



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

Minutes  
Board of Delegates Meeting  
Mansfield, MA  
November 12, 2017

**Attendance:** Attendance:

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

Unit Representatives:

EMBA –Unit 108 - 13 of 17

Curtis Barton, Maureen Bitler, Steve Diamond, Lynn Duncan (L. Gillespie alt.), Peter Lombardo, Grace Lombardo ( C. Cooper alt), JoAnn Menga-Wallace (S. Agranoff alt.), Robert McCaw, Brenda Montague, Neil Montague (P. Tierney alt.) Paul Nason (D. Aronson alt.) Ashok Rao (A. Parrish alt.) Jan Smola,

*Absent: Saul Agranoff, David Aronson Catherine Cooper, Luke Gillespie, Zachary Grossack, Brenda Montague, Sabrina Miles, Adam Parrish, Alix Taylor, P. Tierney*

CMBA –Unit 113 - 2 of 2 Jeanne Robillard, Joan Kuklinski *Absent - none*

CBA – Unit 126 - 12 of 12

Larry Bausher, Paul Burnham (E. Watstein alt.), Allan Clamage, Richard DeMartino, Sandy DeMartino, Ausra Geaski, Joan Martin, Sonja Smith, Michael Smith (P. Bausher alt.) Susan Smith (J. Stiefel alt.) Helma Strauss (D. Benner alt.) Michael Wavada, Susan Wavada

*Absent: Phyllis Bausher, Debbie Benner, Joyce Stiefel, Esther Watstein,*

RIBA – Unit 145 - 3 of 4 Linda Ahrens, Maureen Fahey, Paula Najarian, Marshall Williams

*Absent - none*

NHBA –Unit 150 -2 of 4- Wayne Burt, Sarah Widhu, *Absent- Thomas Marshall, B.L. Tysor*

VBA –Unit 175 -2 of 3 - Karen Hewitt Randle (W. Hersey alt.) Steve Randell (P. Sharpsteen alt.)

*Absent: Wayne Hersey, Richard Tracy, Phil Sharpsteen*

MBA – Unit 189 -2 of 4 - Larry Kolkhorst, Dan Morgenstern *Absent: Richard Budd, Jack Mahoney*

WMBA-Unit 196-3 of 3 Robert Brodeur, Bob Sigor (R. Derrah alt.), Peter Samsel

*Absent: R. Derrah*

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**President’s Opening remarks**

President Bertoni called the meeting to order at 8:00 and requested that speakers identify themselves by name and unit. “This is a bitter-sweet meeting for me as it is my last as president. I have enjoyed these two years and thank all of you and the Board, especially Helen Pawlowski, Mike Wavada and all who helped without these people things would not run the way they do, Over the last two years, every tournament, year to year, has been bigger than the year before. Nationally this is not the norm where numbers at Regionals are down 4-7 %. We are the only District that has done anything to turn this trend around. It is because of all of you that we did it. I had a plan. The first year we worked primarily for the B & C players.

I also wanted a return of the KO’s for the As. This year we corrected that. We kicked it off with a huge response a Nashua and the trend has continued. I was concerned that the KO’s might supper here with all the other events. I was afraid that the bottom might fall out. We had 47 tables despite the rest of the schedule. Without viable KOs there is no room for growth. Lois (DeBlois) has done a

marvelous job on schedules. Without her efforts we would be in trouble. She will continue this as President. I am excited to see her take over, as I know she will do exciting things.

As Vice President I tried many things including evening pairs. At the NABCs I noted extra point pairs. When we added extra points pairs to the evening schedules the numbers grew. H. Pawlowski has done a nice job providing hospitality. The Midflight was well accepted and is doing well. There is no one answer to the problem of attendance. We need everyone's help and work to continue to make D-25 Regionals grow.

**Secretary's Report** - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes of the Board of Delegates meeting held in Nashua, NH, June 25, 2017, as sent.

**Treasurer's Report** - Joseph Brouillard

Copies of the Operating Income Statement and the Statement of Financial Position have been passed out to everyone. This year things are generally OK. We had a few tournaments that lost money, Falmouth and Nashua. We expected higher attendance in Falmouth and staffed accordingly. We had a profit of \$9,659 in Warwick and received over \$13,000 from the Grass-roots Fund. Currently our net income shows a loss of \$222.00. Net assets are \$173,388 and we have no outstanding liabilities. We are in good shape financially.

The NABC Fund is invested. It had a good year with a return of 12.08%. The NABC Fund investments had a return of \$17.35%.

D. Morgenstern (MBA) asked what the financial outcome of Nashua would have been if we had collected the fees for the KO's. J. Brouillard answered that we would have broken even.

