



Minutes

Executive Committee
Presidential Regional
Radisson Hotel
Cromwell, CT
February 17, 2018

Attendance:

Present: Lois DeBlois, President; Jack Mahoney, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Bertoni, Past President

Unit Representatives: EMBA: Curtis Barton (B. Montague, alt.); CBA: Allan Clamage, Esther Watstein; RIBA: Paula Najarian; CMBA: Carol Seager; NHBA: Sarah Widhu; VBA: Steve Randall, (W. Hersey alt.); MBA: Daniel Morgenstern; WMBA: Peter Samsel

Invited guests Mark Aquino, District Director; Peter Marcus- Director, Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager, Michael Wavada, Communications Chair Marilyn Wells- Director

Absent: Robert McCaw (EMBA), Brenda Montague (EMBA), Wayne Hersey (VBA)

President DeBlois called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM. President DeBlois welcomed everyone and asked that members of the Executive Committee identify themselves.

Secretary's Report - As there were no questions or corrections, the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Mansfield, MA on November 11, 2018 was accepted as sent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

We are in good shape. We are up from 2016. We have no current liabilities. The Grass-Roots Fund is growing and the NABC Fund is less than \$30,000 from our minimum goal. We had a small profit in 2017 due primarily to attendance increases in Warwick and Mansfield. Our profit was less than we had in 2016. Also sent via email was a transaction list of the Treasurer's account. The NABC Fund had a 14.46% return on investment. The total return is 19.84%. Even with the recent market rollercoaster of January and February, we have a year to date return of .08%

All the 1099s have been sent out, filed and accepted by the IRS. Our 990 tax return has been completed and will be emailed by the due of May 15, 2018.

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

Purple Pass- Marilyn Wells

As Director Marilyn Wells was present, President DeBlois recognized her for her presentation of the ACBL's Purple Pass program. Marilyn Wells is the Purple Pass Coordinator for the ACBL.

Purple Pass is an ACBL initiative that will allow players to charge their entry fees on their credit cards. It was used in San Diego. The ACBL is using retrofitted iPads with a swipe, mounted on heavy stands.-The iPads have internet capability but reception is dependent on area. In 2018, each District has been offered a chance to try the system at two Regionals at no cost. When the trial period is over, districts will be charged the \$65 rental fee for each unit (one at each selling station/4-5 for D25), FedEx ground shipping and the 3% (+/-) credit card fees. At the end of the tournament, the ACBL will provide a statement indicating "this is what the charges would have been." Marilyn suggested that we publicize that the use of credit cards is an ACBL Experimental program. In Tarrytown the credit card charges were \$34,000 and in Houston approximately \$39,000. Hilton Head

(D7) has its own vouchers so the program was not well received there. Marilyn was asked about the table fees and she reported that Tarrytown fees were \$20.00 and in Houston, fees were \$14.00.

R. Bertoni noted that there is a potential problem if we use the system in Nashua and Warwick, and revert to cash in Mansfield. Players will not bring cash. We will have to be careful to make it clear that this is only a 2-tournament experiment. Why would we not just use our own bank, which is what most small businesses do? It would be cheaper for us and there would be no difference to the players.

Treasurer Brouillard added that the ACBL credit card system may have a benefit to the players but there is no offsetting revenue component for us. There would be a \$1,000 to \$1,500 per tournament cost to the District and would put us in a negative cash position. H. Pawlowski asked when we would get our money. M. Wells answered the funds should be received within a week. H. Pawlowski then asked if we could use direct deposit to which M. Wells confirmed we could. C. Seager asked if this would increase players. (Answer) No. H. Pawlowski added if she (M. Wells) thinks that the ACBL will eventually make this mandatory. M. Wells stated that they cannot mandate a program that will cost the District money. District Director Aquino added that there is always a potential problem with cash. Treasurer Brouillard had asked M. Wells in an earlier email to receive feedback from the ACBL that rather than using credit cards, players could go onto the My ACBL portal and use their credit card to purchase Bridge Bucks. When you do that, the ACBL would issue a membership card with magnetic strip and auto load capability that could be used at Regionals, Nationals and Sectionals to deduct their entry fees; or an ACBL credit card that provides 2% cashback. M. Wells indicated it would be discussed in Philly and stated that this program is very new.

