

New England Bridge Conference



of the American Contract

Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
Holiday Inn
Mansfield, MA
November 12, 2016

Present:

Officers: Robert Bertoni, President; Lois DeBlois, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Mark Aquino, District Director and Past President
Unit Representatives:

EMBA: David Aronson, Brenda Montague; CMBA: Shirley Wagner; CBA: Michael Smith (A. Clamage alt.), Susan Smith (Allan Clamage alt.); RIBA: Maureen Fahey; Sarah Widhu; VBH: Wayne Hersey; MBA: Jack Mahoney (R. Budd alt.); WMBA: Peter Samsel

Invited Guests: Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; David Metcalf, Peter Marcus, DICs; Mike Wavada, Communications Committee/Webmaster; Neil Montague

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

President's Opening remarks - I was pleased to see such a great turnout today. We were down considerably earlier in the week. This has been a great year and we have lots coming up during this meeting.

Secretary's Report - A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Warwick, RI on September 5, 2016.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Operating Income Statement shows that year-to-day income is more than twice what it was at this time last year. Our Grass-roots income received from the ACBL is up from last year. Total non-tournament income is 16 times that of last year. Our expenses were also higher. This is partly due to the fact that stipends are now not paid by the Tournament Manager out of Tournament income, but out of the District's funds. We also spent \$2,500 for future emailing. We had a positive net income for the year as opposed to our loss of \$5,188 last year.

I would like to propose that we move \$15,000 from the working cash into the NABC Fund. We could transfer this back at any time, should we need it. This would bring the NABC Fund to \$85,171. As of October 31, we received a 4.3% yield, which is what we hoped, as our goal was to return 4-6% on that investment.

The New England Bridge Conference annual report was filed with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Secretary of State's office in October. A motion was

made, seconded to move the requested \$15,000 into the NABC account. It was passed unanimously.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Warwick was 7 tables higher than last year. Director's fees were up substantially. S. Miguel was ill and had to be replaced by a higher fee tournament director. Another item that increased was hotel rooms. Last year, we actually made money on the rooms, this year we contracted for more rooms than we needed. We made \$4,000 less there this year than in 2015.

Here, we were down 30 tables on Wednesday and by Thursday, we were down 85. I have no explanation. Friday we were up 15 tables. Today we are a net positive. If there is a vote to continue to hold the B & C NAP event were, I vote yes. I will separate the NAP event from the Regional when I make my report in Cromwell.

Here we have a new Director of sales. We have the right of first refusal for 19 & 20 and contracts for 2017 & 2018.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Lois DeBlois

President Bertoni asked if any Unit President or substitute did not receive the NAP Proposal that was emailed. Is anyone aware of another Unit having a proposal to host the A-Flight NAP for 2017? None responded.

President Bertoni noted that there were 21 ½ tables. We did have some double dippers, B-flight players moving up. District Director Aquino congratulated those responsible for bringing the proposal forward, as it exceeded our expectations. The Unit should be thinking about suggestions for accommodations in the Watertown area for those coming to the event. H. Pawlowski will make a subset of the NAP-B/C in here report for this Regional. EMBA was happy with the results of the A-Flight NAP.

President Bertoni stated that the Grass-roots Fund games are critical to all the Units. Several have run Grass-roots Fund games at their Sectionals. This gives their event a Regional rating, though no red points. The money comes directly to our District. This makes the tournament better for the players and helps us fund our GNT Teams.

B. Montague, for EMBA, proposed that EMBA be authorized to hold the A-Flight NAP at its October Sectional in 2017. The motion was seconded and so approved. The B & C Flight event will be held in Mansfield.

