



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

Minutes  
Executive Committee Meeting  
Spectacle Regional  
Southbridge, MA  
Friday, November 18, 2022

Present

Officers: Curtis Barton, President; Mark Oettinger, Vice President; Joe Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary

**Unit Representatives:** EMBA – Neil Montague, Carole Weinstein; CMBA – Denise Bahosh; CBA -Peter Marcus, Michael Wavada; RIBA – Susan Miguel; NHBA – none; VBA – none; MBA – none; WMBA – Peter Samsel

**Invited Guests:** Mark Aquino, Regional Director; Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager; *Absent; EMBA – Saul Agranoff, Paul Harris; NHBA - David Lawrence; MBA – Daniel Morgenstern; VBA – Steve Ackerman; David Metcalf – Tournament Advisor*

President Barton called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

### **President's Opening remarks**

I want to thank both Lois DeBlois and Joe Brouillard for the Providence NABC and Linda Robinson for her Treasurer's Audit of the Providence financials, which resulted in the best review I have ever seen. I would also like to thank P. Marcus for his NAP efforts. D-25 dwarfed all other Districts with our 44 tables. The only issue with the NAPs and GNTs is whether we will ever be able to return to face-to-face play with simulcast. 2023 will be an important year. For financial reasons, it is doubtful that we will ever be back to where we were. Tomorrow at the Board of Delegates meeting, I intend to officially make every Board of Delegates member an official Ambassador of Bridge. Anyone not interested in will be replaced with someone who will.

(Re the schedule for February) We decided to do pairs alongside the KIKO. It's an experiment in response to requests. I have financial concerns.

(M. Wavada) I suggest that you put in that single sessions can be purchased.

(Pres. C. Barton) I will put that in the advertisement. I have one more year and then it is Mark Oettinger's problem.

(P. Marcus) Open pairs opposite teams is an experiment and a risk when not enough show up to make a decent pairs game. I will say to everyone, you asked for it, we put them in, so show up. It might be a mistake.

(J. Brouillard) What was the pairs side game Thursday?

(P. Marcus) 9-11- 9- 7½.

(J. Brouillard) Opposite the Swiss - (answer) Yes.

**Secretary's Report** - Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, Ocean State Regional, Warwick, RI, September 2, 2022 - Carolyn Weiser

A motion was made, seconded and so approved to accept the Minutes from the Ocean State Regional as sent.

**Treasurer's Report** - Joseph Brouillard

The Statement of Financial Position shows our current assets are down \$38,000 primarily due to the NABC expenses. We did receive Grass Roots money from the ACBL. We need to encourage the clubs and Units to hold Grass-roots Fund games.

The NABC investment in Fidelity is currently down 43,827. Our Working Capital is also down \$16,362. Our total Net Assets are down \$58,046.

Operating Income Statement shows a loss in Warwick, for the first time in years. Our total income loss is \$13,525 from 2021. The \$5,524 Tournament Loss does not include the NAPs that earned approximately \$4,000 last year. There is \$2,000 not yet received from the ACBL. With this, we should break even or have a slight loss. There is still one club outstanding. The GNT stipends of \$6,600 came out of GNT reserves. We show a total loss of \$13,162 from this time last year. I have no information on this tournament. We need to break even soon.

(P. Marcus) What eventually happens to the NABC Fund money?

(J. Bouillard) The money is set aside for the next NABC. Nothing says that we cannot re-allocate the money to the general fund.

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

**Tournament Manager's Report** - Sally Kirtley

Update: Spectacle Regional

We are doing ok here. We do not have enough rooms to cover the room block. We will negotiate to cover it with our hospitality. We are 80 rooms short, not a huge difference. The give aways and free lunch are being executed. We are doing pizza as it was the cheapest we could do.

Review of Warwick

We had an \$8,000 loss in Warwick. We had almost \$50,000 less in income than in 2019. We lost just \$8,000, which was not bad right after the Providence NABC.

P. Marcus added that Warwick was the perfect storm. We are doing ok compared to the rest of the country.

Update – Tournament sites and contracts

We are working on the Nashua contract. It is a new hotel (chain) that has been totally remodeled. The room rate will be \$119. We can have the big ballroom. The room block requirement has yet to be determined. I think we will come close. Warwick has reduced our room block and the amount of hospitality we have to buy,. It has yet to be signed. We only have a proposal. Marlboro is already signed.

**Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report** - Mark Oettinger

Review of TSC meeting

The discussion touched on the increase in card fees from \$15-20. The members of the TSC think that it will have a new positive effect on the bottom line. The players do not even seem to have noticed.

We are planning to hold 4 regional: February – Southbridge, June – Nashua, August/September – Warwick, and Marlboro in October/November. We are planning on Tuesday through Saturday partly because of the perception that Sunday is not well attended and the hotels want Sunday back.

(C. Weinstein) Do we have a comparison between Tuesday vs Sunday?

(P. Marcus) This Tuesday was particularly bad. In Marlboro, Tuesday and Sunday were reasonably even - 50-60 tables. The first day is always smaller.

(C. Weinstein) Tuesday, not Sunday excludes people who are still working.

(P. Marcus) We cut Sunday because Sunday has been our worst day. Post covid, it may change. When we all started playing bridge, the games were 1 and 7:30. Are there players who work? Yes, but not the numbers we used to have. We have tried horizontal schedules.

General discussion followed.

(P. Marcus) We need people to get the players to come. Just putting an event on the schedule is not enough. We have to go out and sell it.

(Pres. C. Barton) A lot of districts have gone away from Sunday.

(S. Kirtley) The hotels want Sunday back.

(M. Oettinger) I also work. P Burnham brought this up at the TSC meeting. We also need to work on getting the “young old” back.

(S. Miguel) None of the Bridgefest work. They are newly retired. Bridgefest is the best thing that we have done in 25 years. Many of the players have commented. They are looking forward to February. Denise (Bahosh) helped. They played 12 prepared hands. It was a total team effort. They are all revved up for February.

(D. Bahosh) There were people who had never used Bridgemates. We had time to answer questions.

(S. Miguel) It was a mixed group of ACBL and non-ACBL players.

(M. Oettinger) The Units need to know our proposed schedules in order to set their Sectional dates. We are a bit behind the curve. We would have to have 2024 and 2025 tentatively scheduled and try to standardize the month and week of our events.

Jack Mahoney mentioned that Adam Grossack would be willing to help. He has spoken to Curtis (Barton).

(N. Montague) We have never had many pro teams come.

(P. Marcus) But now we are the other games. There is no bridge in the Northeast. We have talked and we are working on an idea for Nashua that would actually go back to the old concept of the Flight A KO. We have voted not to seed the KO's. This would have to change. We would be targeting pro-teams: Wednesday/Thursday, Friday/Saturday. We are working on the schedule. We will have pros talking to pros to create a buzz.

General discussion followed.

(P. Marcus) It will take a lot of work and effort to make it work.

(M. Oettinger) We need to market, market, market.

(Pres. C. Barton) We need to advertise our regionals in New York. This site is not that far from Albany. There are no regionals in New York. Our regionals are well placed along highways. Mike's (Wavada) picture on the web demonstrated this.

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

So much is going on in the ACBL, that it is hard to identify them all. The major concern at this moment is Phoenix. The board meetings will start Sunday night. There has been tremendous turnover. Rob Gordon and Sarah Beth Robb are gone. A. J. Stephani resigned. The ACBL is projecting major financial losses. We decided to have Minneapolis.

There is a lot going on regarding On-line clubs. Lots on maneuvering. There is lots of friction with BBO and putting penalties on clubs with on-line games.

There is a lot of money generated by the Educational Foundation – that has between 2-3,000,000 million dollars in assets. They want to boost the programs that help to teach beginners and to bring them into clubs. There are lots of opportunities there.

There is also a lot of reorganization going on as we morph into a smaller board.

David Moss's term is ending. Exactly what my status and role will be is still unclear. I have to wait and see. I am grateful for all of your efforts: Peter (Marcus), Sue (Miguel), Sally (Kirtley), Curtis (Barton), Carolyn (Weiser), and Joe (Brouillard) and Lois (DeBlois) and the NABC team. We have to wait and see what the future will bring. Peter (Marcus) and I started out with companies that went out of business because of obsolescence. We are seeing the same in bridge. Our market and our demographic are changing. This is the first evidence of an attempt to right size tournaments.

