



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 17, 2022
7:00 PM Via Zoom

Officers: Curtis Barton, President; Mark Oettinger, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Jack Mahoney, Past President
Unit Representatives: EMBA- Saul Agranoff, Paul Harris; CMBA- Denise Bahosh;
CBA- Michael Wavada, RIBA - Megan D'Orio (M. Smith alt.); NHBA - none VBA - none; MBA - Daniel Morgenstern; WMBA - Peter Samsel

Absent - CBA -Sonja Smith; RIBA - Marshall Williams; NHBA- David Lawrence
Invited Guests (non-voting)- Mark Aquino, Regional Director; Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager; Peter Marcus, DIC; Sue Miguel, I/N Coordinator

President Barton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed the members of the Executive Committee to the first meeting of 2022.

Announcements-

The Board of Delegates meeting scheduled for Sunday, May 22, 2022 is scheduled to be a face-to-face meeting.

Michael Wavada, District 25 webmaster and Communications Chair has announced his intentions to retire at the end of 2022. If anyone knows of someone who would be a good candidate to do all or some of Mike (Wavada) does for the District, please let me know.

GNT Status- The schedule for the GNTs for 2022 has been sent out. There is an overlap for the top flight with the EMBA Sectional. If all the members of the teams in the finals agree, they could play face-to-face there.

Royal STaC - The Royal STaC has been scheduled for April 4-10. All Unit Presidents have been informed. Information from the ACBL should be forthcoming.

The next scheduled regional, barring some unforeseen circumstance, is scheduled for the May Gala. We will follow the standard schedule for meetings. The Tournament/Scheduling Committee will meet Friday evening, the Executive Committee on Saturday evening and the Board of Delegate on Sunday morning. Breakfast will be served, as usual, for the Delegate at 8:00 AM and the meeting will begin at 8:30AM.

Secretary's Report - Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, December 16, 2021

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes of December 16, 2022 as sent. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Statement of Financial Position and the Operating Income Statement were sent via email.

The Statement of Financial Position show that 2021 was a fairly successful year even though we did not have any face-to face games. Our total assets increased due principally to the GNTs and NAPs, which were held on BBO. Our investments in Fidelity did very well. We have no liabilities.

The Operating Income Statement shows income derived from the BBO GNTs and (\$6,948) from the BBO NAPs. Even though there were no face-to-face regionals, our net profit for 2021 increased.

A motion was made, seconded to accept the Treasurer's report. It passed without dissent.

Tournament Manager's Report - Sally Kirtley

Update: Gala Regional

We have an incredibly favorable contract with the Best Western in Marlboro. We have no room block as long as we spend a minimum of \$7,000 in food and beverage, an amount we will easily exceed. The room rate is \$109.00, which includes a full breakfast for every room. It's going to be a great place to hold a tournament. President Barton added that it is a nice hotel. The tournament sites for the fall will be Warwick and Southbridge.

District Director's Report - Mark Aquino

ACBL affairs

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to have the Executive Committee ago into executive session. All present are invited to attend.

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A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to return to open session

President Barton called on Mike Wavada.

M. Wavada stated that no motion was needed to update the website and what he can do has been done. Some of the sections are not operable. We no longer have a District Director, but, he believes that, they (the old District Director Reports) should be archived. Some of Bob's (Bertoni) don't open. The source for the names on the page for District 25 winners at NABCs was the District Director. I have no other source. I received none from Austin. I am not sure what to do with the on-line winners.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Mark Oettinger

President Barton reported that we have received permission to hold the Gala Regional in May. There will be three tiers. The schedule was sent to everyone. The process of approval was a lot of work. The initial letter requesting permission, the Proposed Schedule, the Options for the Gala Dual Tournament were forwarded to the members of the Executive Committee. The process to get this approved was very complicated. S. Weinstein was also involved.

The Tournament Committee had voted to have the “Gold Rush Graduates”, Non-life Master portion free and the simultaneous Summer Regional portion at the regular price. The bottom group would be free.

The Committee has asked that this decision be revisited at this meeting.

A hospitality plan was developed.

There are three options: (see charts as sent and included as an addendum)

1. No change, retain the structure the ExCom voted at our last meeting.
2. Heavy Hospitality. Retain the free structure for the NLM, with enhanced hospitality for everyone.
3. All entries free standard hospitality.

