



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Board of Delegates Meeting
Mansfield, MA
November 10, 2019

Attendance: Officers: Lois DeBlois, President; Jack Mahoney, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Robert Bertoni, Past President & District Director
Invited Guests (non-voting)- Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager

Delegates:

EMBA – Unit 108 - 16 - of 18

Saul Agranoff, David Aronson, Curtis Barton, Maureen Bitler, Cilla Borrás (Alix Taylor alt.)
Peter Clay, Lynn Duncan, Hardin Matthews, Jo Megna-Wallace, Sabrina Miles, Brenda Montague,
Neil Montague (S. Hotamisligil alt.), Robert Bertoni, (D. Panagopoulos alt.) , Ashok Rao , Linda
Robinson, Jan Smola *Absent: Fred Brown, Steve Diamond, Selen Hotamisligil, Dean Panagopoulos,*
Alix Taylor

CMBA – Unit 113 - 1 of 2 Joan Kuklinski, *Absent, Jeanne Robillard*

CBA – Unit 126 -10 of 13

Phyllis Bausher, Larry Bausher, Paul Burnham, Richard DeMartino, Sandy DeMartino, ,
Robert Huntington, Michael Smith, Susan Smith, Eric Vogel. (S. Wavada alt.) Michael Wavada,
Absent, Ausra Geaski, Sonja Smith, Esther Watstein, Susan Wavada

RIBA – Unit 145 - 4 of 4

Linda Ahrens, Maureen Fahey, Diane Lambert (P. Najarian alt.), Marshall Williams,
Absent: Paula Najarian

NHBA – Unit 150 -4 of 4

Ross Huntington, David Lawrence, Paul Marques (T. Tysor alt), Sarah Widhu
Absent: Tink Tysor

VBA –Unit 175 - 3 of 3

Mark Oettinger, Karen Hewitt Randle (W. Hersey alt.), Steve Randle *Absent: Wayne Hersey,*

MBA – Unit 189 - 2 of 4

Dan Morgenstern, Jack Mahoney *Absent: Allen McRae, Teri McRae*

WMBA – Unit - 196 - 3 of 3

Yan Drabek, (R. Brodeur alt.) James Osofsky, (P. Samsel alt.) Bob Sagor,
Absent: Robert Brodeur, Peter Samsel,

Call to Order- President DeBlois called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM

President's Opening remarks- Lois DeBlois

President DeBlois: There are a few people who have done an outstanding job. Sabrina Miles again has done an extraordinary job as Tournament Chair for the Mansfield Regional. This is my last meeting (as President). Mike Wavada is so special in what he does for us. Anything he puts his stamp on makes D-25 look special. I hope he will continue as our webmaster forever.

Being President of D-25 is a unique experience. I was terrified when I took on the Vice president's job. It has been fun. I've enjoyed working with Joe Brouillard, Carolyn Weiser, Bob Bertoni, and wish Jack (Mahoney) and Curtis (Barton) success. I also want to thank the members of the Executive Committee and all the chairs of the committees. They are all really engaged. Sometimes we look disorganized. But, when anything comes along that might improve the bridge experience of any group, we are all in. We need to increase attendance and are fighting to find ways to serve everyone. Thank you all.

Minutes- Nashua - As there were no corrections, the Minutes of the Board of Delegates meeting held at the Nashua Regional on Sunday, June 23, 2019 were accepted as sent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

I give Lois a tremendous round of applause for her hard work. The District is a better place than it was when she took over.

The Statement of Financial Position shows that we are in very good place. Total assets are up \$21,225 as compared to last year at this time. Our Fidelity Cash account is up to \$55,730, the Grass Roots Fund to \$23,096 and the NABC Fund to \$104,187. The only liability is at \$1,035 for unredeemed entry vouchers.

August was a very good month. If we had 12 months like that, I would be very happy. We earned \$13,600 in Warwick We received a Grass-roots check for \$18,000 from the ACBL in August. Operating expenses are up \$2,850 (\$17,717 vs \$14,858). This can be attributed to the increase in credit card processing fees. We have to pay 3% for processing. There has also been an increase in the stipends for the GNTs and NAPs. Our net income is \$5,891, which is a tremendous reversal from last year at this time. The only number that concerns me is the tournament profits which only stand at \$4,074 for all tournament combined. If it were not for Warwick, we would be in a poor state. Falmouth was our biggest loser. We hope we can turn this around in 2020.

A question was asked regarding the use of the Grass Roots. J. Brouillard answered that it is used for the stipends for the NAP and GNT winners and for hospitality for the NAP and GNT events. (D. Aronson) Regarding the Senior Regional, even though we had fewer tables, we cut the loss by one-half.

(J. Brouillard) I credit Sally (Kirtley) for doing a great job cutting expenses. She worked very hard with the hotel and directors to control costs

(D. Morgenstern) The same can be said of Warwick.

(B. Montague) I make a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion was second and so voted.