B. Bertoni noted that his costs for using a credit card are 1.58-1.9% plus a monthly fee of about \$45.00 fee. The swipe can be put on any device, including a cell phone but these devices would have to be purchased. He offered to research the cost and features of using our own swipe system with our own bank and bring this information to the Executive Committee in Falmouth. J. Brouillard reiterated that we will be incurring additional costs with no increase in revenue. C. Barton noted that newer players are used to paying by credit card and through their phones. E. Watstein noted that it a cost of doing business and if it is necessary that we increase in price, we will have to pass it on. General discussion followed. P. Najarian made a motion that District 25 try the Purple Pass experiment for Nashua and Warwick. The motion was seconded. A show of hands indicated that 6 voted yes and 5 voted no. The motion massed. A survey will be constructed for Nashua that will include the costs and potential table fee increase. Director Marcus estimates that the increased cost will be about \$1000 per tournament if we sign on.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Summary -Harvest Regional

The comparison is only for two years as to include the NAP. We were up 90 tables total but down 23 for the NAP. Our profit was up \$651 from 2016. The schedule worked out well.

Update - Presidential Regional

Here we are down 55 tables from last year. We were down 15 tables Wednesday and 20 on Thursday, even on Friday and we are down 20 tables today. The schedule did not make it clear that the Gold Rush players would be able to play in their own protected strat in the KOs. Lois and Jack addressed this in the Scheduling Committee meeting. Marketing for the Gold Rush may be an issue. The forecast for snow may have been a factor in keeping the commuters from coming to a two-day event.

Update hotel contracts for Regionals

Our hotel contracts are in the process or signed through 2020. I am working on Nashua for 2022 and 2023. This is important, especially if the Executive Committee decides not to play in Nashua in 2021 because of the Providence NABC. It will be easier to relinquish the spot for that year if we are willing to sign on for two more years after that. H. Pawlowski recommended that we eliminate Nashua for 2021. She also recommended that we add an additional year to the contract. Discussion followed. It was determined that Nashua was a desirable location and adding 2 years to our current contract was in

our interest. A motion was made seconded and so voted to eliminate Nashua in 2021 and add 2022 and 2023 to our contract

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Jack Mahoney

NAP Flight A -2018

No one was happy with the January date for the NAP-A flight. A weekend opened up and the Hartford Bridge Club is willing to host the NAP-A flight on October 20-21, 2018. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to move the NAP - A flight to October 21-22, 2018.

The Committee discussion centered on the naming of the two different KOs. We decided to keep the brand of Monster KO. The Committee decided to keep the brand Monster KO for both events. Sue Miguel is committed to marketing the Monster KO to the I/N group. She will be sure that they understand that this is the place for the Gold Rush group to play - that Monster means Gold Rush too.

With the NABC being in Providence in 2021, adjustments will have to be made in the schedule. The Committee recommends that we stay in Warwick for 2021 and eliminate Nashua. This will provide more “run up” time to the NABC.

P. Marcus explained that non-life master Regionals have always been legal, but changes in the ACBL rules now allow us to run a 0-750 Regional with gold points. The Committee proposes that we extend the Rainbow weekend to Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We would continue to hold the Championship, Flight A and Flight B GNT finals on Saturday and Sunday and the C Flight GNT on Sunday. As we would like to attract non-District 25 players, we would also add a non-D-25 GNT event for Sunday for the players who were not from our District. This will be a great event for New England and should draw from nearby districts as well. We already have the logo of a gold mine for the Non-life-master Gold mine event. This would replace the Rainbow weekend in April 2019. The full schedule will be presented to the Tournament Committee in April. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve a Non-life Master 0-750 Regional for 2019.

District Director’s Report - Mark Aquino

The agenda and meeting schedule for the next District Director’s meeting has just been sent out. Lois and I talked about several of the issues that are of concern. We need to push for more volunteerism. Recently, I helped create and produce webinars with Director Paul Cuneo of Houston (D-16) on how we can promote volunteerism. We need to find a way to retain and use our volunteers effectively.