The Hospitality Plan (see addendum) would include a lot of special events, such as Play today and play free Sunday (Thursday) , Free lunch Friday, ShinDig Saturday, which would include a party with the first drink on us, and Pay on Sunday and get a free play to the NABC.

The free entries for everyone was a rejected earlier as having too much possible financial liability.

Our contract required us to spend \$7,000 on hospitality, which will be easy. Regarding the hospitality plan, Jack (Mahoney) may have a sponsor. There will be people, I hope how might contribute by paying for some super hospitality.

Peter (Marcus) or Sue (Miguel) would.

(P. Marcus) We have been watching the past six months and the players are not coming back. The purpose of doing something free was to get the players to look at what we are doing and come and play. We have a new schedule now. I do not think that this will get the people to come out. We need something to get people to pay attention. I do not care if it is free or if we charge and give the players the money back in hospitality. The goal is to get the people back to bridge. We might use some of the NABC money as this will help get players to the NABC. We might use the Grass-roots money. We have to do something to change the equation and get them back. I will volunteer for the Friday cocktail party. I will put my money where my mouth is and make this happen. If we do not do something special, they won't come. We have to see this as an investment. The way the government got us out of the depression was the New Deal, to get the people back to work.

(Sue Miguel) Whatever you decide this event, having the event fee for one group and not the other won't work. Looked up a Gala. It is a social event with lots of special experiences. We should advertise the Gala, the experiences for every day, so we can hook these people to come back. I talk to everyone about coming back to bridge. I am in the trenches, We are never getting anyone to come and play unless we do some radical things to get them to come and play. Charge the regular price, we will spend what we take in. We will be the first regional with 80% or even 75%. I can run with this stuff. The little people need to have a reason to come. We have been giving away points like water. At least with this schedule they have a place to play. The Gala will give me the tools to get them to come.

(President Barton) In a nut shell, we intend to charge the regular free and give it all back

(S. Agranoff) The best time I ever had at a Regional was in Quebec where they had a wine and cheese and crudites party on Saturday night. It was memorable. I would favor a party or Gala.

(President Barton) We need a motion and a discussion. Do I have a motion.

(D. Morgenstern) I make a motion that we hold a 4-day Gala and charge normal prices, with hospitality so no one will ever forget this one.

Motion was made and seconded

(President Barton) I love the play and get a day in Providence. One of the marketing pitches is that this is right before the NABC.

Discussion

(J. Brouillard) We need to set some parameters. As treasurer, I cannot be on board with something that might cause us to lose unlimited money.

Regarding the free play at the NABC, what type of game are we offering.

(P. Marcus) We are offering a free play up to \$40.

(J. Brouillard) We will be losing a 5 digit number.

Don't think that the super A's will be playing in a Regional Event.

(P. Marcus) All lose eventually and will play in a Regional event.

(S. Miguel) First of all, I never said that we would lose gazillion tons of money. I said we would spend the money we take in. If you ask me, what better way to advertise the NABC. Half of those who play in Marlboro won't go to NABC. We will have to make sure it is non-transferable.

(D. Morgenstern) I am avoiding face-to-face bridge as I am covid averse. Most who are not playing are concerned with covid. I am hoping that will change. We will get those who are playing in the NABC and EMBA but few extra.

(P. Harris) I am in big support of what Sue is saying.. Offering free play never works.

They are not avoiding bridge because of the cost. I would like to work out some entertainment.

General discussion followed.

(L. DeBlois) It seems strange, but I am a non-voting member. Under these options, you refer to the summer regional. What is the summer Regional: the may tournament?

(President Barton) we normally have a regional in Nashua and decided not to hold as it was too close to Providence. We are using the sanction we had for that.

(J. Brouillard) Do we know definitively if we can use the Grass Roots money?

(M. Aquino) I was responsible for creating the grass roots fund. No you can't. The Grass Roots Fund was created to promote the NAPs and GNTs and provide the publicity and subsidies and other things that they might need to support them. Our District gives \$2,000 team. That is \$8,000 and the money can be used for this. I set up the financial argument. The ACBL was generating about \$300,000 on the qualifying games. The ACBL was pocketing that money and not redistributing it to the Districts to give them money to support the events. Took advantage of the law to allow us to move forward

(J. Brouillard) How much in that fund? (answer) \$20-30,000. (M. Aquino) It is used to pay the Directors, the sites and support the support the events. If the money is excessive and you have more than enough and that you can stretch, and are willing to see this as these people that are primarily flight C, perhaps giving them to get them to attend these events. You just can't take it and put it into the general fund.

