



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

Minutes  
Board of Delegates Meeting  
Return of the Gala  
Marlboro, MA  
November 5, 2023

Attendance – Present

Officers: Curtis Barton, President; Susan Miguel, Vice President; Joe Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Mark Aquino, Regional Director. *Absent: Jack Mahoney, Past President*

Attendance -

EMBA – Unit 108 – 9 of 16 -Saul Agranoff, David Aronson, Peter Clay, Steve Diamond, Bob Gorsey (R. Vachani Alt.), Neil Montague (B. Montague alt.), Linda Robinson, Jan Smola, Stuart Whittle (L. Duncan alt.)

*Absent: Carolyn Bitetti, Lynn Duncan, Abhijit Dutta, Paul Harris, Matthew Hardin, Jo Megna-Wallace, Sabrina Miles, Brenda Montague, Ashok Rao, Rita Vachani*

CMBA- Unit 113 - 2 of 2 - Denise Bahosh, Shirley Wagner *Absent: none*

CBA - Unit 126 -12 - 3 of 12 - Donna Feir, Benjamin Levine, Peter Marcus, William Seagraves, L Allison Rudary *Absent: Paul Burnham, Richard DeMartino, Sandy DeMartino, John Lloyd, Michael Wavada, Susan Wavada*

RIBA - Unit 145 - 3 of 3- Gregory Klinker, Diane Lambert (J. Haley alt.), Chris Soares *Absent: Joyce Haley*

NHBA - Unit 150 - 1 of 4 - Lawrence Cheetham, *Absent: William Kennedy, David Lawrence, John Piper*

VBA - Unit 175 - 0 of 3 - *Absent: Steve Ackerman, Sue Collinson, Don Sharp*

MBA - Unit 189 -2 of 4- Dottie Kelleher, Dan Morgenstern *Absent: Richard Budd, David Lindley*

WMBA – Unit 196 - 2 of 3- Alan Frank, James Osofsky *Absent: Bob Sagor*

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

President Barton called on Treasurer J. Brouillard to present his report as the treasurer was under time constraints.

**Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard**

Review of 2023

The Statement of Financial Position for October 31, 2023 shows that our Total Assets are down from 2022. This is due primarily to a drop in the Grass-Roots fund and

the NABC Fund. W. Segraves asked about the investments. J. Brouillard answered that the market took a big hit in October. We are up as of November 1.

The Operating Income Statement shows a loss of \$1,545. We made a modest profit in Warwick. Warwick is always good. There was a final loss of \$1,545. The Operating Income Statement does not reflect any earning for the NAP, which was held on BBO. This is because we receive our portion from the ACBL and they have not, as of this date, received any money from BBO. Preliminary figures indicate that after this is settled our loss of \$1,545 will be a profit Year to Date.

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

**Secretary's Report** – Minutes, Board of Delegates meeting, Granite State Regional, Nashua, May 25, 2023 - Carolyn Weiser

The Minutes from the June meeting of the Board of Delegates were sent to the members. The secretary requested a motion to accept the minutes as sent. A motion was so made, seconded and so voted.

### **President's Opening Remarks**

I think it's fair to say that we began the Face-to-Face era, or maybe "restarted" it, with a lot of uncertainty. 2022 was a year of finding out what we could do. The Providence NABC, thanks to Joe, Lois, and a horde of volunteers was a great success. However, we had problems during the year. Warwick, usually our best tournament financially, lost money. We also struggled with our event schedules and had to replace some long-term volunteers. But, we made progress.

2023, I think, will be reckoned as a success. We have a stable, boilerplate, tournament schedule that we can replicate in a five or six day tournament that we know works. It exists thanks to Peter and David, and Mark Oettinger. Our success here has many parents, including the incredible efforts of Sally to get the locations and legal stuff right. We have reduced some of our expenditures without affecting what we give the players. We are supported by a dedicated tournament staff of ACBL directors. Our web site and mail support is superb, thanks to Gary (Peterson) and Neil (Montague). We survived the covid onslaught; and we have established a Bridge Fest for new and returning players, thanks to Sue and her helpers Carolyn and Denise. We are beginning to make money at tournaments, thanks, everybody!