The ACBL has 4 different convention cards coming out. This is a result of the work that has been done by the Competition and Conventions Committee. Doug Daub, Jeff Meckstroth, and Curtis Compton and a number of other top experts are members of that committee. J. Meckstroth has been working on this for almost 20 years. They are the Basic, Basic +, Open, and Open+. There are different convention charts for different levels of competition.

I have been pushing for term limits to membership on the Board. The best we could do was to get a watered down version that would limit any Director to 4 3-year terms. Somehow, there was an administrative snafu and this motion won’t be voted on again until after Atlanta, as it requires a bylaw change.

I am concerned and disappointed with the job the ACBL does in promoting the NABCs. They did a terrible job promoting fabulous venues for the FL NABCs in San Diego and Orlando, in my opinion and; Honolulu now looks certain to lose a lot of money. Despite expected losses, it seems as if the ACBL doesn’t provide extra marketing and promotion. They seem stuck in a 4-month process that includes only the picture and the schedule in the ACBL Bulletin. On the other hand, they have provided repeated promotions for some of the recent experiments, such as REACH, and Robot Games. The lesson for us from this is that we must take the lead in selling Providence and New England as a fabulous venue for the Summer NABC in 2021. We cannot expect the ACBL to do it for us.

Many of the “Big Ideas” have been altered or abandoned. Management does not think it is getting a sufficient return on their investment in the Bridge in Schools program. I think they have done a good job. My feeling is that they should promote everything.

Tournament Manager Search Committee Report - Carolyn Weiser

The Tournament Manager Search Committee, consisting of Treasurer Joe Rouillard, President Lois DeBlois, Vice President Jack Mahoney, DIC Peter Marcus, Tournament Manager Helen Pawlowski, Executive Committee member Esther Watstein, Finance Advisory Committee Chair Curtis Barton, and myself developed a job description that was sent to every Unit President and Secretary and member of the Board of Delegates. It was put on the web and printed in the Mansfield *Daily Bulletin*. The deadline for submission was December 31, 2017. All letters and resumes were sent to the members of the Committee. The Committee developed a set of Question that was submitted to the candidates for written response on January 1. These were due back by February 1. They were reviewed by the members of the Committee. Three candidates were asked to come to Cromwell for interviews. They were Sally Kirtley, Karen Randal Hewitt, and Catherine Steinhoff. All were well qualified for the position. The Committee is pleased to recommend Sally Kirtley.

Old Business

Bylaw review- Allan Clamage

The last review of the bylaws was in 2011. There are still some issues pending. One came up today, as it is not clear whether the President has a vote or only votes in case of a tie. This is not specifically covered in the current bylaws. The difference between a standing committee and an ad hoc committee is unclear. We need to specify the difference between the Handbook and the Bylaws. That the bylaws can be changed by a vote of 51% is unreasonable. Normally it is by 2/3. President DeBois asked A. Clamage to write up his list of issues and bring them to the Executive Committee in Falmouth. The problem is that the issues are so vast that it will take too much time to go over every one here. C. Seager suggested that the Bylaw committee put the changes together and then present them to the Board. A. Clamage answered that he and Bernie Schneider did this. He will send this to the Board. E. Watstein suggested that he create a set of changes that could be sent to the Board before any discussion. A. Clamage answered that there are three sets of changes: those that are trivial those that will need some discussion, and the third set that includes those that were left unfinished at the last attempt. B. Bertoni suggested that these could be posted on a secure webpage where it could be read and comments left. A. Clamage agreed.

District Director Aquino added that A. Clamage had inquired about the status of ACBL Score. Headquarters is trying to make a conversion from the British system. It is very controversial. I am only on the periphery of this. The Board is concerned with the expense and what he is planning. Almost 2 million dollars has been spent on ACBL Score.

Old Business

Increase in Table Fees

This item will be revisited after the Nashua and Warwick ACBL Purple Pass Experiment.

District Director Aquino asked Treasurer Brouillard how we stand regarding the NABC fund. Are we adding money? B. Brouillard answered that we transferred \$15,000 from the General Fund to the NABC Fund last year. I would like to see us move any money over \$60,000 from our unrestricted assets to the NABC Fund until we reach our goal.

A motion was made and seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25