The responsibility for the printing of the flyers and their distribution has fallen to the Vice President. There is no budget item for this. The purpose would be to handle the flyers, postage and mailing costs as well as any necessary signage at our Regionals. The estimate is approximately \$2,000 per regional, including the printing and mailing. This should come out of the Tournament Manager's budget and be shown in a separate line item. President Bertoni suggested that this be sent to the Finance Committee, President Bertoni, Treasurer Brouillard, Finance Chair, Linda Robinson and Secretary Weiser for review both the amount and the oversight necessary. The Tournament Manager's Report would show more profit, though the balance sheet would be the same. This would give a more honest evaluation of our profit and loss. H. Pawlowski added that the way we are doing it now is working well. The Vice President is doing the job. The only issue is when L. DeBlois is no longer Vice President. The incoming Vice President would not necessarily have the same ability to complete this task, both the amount of work and the

oversight necessary. The Tournament Manager's Report would show more profit, though the balance sheet would be the same. This would give a more honest evaluation of our profit and loss. H. Pawlowski added that the way we are doing it now is working well. The Vice President is doing the job. The only issue is when L. DeBlois is no longer Vice President. The incoming Vice President would not necessarily have the same ability to complete this task. Certainly, if that were our expectation, the job description of the Vice President would have to change. J. Brouillard noted that this would make the flyers an administrative expense rather than a Tournament Expense. L. DeBlois stated that this should also include the ads as well as any special promotions, such as the prize bags.

A motion was made that the responsibility for promotional material for the five Regionals would fall under the Tournament Committee chair with the Vice President and Treasurer as oversight with a managed amount of money. The motion was seconded and so approved.

District Director's Report - Mark Aquino

I will be leaving on the 19th for the Director's meeting in Orlando. There is a lot on the agenda. We will elect a new president and there are many organizational issues to be decided. The CEO is trying to reduce the Board to 9 members, not 25. This will have a serious effect on the ACBL. There would be a Committee of Nine: 3 Board members, 3 Non-board members and 3 from Management. There has been some discussion, but the actual proposal is as yet unclear. Possibly, we would have one representative for several Districts, such as 24, 3, 25, together. They would keep the Districts that exist but merge them into only 9 representatives. There is discussion about moving the Educational Foundation and the Charity Foundation to a separate, independent body. There are lots of internal concerns regarding this. The CEO agreed to a deal with Bridge-Base-on-Line what will have a negative impact on the ACBL. Bridge-base-on-line would have an exclusive arrangement with the ACBL, freezing out any others. It is a one time, 2 million dollar windfall, with many potential negative consequences. The good news is that the authorization for the 2021 NABC in Providence was signed. Without this, it looked as if any site north of Philadelphia was out of the NABC list for up to 20 years. Getting the NABC for 2021 is a tribute to Helen and Joe for their work as chairs for the last NABC and for everyone who lobbied for a return to Providence.

Webmaster's/ Communication's Committee Reports - Michael Wavada

President Bertoni stated that we got twice the email units (2 million) for the money approved, as there was a one-day sale.

Old Business

None

New Business

President Bertoni stated that, nationally, Regionals that are doing well receive a significant portion of their revenue from KO's. In District 25, our best Regional rated only 12 nationwide, and our worse were 17-18. Where the KO's are doing well, the tournaments are doing well and visa-versa. Districts with half our membership are seeing

regionals 2-3 times our size. In Gatlinburg, admittedly a unique case, 61 ½ % of their table count was due to KO's. Ours account for only 2.7%. We changed the KO's to daytime in 2017, but we still ran a Swiss against them. This format broke the KO's. We need viable KO's to rebuild our numbers. We have a prove model. We do not seed, we bracket. We made the KO's elitist and killed it. We need to try to bring it back. We must remove the 0-4000 and just bracket. When we run KO, they must be the only team game available. DIC P. Marcus stated that we saw the KO's decline and decline. They were run badly. We went from a PM to an AM centric schedule and killed them. We need to get the people back. The proposal is to have a Saturday-Sunday, prime time bracketed KO free. This is a marketing tool. We have to sell the concept. If we get 60 teams we will lose income, but we will get the players to come back. Those who are knocked out in the first round may stay and play in the afternoon. Those that get knocked out in the second round may return to play in the Swiss on Sunday. We have to get the players back that we have lost. We get more of an emotional buzz with "free." We propose a 4-session, Prime time, KO in Nashua. They would be advertised as 10 & TBA. President Bertoni added that we have taken the 0-4000 off the schedule in Cromwell. We decided not to try the complete change there, as the potential for a weather issue would make the trial unclear. Nashua would be like a Grand Opening. There are no KO's scheduled for the Senior Regional. We need to promote the KO's for Nashua in 2017 if we hope to resurrect the KO's. This will still be good for the Gold Rush group as they will still be in their separate bracket. KO's are a different event. They are more like rubber bridge, a format with which many of the newer players are familiar. This will cost revenue. We just put \$15,000 into the NABC fund. We are in good financial shape. To grow the District we need a viable KO event. M. Fahey pointed out that many players have never played in a KO. She is one. There need to be lots of education including an explanation of what KO's are and how they are run. President Bertoni added that in the past the KO's were the Gold Rush Event as winning your bracket was your ticket to gold. DIC Marcus stated that taking Gatlinburg as an example, 65% of their tables are KO's. We would bring players here from outside of New England. President Bertoni reiterated that we have eliminated seeding in KO's. Beginning them on Friday night was counter-trend. DIC Marcus added that success will depend on word of mouth from the Board of Delegates in their clubs and sectionals. A President's Message and a flyer on the website will not be enough. This is especially true for these who go to 199 and 299 Sectionals.