I should mention that we have a well-coordinated and executed GNT and NAP schedule, thanks to Bart (Bussik) and Mark (Aquino). We had issues, but we're moving in the right direction. We should also note the hard work of Joe (Brouillard) and Carolyn (Weiser), among others, who keep the District going while everybody plays bridge. A special shout out to Mark (Aquino) for his work as Regional Director.

All in all, we aren't back to pre-covid days, and we may never be, but, as Churchill once said about 1942 in World War II, this is the "end of the beginning".

### **Election of Officers - 2023 (for 2024) – Peter Marcus, Chair**

Nomination/Election Committee

Chair Peter Marcus announced the candidates for election as selected by the Nomination Committee. They are

President

Susan Miguel

RIBA

Vice President Denise Bahosh	CMBA
Treasurer Joe Brouillard	RIBA
Secretary Carolyn Weiser	EMBA

A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to accept the slate as presented.

### **Tournament Manager's Report – Sally Kirtley**

Summary: Nashua saw a gain of \$144. At the Warwick (Ocean State) Regional the Operating expenses were up but we made income of \$3,762 this year as compared to a loss of \$8,154 in 2022.

Update – Return of the Gala Regional

Attendance is up from last year. The costs here are higher. What the players buy at the concession stand goes toward our hospitality commitment. Staff rooms are down because the directors live close enough to travel by car.

Tournament Sites – Update sites and contracts for 2024

A hand out was provided to the members. A correction was made on one date.

### **Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Susan Miguel**

Vice President Sue Miguel introduced the NLM Regional that is planned for Mansfield in February. The dates are confirmed for Tuesday February 6 through 9, 2024. It will be a combination of the NLM Regional with an Open (Silver Point) Sectional. The NLM Regional will give gold points and the Open Sectional will get credit for the NLM tables. P. Marcus explained that this tournament was the first in New England, Ultra Gala Teams, which was a great success.

Discussion followed on the issue of the inherent differences between Preliminary Schedules and Final Schedules. S. Kirtley explained that hotel availability is the determining factor. Every effort is made to maintain the original schedule but that is sometimes impossible, S. Kirtley confirmed that the dates for February are set.

There were 10 tables at the Dollar a Round Swiss on Saturday. W. Seagraves (CBA) noted that it was a good social event.

J Smola returned to the published inconsistencies. S. Miguel answered that we have to try to balance the fact that players want to see a schedule as soon as possible so we print tentative schedules. Things are getting better every time. S. Kirtley worked very hard to find a site. These are the only dates that Mansfield had available.

The silver point totals will be huge. As P. Marcus noted that a 10-table sectional with a 40 table NLM regional will pay 20 silver points for one session. We need everyone to talk it up. This is a great opportunity for the NLMs to play for gold in their own regional and for the LMs to get great payouts for their sectional awards.

General discussion followed.

(S. Miguel) I received a very negative email about the reviews the hotel had received. In response, we did a site visit. "I am happy to report that the reports are not true." The Masons there for their convention. They reported that the customer service was excellent. The hotel is under new ownership. The lobby and grand ballroom have been redone.

Denise (Bahosh) is keeping a list of goals. We need your help. Nothing is ever just my idea. I'm just the spark. It is always a team effort. But, the team is too small. If

you can help or know people who would like to get involved, send me their names. We need leads.

S. Agranoff questioned whether the dates of Southbridge will conflict with Gatlinburg.

There is an overlap. It always hinges on hotel availability.

(L. Robinson) There is interest from players from New York who want to bring clients in the future. If possible can we set a schedule so that those who want to come can.

(P. Marcus) I have the schedule of every Regional and we do try to avoid conflicts. There does come a time when hotel availability becomes the over-riding issue. None of the decisions are made in ignorance of this.