(P. Marcus) 1. Where are these rules written down? Are these District or ACBL rules. I want someone to get these rules. (M. Aquino) They are in the minutes of the meeting.

2. What about when we spent 1,00,000 of for free breakfasts to everyone at the regional where the final was run.

(M. Aquino) I would like to see these figures. We have not have Unit qualifying in over 30 years.

(P. Marcus) These Grass Roots Funds were not started 30 years ago.

Discussion between P. Marcus and M. Aquino continued.

(M. Aquino) The bottom line is, how much money do you need from the Grass Roots Fund?

(P. Marcus) We expend about \$10,000 per day. A 6-day regional takes in about \$60,000. My proposal is to take the money from the District Treasury, Grassroots Fund, and the NABC fund.

[P. Marcus announced that he was leaving the meeting.]

(President Barton) We do need to decide how we will structure this. We also have to decide to make sure how we handle the players who get free plays.

(M. Aquino) I would like Sally's opinion.

(S. Kirtley) I love this idea of a party with lots of hospitality. I think we can market it.

(President Barton) I believe we will be getting several \$1,000 to support these special events.

(S. Miguel) This is not intended to blow all the Districts money with a blank check. We are looking at a close to 0 sum event.

(President Barton) We can vote this verbal or by hand.. Carolyn, would you repeat the motion.

As made- - (D. Morgenstern) I make a motion that we hold a 4-day Gala and charge normal prices, with hospitality so no one will ever forget this one.-

(D. Bahosh) I think that this is investing in the future

(J Brouillard) The amount of the entry was not in the motion. I suggest that the motion be reworded

(as reworded)

(D. Morgenstern) I propose that we have a 4-day regional at which we charging our usual fee and expend significantly the amount of hospitality.

(M. Aquino) What if you were to roll back the entry free from \$15,00 to \$10,00 and double the hospitality that would be normal at regional? You would use some money from the treasury and take \$5,000 from the Grass Roots Fund. Would that be sufficient? It might put a framework around the possible losses and limit Joe's concern and find a way to support what Sue wants.

(S. Miguel) I need marketing tools saying someone will get a coupon won't work.

I have been making events at my bridge club. We did a wine and cheese party.

(M. Aquino) You don't want to lower the free to free?

(S. Miguel) We want to run a tournament in a not-for-profit mode.

(President Barton called on S. Agranoff.

(S. Agranoff - I'm not in favor to lowering the price from \$15.00 to \$10.00. The difference between \$10.00 and \$15.00 is not significant. What would be (significant) is the experience that we can provide.

(President Barton) At this point it is.

(S. Agranoff) I second the motion.

(President Barton) The motion says that there will be a normal charge for play. To vote please raise your hand.

(President Barton) Nine yea and 2 opposed. The motion passes.

(Note: after a clarification of votes, the motion passed unanimously.)

There is still work to be done.

(M. Oettinger) A consensus has been reached. Tremendous work has been done. Having special hospitality and charging the normal rate will give the implementers the needed flexibility.

(President Barton) As you are the chief implementer, I'm glad you agree.

(M. Wavada) Are we going to have a bulletin?

(President Barton) Yes, if we get a sponsor, he would like to see his name publicized

(M. Wavada) I will miss the tournament and I will not be able to do what has to be done. (in the past)

(President Barton) So noted.

(calling on) Jack

(J. Mahoney) I neglected to do something at the last meeting at which I was president. Carolyn does her work whether we have live tournaments. She does all the work a secretary has to do, tournament or not. Last year we decided that the District would play her for the work that she did. Every seemed to think that it was reasonable.

I will make a motion that we do the same this year and play Carolyn (Weiser) for the work she does.

The secretary requested that she be allowed to leave the meeting. M. Aquino also left the meeting

The secretary was called back to the meeting.

It was reported by the President that the motion regarding paying the secretary was passed.

S. Agranoff made a motion to adjourn.. There was no second. Members began to leave the meeting. Time 8:07

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, D-25