line as the only on-line site that can give masterpoints. This does not compete with us for players as on-line bridge does. It encourages players to come to our Regionals. District Director Aquino cautioned that we do not have a contract. We need to see one in writing before we make any decision. It appears to be in conflict with the contract signed between the ACBL and Bridge-base On-line. R. Budd added that we should not get into this without getting a legal opinion. R. McCaw added that we need to have a representative present. We should invite their representative to give a presentation to the Executive Committee in Mansfield. The proposal was tabled.

Director P. Marcus gave the Executive Committee the current figures as of the end of the 2nd session on Saturday. Total tables are up from last year There were 99 KO teams in Nashua and there are 83 here.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25

Proposed Web Changes
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