(L. Cheetham) Can we use the same name for an event on all the sheets.

(S. Miguel) Yes.

(-) If we have a list of clubs, we should send the information to them.

(S. Miguel) I do.

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

Congratulation to Sue (Miguel) on becoming Vice President. She is a dynamo.

I have reached my halfway point as your Regional Director. I'm in a strange position. I am responsible for D-24, Long Island and New York, as well as D-25, which is all of New England. These two districts have been merged only for the purpose of representation on the ACBL Board of Directors as Region 2. I only know a few of the players in D24, but here in D-25 I know almost everyone. There are a few new delegates including Peter Marcus, Bill Seagraves and Donna Feir from CBA, Alan Frank from WMBA, Diane Lambert from RIBA, to name a few, that I have known for many, many years. I received my first sectional award of 23 MPs in a 1019 table pairs game in the 1970 NABC in Boston. I've known Peter Marcus for close to 40 years. Peter donates his time and gives more than that. Donna Feir has run the Hartford Bridge Club for 26 years.

Please note that the ACBL will be raising fees as of January 1 including entry fees, sanction fees and membership dues. You can expend you membership for up to 3 years. I suggest that you do this before the end of the current year so you can lock in the current lower fees.

As I have alluded to in the past, our membership is in serious trouble. The total has dropped to under 130,000 members for the first time in decades. On-line saved us during the pandemic, but the cure is sometimes worse than the disease. The trend is starting to turn back. It is incumbent on all of us to reach out and network to encourage players to return to face-to-face bridge and to take lessons. ACBL's new Executive Director Bronia Jenkins is very smart, creative, and enthusiastic. The next several months will be crucial.

The ACBL has two other challenges, improving the IT group, which seems incapable of functioning and has been a huge cost and increasing membership. We are in the process of reorganizing as well as trying to get a better grip on on-line cheating. We have spent enormous resources on this. It won't be a quick fix. We will address this again at the upcoming NABC meeting.

(L. Cheetham-NHBA) Does the ACBL have a sunset strategy as ACBL becomes obsolete and unsupportable? Is the ACBL still using Rich Oshlag to do the work?

(M. Aquino) I don't know, but I will follow up on this and get back to you.

(A. Rudary – CBA) We should reach out to New York.

M. Aquino - Sue is the best person to talk to regarding ways to reach out to players. We need to reach out to lapsed members.

[General discussion followed regarding on-line clubs undercutting each other, unifying costs, and price wars]

(M. Aquino) There is a Club Managers' Forum. Sue (Miguel) is on the Advisory Council. There is lots to do. We have a long way to go to get out of the weeds.

(L. Robinson) Is Providence on the NABC list?

(M. Aquino) Volunteers are the key. Lois (DeBlois) and Joe (Brouillard) went to seven NABCs to talk up Providence. Running an NABC takes an incredible amount of work. Summer 2027 is still on the docket, but I will not push it without a clear mandate from D25.

(S. Miguel) The Bridgefest as a concept is working. Here we started with a ½ table and ended up with 6-tables. We did a lesson on teams in Warwick. We focus on table count. We had a success. Send your new players to Bridgefest.

(P. Marcus) The first Bridgefest was in Southbridge. There were 10 tables there when we had only 50 tables in the main room.

(S. Miguel) We need to encourage the new players. Club Directors should be Customer Service Agents. If players have a problem, they should bring it up to the director or the DIC to have the issue addressed. The members of the Board of Delegates should be unofficial agents of bridge. No form of poor behavior should be tolerated at the table.

**Old Business-** none

**New Business** – none

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:45. The motion was seconded and so voted.

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, D-25

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*(Note: RD Mark Aquino followed up as promised [to L. Cheetham] the next day with Lynn Chapin, ACBL's Manager of Virtual Program. Lynn clarified that this was a miscommunication and corrected herself which was satisfactory for Lawrence and there is now no issue.)*