President Bertoni continued that we should gear our Expert Lectures to this as well as produce a pamphlet for those who have never played. N. Montague reminded the Board that the lower bracket players must be assured that they will be playing against their peers. H. Pawlowski asked how ere were defining "free." P. Marcus reiterated that it meant for the whole thing. Other suggestions were made including a "clip a coupon" on the website, free first round and something off the rest. D. Aronson stated that the cost would be the sanction fee plus our lost revenue. H. Pawlowski reminded the Board that the Saturday /Sunday KO is on the schedule for Cromwell. The Big Event is planned for Nashua in 2017. J. Brouillard stated that , as Treasurer, at the word "free" his blood pressure shot to 220. Perhaps we could make the first 2 rounds free and ask the winners to pay for the semi- and final rounds. P. Marcus countered that the amount of money that would be realized from the final two rounds is small as we would be down to 4 teams. We need Free for the quality of the buzz. It's a marketing approach. It will not generate

income but it will get the players to the tables. District Director Aquino added that if we should be caution is we use the word free regarding the expectations down the road. We must be clear that this is a one-time only promotion. N. Montague added that this could be the great comeback for the KO's. The KO's are our only 4-session event. A motion was made to change the Cromwell schedule and remove the 0-4000 Swiss and add a red-point Swiss and for Nashua remove the Red point Swiss and add a free Saturday and Sunday KO. The motion was seconded. Discussion followed. District Director Aquino asked if this would be extended to the evening game. The answer was no. President Bertoni confirmed that there would be no Swiss or Gold Rush held against the event. H. Pawlowski stated that the effect of removing the 0-4000 would be infinitesimal. Removing the Gold Rush would be significant. The motion was called and passed ominously.

President Bertoni added that he would like to make the side games at night Charity or Grass-roots games. This would significantly increase the point awards, and thus the attendance. He requested the permission of the Board. A motion was made and seconded to change the side games to Charity games or their equivalent at Cromwell and beyond. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent. DIC Marcus reported that at 9:59 this morning we were 71 tables down. As of 10:01, we were 22 tables up. This would not have been the case without the NAP's, which is a real success. He had been informed that the Board of Delegates had voted to change the student fee to \$2.00 per session. The numbers are very small. He suggested that the \$2.00 was not worth all the haste and paperwork. D. Aronson made a motion that full time students, under the age of 25, with valid school ID's, who were non-life masters be admitted free. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent. President Bertoni stated that as the Board of Delegates had made the motion to change the fee to \$2.00, this would have to be brought to that body on Sunday.

There is one item left to be discussed. We are lucky to have two people who have expressed a willingness to chair the 2021 Providence NABC. They are Joe Brouillard and Lois DeBlois. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve Joe Brouillard and Lois DeBlois as co-chairs of the 2021 Providence NABC.

Handbook

Copies of the current Handbook were sent to the members of the Executive Committee. No comments or corrections were offered.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, D-25