**Election of Officers - 2017** - Brenda Montague (absent)

In the absence of Brenda Montague, President Bertoni read the slate of candidates for 2017

President	Lois DeBlois	RIBA - one-year term
Vice President	Jack Mahoney	MBA- one year term
Treasurer	Joseph Brouillard	RIBA - two-year term
Secretary	Carolyn Weiser	EMBA - two-year term

**Tournament Manager's Report** - Helen Pawlowski

As of this morning, we have an increase of 31 tables here over last year. Last year we were up 67 tables from the year before. This means that we are up over 100 tables in two years.

At Warwick, Caddies cost more than doubled. The Executive Committee decided to gross up the pay of the Caddies as we now give everyone who earns over \$600 a 1099. Expenses were also up \$1,400. Tables were up by 17 but profit was down by \$550. We still made \$9,659 overall. M. Smith (CBA) asked why the caddie costs were so high. H. Pawlowski answered that the KO's use more caddies and there were more caddy sessions. Their gross pay per session was also high.

R. DeMartino (CBA) asked if there would be a vote on the slate of candidates. Agreed. He made a motion that the slate be approved as presented. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent.

H. Pawlowski continued that the caddies are now given 30% more and they were also given a \$5.00 raise, the first in more than 10 years.

P. Najarian made a motion to accept the Tournament Manager's Report. It was seconded and so voted.

L. Kolkhorst asked why the KO's started ½ hour late. President Bertoni answered that there were a number of glitches. An A-flight team that had received an entry could not be found to turn in their entry and this affected the pairings. There was a program glitch in the ACBL Score. These will be handled better in the future. R. DeMartino added that the problem is with the ACBL not with us. There

is no real solution. The ACBL Board worked on it. We might look at what 3 & 24 are doing with their bracketed Swiss. Swiss still do not pay the same as pairs.

### **Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Lois DeBlois**

Bob has laid out the groundwork with everything he has done in the last two years. Our Regional schedules are in good shape. Starting in Cromwell we will be adding a second KO to the schedule. The Presidential KO will be on Thursday/Friday and the Monster KO will continue to start on Saturday and finish on Sunday. We will continue with this KO schedule in Nashua. With fewer boards played in the B & C, we have shortened the break between sessions. The second session will start at 2:15.

L. Kolkhorst asked why the KO's started ½ hour late. President Bertoni answered that there were a number of glitches. An A-flight team that had received an entry could not be found to turn in their entry and this affected the pairings. There was a program glitch in the ACBL Score. These will be handled better in the future. R. DeMartino added that the problem is with the ACBL not with us. There is no real solution. The ACBL Board worked on it. We might look at what 3 & 24 are doing with their bracketed Swiss. Swiss still do not pay the same as pairs.

L DeBlois continued that working with Bob has been a joy, most days (smile). He has been a mentor and friend. He has worked hard and has been responsive to every question. I will need your patience in the next two years as I continue to learn. I want your input.

President Bertoni thanked L. DeBlois and stated that no one has worked harder than Lois. When I became Vice President, he explained, we expanded the job. She will continue the trend.

### **District Director's Report - Mark Aquino**

I Echo Lois' applause to the great job Bob has done as president. He has done an amazing job. A week from today I leave for San Diego for the ACBL Board of Directors meetings. He asked for a show of hands for those who were also attending (6). Last night when I had an impromptu meeting with Sandy DeMartino and Sue Roderick, I recalled that 45 years ago I spent Thanksgiving in Georgia. I will miss being at home for Thanksgiving, but I recall that 45 years ago I spent Thanksgiving at Fort Benning, GA. He asked for a show of hands of those who were veterans or had a family member who was a veteran. In the spirit of Veterans' Day, thank you for your service.

I have spent a lot of time on Board activities in advance of the meetings. I have been putting in many late hours on board committee teleconferences recently. I actually fell asleep on a conference call. I continue to work on the Tournament Task Force. It is a busy committee headed by Margot Hennings, the District Director from Washington, D.C. and it includes individuals a number of board and non-board members such as Pete Mislin, who serves as the Tournament Chairman in charge of the huge Gatlinburg, TN Regional. I am also working with Paul Cuneo, the District Director out of Houston to help develop a Volunteer Management Program. We have been preparing a Webinar to try to address how to increase awareness of the benefit to the organization of our volunteers.

R. DeMartino alluded to the Bridge Committee, which is run by Russ Jones of Arkansas (D-10). One issue that will be discussed in San Diego is the masterpoint inequality that Rich cited.

I would like to thank H. Pawlowski who does a marvelous job and a special thanks to the directors.

The New CEO, Bahar Gidwani, has studied astrophysics and has a degree from the Harvard Business School. I critical of the last CEO for the time he spent travel throughout the ACBL. Bahar is not at all like this. In Fact, he appears to be somewhat of a workaholic. He attempted to collate a litany of discussion topics into his "10 Big Ideas." Truthfully, I found some of his out-of-the-box ideas a bit scary. I do not know how to rope in his enthusiasm so that we can preserve what all of you have worked so hard to develop and enjoy.