I have also pushed management to reduce their operating expenses. The Board has been more like the patriarchal Roman Senate. I look to the Board becoming more intrusive into Management operations.

(P. Marcus) The concept of the ACBL that made Providence as painful as possible now wanting to come back is ludicrous. We shouldn't provide 5 cents on the next NABC We should use that money to promote bridge in New England. We can do it better.

### **Old Business- none**

### **New Business-**

Ad Hoc Finance Committee meeting - Mark Oettinger

The question came down to whether we should cost cut our way out of our financial problems or spend our money intelligently to sell ourselves out of the financial problems by getting new members and creating greater value and greater fun. We just increased card fees. Our losses are more like 10%. The Ad Hoc Committee felt that this is a temporary condition and that we should not spend pointlessly by in ways that promote perceived value. All five that participated are here: Sally, Sue, Peter, Carolyn and myself. It was not the consensus of the committee that stipends need to be changed.

Appointments- Pres. C. Barton

Tournament Advisor- I have appointed David Metcalf as our Tournament Advisor to work with Peter Marcus

Sponsorship Chair - we need a Sponsorship Chair. Jack Mahoney started the Committee. We need a chair to market it. J. Mahoney is thinking about becoming the Chair.

Bulletin Editor – Tomorrow is Mike Wavada Day in recognition of all his contributions to the District. We need a new Bulletin Editor. Mike did a brilliant job.

Website- I have appointed Gary Peterson to handle the website itself.

We should not promote ACBL sponsored on-line events that give gold points.  
A motion was made that D-25 website not advertise ACBL gold point Regionals.

S. Miguel- I make a motion that D- 25 should not promote any on-line events other than D-25 on-line events. Seconded by N. Montague. The motion passed unanimously.  
Pres. C. Barton will inform G. Peterson.

Mike Wavada – Website issues

I own the current D-25 database. I do not mind if the District uses it but I do not want it on the same system as my journals. I can put it into a drop box. Steve Ackerman will be contacted to find a solution.

There is an issue with the LZH files. P. Marcus stated that the problem has been fixed. He stated that he would help M. Wavada find the ACBL's new process for obtaining the LZH files.

I have not trained anyone in the use of Mail Chimp. I want to get the database set first. Then I will look into it.

(P. Marcus) We have been blessed with M. Wavada allowing us to use his system. We need to recognize the need and the cost of getting one of our own.

(M. Wavada-) It will cost about \$200 a year. The two necessary products on whatever hardware system D25 decides to use are MySQL and php. The District can use MYSQL and PHP.

(Pres. C. Barton) I am sure that Steve Ackerman and Mike will find a solution for the problem.

(M. Wavada) Regarding the Weiss Committee, I think that we should have an award.  
Pres. C. Barton will bring up to the BoD.

Vaccination Status - Pres. C. Barton will bring it up to the BoD. As of now, we will continue to require vaccinations but we won't check.

(M. Aquino) This is the policy that the ACBL wanted but the Phoenix committee said they would all quit. The Board reviewed the management request to discontinue providing money to check covid vaccination status. The ACBL backed off when Cindy Schumacker stated that ½ the volunteers would quit if the ACBL did not continue checking.

(P. Marcus) The ACBL has set up a new system without telling us. In 2023-4 tournaments can't take cash. I make a motion that we as a Board say no. Many feel that their covid policy and their decision to go cashless may be good ideas, but we will decide. If they are our tournaments, we have to stand up and say no. It is not that we may or may not be against the policies but that the tournaments are ours and we should decide. Any ACBL policy of this nature, we should vote or decide if we will follow. It should be our decision.

(S. Miguel) D-25 is an independent Business operation and should not be dictated to by the ACBL.

(M. Aquino) I think that you should check first. As far as I know the ACBL and D-25 are connected.

General discussion followed as to the rights and obligations of the ACBL and D-25.

Pres. C. Barton will constitute a committee to address the authority issues and decide if the ACBL has the authority to require that we go cashless in 2023-24. I will bring it up to the BoD.

M. Aquino- This is a major precedent. Changes will not be endorsed or put into effect until they are reviewed and there is an opportunity to discuss them before any acceptance. General discussion followed.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted:  
Carolyn Weiser  
Secretary- District 25