NABC Fund - Joe Brouillard

The money has been invested at Fidelity, half in two mutual funds and half in bonds. Due to the market volatility in August, I liquidated these investments and put the money into laddered CDs. The yield curve inverted and this is usually a predictor of an impending recession. This has since settled down but our original investment plan was to invest the funds until we reached \$105-110 in the NABC Fund. We are now at \$104,000. The laddered CD's will yield 1.9% which will put us at between \$107,000 and \$108,000. We have done very well. Year to date we are up 9.6% and have earned \$9,100.

(J. Smola) Is part of our improved financial position due to the raise in entry fees?

(J. Brouillard) Yes.

Election of Officers - 2019 - Brenda Montague- Chair, Nomination/Election Committee announced that the slate of candidates for 2020 as selected by the nominating committee are:

President- Jack Mahoney (MBA), Vice President- Curtis Barton (EMBA), Treasurer- Joe Brouillard (RIBA), Secretary- Carolyn Weiser (EMBA).
(N. Montague) I make a motion that the secretary be directed to cast one vote for the delegates present. The motion was seconded and so voted.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Vice President Jack Mahoney

S. Kirtley has done a great deal of work in searching for new locations. Most important was moving the Mine to a hotel in Marlboro in 2021. We will add a 4-day sectional at the same time. The draw will be that an open sectional will get masterpoint credit for the Gold Mine tables. This is increase the masterpoint pay out. In 2021, The GNTs will eventually migrate to the Mine. They will be at the Senior regional this year. (2020) The “new” Mine will be a 5-day NLM Regional, culminating in the GNTs. Any team knocked out Saturday will now have an event in which they can play on Sunday.

In 2021, the Senior Regional will move to Springfield. D-3 has lost their Regional, and they will come.

Three of our four major Regionals are 6 days and only one (Mansfield) is five. The Committee agreed to standardize all Regionals to 6 days. We will also standardize the events, as far as possible, excluding the special events such as the NAPs. The current schedule is a bit confusing. From now on, players will know which days are team events and which ones are pairs, etc.

I would also like to give a heart-felt thank you to Lois. We were in tough shape, but between Lois’ and Peter Marcus’ efforts were have come up with some great solutions. Peter came up with the ideas and Lois had the strength to go through with them.

Next year the NAP-A will return to Watertown. There were concerns from many upper B players that in the current format, they could not compete in A as well as B. The Bs and Cs will remain in Mansfield.

(M. Smith) Where will the GNTs be?

(J. Mahoney) They will be with the Mine in Marlboro in 2021. 2020 will be the last time they are held with the Senior Regional at the Cape.

Tournament Manager’s Report - Sally Kirtley

Over the last three years, our losses have been a bit smaller and our gains a bit bigger. Thursday and Friday the tables count was up 23.5 tables. We were up 50 tables as of yesterday. We lost a few today, but we expect to earn some money.

In 2021 we will move the Senior Regional to Springfield. We hope that the casino will be a draw.

The Mine will move to the Best Western in Marlboro, It has a good playing space. President DeBlois added that there one down side of Springfield is that non-guest parking will be \$5.00 a day. You can park at the casino free and walk one block to the hotel. The room rate is \$144 per night. I would like the sense of the Board as to whether we need to do something to soften the blow. We need players to stay in the hotel to meet our room block. If we do not, then we would be required to pay for the playing area, which would cost us \$5,000 to \$6,000. The players who stay in the hotel, pay for the tournament. Without them, we could not afford to have tournaments at hotels.

(P. Clay) That is a great question. I support Springfield. The \$105 room rate our players expect cannot be found anywhere else. To have a place in New York the rate is \$399.

(L. Duncan) Does the \$144 include the tax?

(L DeBlois) No, it’s plus, plus.

(P. Tauscher) I’m afraid that players will see the \$144 and stay elsewhere. Some gimmick might help.

(J. Smola) I grew up in Springfield. That price is way out of line for the area. Maybe something for the concession stand. We depend on people staying. Many will have a longer commute than at Sturbridge.

(L. DeBlois) Sally (Kirtley) spent 2-years searching for hotels to move the Senior Regional off the Cape.

(L. Robinson) What month is the Senior and Mine in 2021?

(L. DeBlois) The Senior is in April and the Mine is in May. We cancelled June because of the NABC.

(D. Aronson) Does the \$144 include breakfast?

(L. DeBlois) Not at that price. The \$109 at Marlboro does include breakfast. All of these things were talked about in the committee meetings. That is why it might be important to sweeten the pot. We can't go to Sturbridge and have to leave the Cape. Perhaps we could give a \$15.00 voucher for every night a room was booked at the hotel.

(P. Clay) Could we put a time limit on the redemption of vouchers?

(J. Brouillard) We operate in multiple states, all of which have different laws regarding gift cards and voucher redemption. It would be impossible.

(J. Osofsky) I think the \$144 for New Yorkers is cheap. I suggest that we add \$5.00 and provide a free breakfast. That gives those that stay a meaningful benefit.