The average age of the ACBL members is 72. The most important question that needs to be addressed is how we are to sustain this organization in the future. Three of his 10 Big Ideas have been wiped off the plate. These are the Expert Guild, Money Bridge, and the Health Benefit of Bridge. The

majority of players are not interested in “green points” but “gold points.” There are 7 left, which will be reviewed.

There is a Committee that will attempt to align these with our strategic priorities. Remaining from the list are: Improved Teaching; Relaxed Bridge; Strength based ratings; Upgrading technology particularly with clubs; improved use of technology at clubs and tournament which has been mistaken to mean correcting ACBL Score; and Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship. Each will require scrutiny. We need to simplify masterpoints. The Redistribute Tournament Activity alone has 42 different subtopics. One of the things that Bahar as advocated is to eliminate Sectionals and experiment with Regionals at Clubs, which would be counter to everything we have done here. I am opposed to almost every one of these.

He has acted on some financial concerns. The Las Vegas Tournament was a disaster. They were unable to meet the hotel requirement of rooms as the hotel undercut them, and they almost went bankrupt. He wants to take over all of the tournament sponsorship and financing. He wants to put people at Horn Lake in charge of many things that I truthfully don't believe that that have the necessary skills or experience to do effectively. You delegates are the strength of the organization, not Horn Lake.

The Regionals at Clubs is an experiment out of D-6 with D-9. We were asked if we would participate. The overwhelming response was negative. While it certainly helps players in remote parts of our District or those who are physically unable to travel to earn gold points, the overwhelming concern is that it opens the door to killing our ability to sustain our face-to-face competition down the road.

R. DeMartino stated, “most District Directors I know seem to believe that he takes only the ideas of a few. We need to take back the organization from J. Whipple. You and the other District Directors need to take back the organization. They want to drop the number of Regionals by 21. We have contracts. I beg you to take the authority back. Most say he does not listen.”

President Bertoni added that he could not agree with R. DeMartino more, It might be good to have Regionals at Clubs if you own a bridge club. If we are to continue, we need to put the fannies in the seats and have live regionals. Mark, I make a direct appeal, tell him to leave the Regionals alone.

### **Old Business**

Update: Danbury- President Bertoni reviewed the history. D-3 has held a Regional in our District. This year the Executive Committee asked for an accommodation as this Regionals draws from player who might otherwise come to our Regionals. A proposal was made by the Executive Committee that was rejected and counter proposals were made and discussed. I went to Danbury to meet with their President. Their proposal that was accepted by the Executive Committee was that they would give us \$250 a year to use the Danbury site. This will only apply to Danbury. A. Clamage (126) asked if they could come back with a counter proposal. President Bertoni said no. We do not want it to come back. This is not what the Executive Committee voted.

### **New Business-**

ACBL update- The ACBL update was covered by D.D. Mark Aquino. I would like to stress again that Regionals at Clubs will eventually wear down the number of people who come to these (regional) events. It is not good for us. Ending Sectionals is even less of a good idea. Competition at clubs is too variable and the results are often skewed. In my experience, he never followed any suggestions and only asks those who agree with him. I do not think he understands Regionals.

R. DeMartino (126) asked the status of Peter Marcus. President Bertoni answered that Peter Marcus is our DIC. He is not an ACBL employee. He had a previous lawsuit which led to a class action lawsuit which forced the ACBL to pay their directors overtime. Part of the settlement was that D-25 could hire him as long as they wanted him to be their DIC. Last year he got passed over for a promotion and he felt that this was retaliation, which was expressly forbidden by the settlement. He left the ACBL. Since then, the ACBL has passed a rule that all DICs must be ACBL employees. I

asked the ACBL for this in writing and they refuse to provide it. Peter works for \$1.00 per session. He contributes a lot. His knowledge is wide ranging.

Vice President DeBlois stated that she would be remiss not to mention some changes for 2018. Dick Budd, who has been our Recorder for many years has decided to retire from that position. Our new Recorder will be Neil Montague. Luke Gillespie will be replaced by Maureen Fahey as Tournament Coordinator. I look forward to working with our new Vice President, Jack Mahoney (MBA) I think we will make a great team. There is a box of green Harvest Regional bags by the door. When you leave, please take one as a small thank you.

D.D. M. Aquino announced that Frank Merblum (CBA) would be the new NAP/GNT Coordinator effective January 1, 2018. The members of the Board of Delegates were reminded to return all financial papers and sign-in sheets before they left.

President Bertoni asked for an alternate to attend the meeting of the Board of Governors in San Diego.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25