(S. Bitler) It will be nice to stay in rooms. The rooms in Sturbridge were ratty.

S. Kirtley noted that the hotel is newly renovated, including the playing area.

District Director's Report - Robert Bertoni

The ACBL controls site selection and hotel prices for NABCs. The average rate is \$189-199. In Las Vegas we chose the Cosmopolitan. The quality was better than the Hilton.

There are 4 motions to stop the KIKO. The Board was split 17-16 to try it and we have all seen the results. I would like a sense of the Board as to whether I should vote to keep the KIKO. A show of hands was 16-7 with 2 abstentions. In Warwick, the KIKO increased attendance in the 0-99 group from 138 to 245 tables. The effect on attendance from the lower masterpoint players was dramatic. It was not as dramatic for the top group. The 760-1200 saw an uptick as they had just moved into the non-Gold Rush group. I wasn't for it in the beginning, but I am now. The original rule was established to allow small regionals to run events when the top bracket was only 5-6 teams. We just extended it down. I find it inherently unfair if we make a rule that profits the top players and not the players who pay the bills. Approximately 85% of the players have under 750 mps. What's sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander. The new proposal is to allow one or two 5-6 player teams and the rest would have seven or more (players). The payout of gold points would be reduced as well. Various ratios have been suggested.

There is also a motion to provide that is the ACBL makes any rule that leaves a loophole, we would have to apply for permission to use it other than in the manner that they originators intended. You would have to be a mind reader to figure out the intent of the authors of any motion, other than as it was written. I call it the no imagination motion. There is a format that has been tried in New York. In this format the KO includes 3 rounds of 18 boards. The losers of the first 18 board set are entered into a gold-point Swiss. DD Bertoni asked the members if they thought that increasing the bracket size to 7 would relatively affect the event. A show of hands 11 yes, 3 no, 5 abstain. Do you think that the change in the mp awards would negatively affect the event? 11 yes, 2 no, 4 abs. Do you think that the change in the gold point awards would negatively affect the event. Yes- 9 No affect - 3 No opinion - 6. I will vote to keep it but I believe that it will lose. I will do my best.

(R. DeMartino) What's wrong with 6. We try to give out gold points. If 4 of the 6 get gold. 100 gold points would increase attendance, but 6 is more reasonable.

(L. Duncan) If 5 get gold and one does not. With 6 there are 2.

(M. Smith) I like 6 too. Make it the same as for the top.

(DD. Bertoni) I like 6 as well. I will offer an amendment to the motion.

There will be a motion to reorganize the Board. I suggest that you look at Bridge Winners for a thorough discussion. There is a motion to change the 25 Board of Directors to 13, and another to 9. It is being brought up for reconsideration as it failed in Las Vegas. The proposal would be to combine, for voting purposes, the current D-24 and 25 (Long Island and Manhattan). The "Representatives" would no longer "represent and area". It is a very convoluted proposal. I believe that the motion to reduce the number to 9 will be defeated. The argument is that a group of 13 is more efficient and

therefore affective. In a small group, there are fewer opinions. You need fewer people to pass a motion. I do not see how it will help.

(C. Borrás) I find no representation at all. D-24 & 25 have different problems and needs. Seems wrong.

(S. DeMartino) As I understand it, the number of players is about the same, but the regions are not the same.

(R. Bertoni) The election will be done the same way (as now). The Units will vote on a weighted scale. New England should carry the vote, but I wouldn't "represent" New England.

(?) How would this save money? You would have to travel.

(R. Bertoni) No. Travel would not be required, as I would not "represent" anyone.

(C. Borrás) I consider this non-representation ridiculous.

(S. Agranoff) Why don't they just vote to make each District their own cooperation with their own money. Some are broke and some have money. Each district has different problems with different solutions and different populations.

General discussion followed.

(R. DeMartino) We would have a small number and might save a small amount of money. But this is not one of the top 10 problems. This is the wrong time to do this. It will lead to chaos.

(B. Bertoni) D-7 & 9 are not being combined with any other district. They have tried to get Districts with 10-20,000 populations. I will vote against it. It will take a 2/3 vote to pass this motion. There should be enough to vote it down,

There is a motion coming up regarding the Grass-Roots Fund that would allow the individual Districts to allocate some of the money to Clubs or Units that promote the GRF. It probably will pass but it will be at the discretion of the individual Districts.

Old Business - none

New Business-

Update: Providence NABC - Joseph Brouillard

Lois and I are co-chairs of the NABC Providence- 2021. We have worked closely with the Convention Bureau. They were a great help in 2014. They developed a logo that was sent to the ACBL. They tweaked it and this is the logo (shown). Lois (DeBlois) and I met with Dennis Powers and ordered shirt, etc. We intend to attend the 3 NABCs before Providence with promotional items. We have held a few committee meetings, but it is still a bit early. The website is 80% done. The art work is still there. The site is ProNABC.org.

(S. Agranoff) I make a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded and so voted at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25.