

With Proposed Web Changes Below



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting
Spectacle Regional
Wellsworth Hotel
Southbridge, MA
Saturday, April 26, 2025

Present

Officers: Susan Miguel, President; Denise Bahosh, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, (via phone) Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Curtis Barton, Past President
Unit Representatives: Brenda Montague, Neil Montague (L. Duncan alt.) EMBA; Ray Oglesby (M. Kagan, alt.) CMBA; Peter Marcus, Benjamin Levine (W. Segraves alt.) CBA; Jonathan Klinker (J. Haley alt.) RIBA; William Kennedy, NHBA; (none) VBA; Dan Morgenstern, MBA; WMBA, Sheila Ryan
Absent - Lynn Duncan, EMBA; Michael Kagen, CMBA; William Segraves, CBA; Joyce Haley, RIBA; Steve Ackerman, VBA
Invited Guests: Mark Aquino Regional Representative, Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager, Gary Peterson, Webmaster

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 PM.

Secretary's Report - Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, Harvest Regional, Holiday Inn, Norwich, CT, Friday, November 22, 2024

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes from the Holiday Regional as sent,

President's Remarks

President Miguel welcomed the replacement representatives from CMBA, CBA, and RIBA. She thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their quick responses to the votes that were taken via email as this allows us to respond quickly to items that from CBA advertisements for Unit sectionals be sent out a month in advance rather than the current two weeks. That change will be made. Units can no longer advertise outside of their Unit do to the current ACBL terms and use rules for advertising. We have picked up that slack.

(W. Kennedy) Can it be done twice?

(Pres. Miguel) We send out too many emails. ACBL terms of use allow us to send out to everyone in the District. You can check with the ACBL regarding the terms of use on the ACBL

website. You can advertise only to your administrative area or smaller. This can be discussed at more detail at the President's Breakfast tomorrow.

This is our first post covid apples to apples tournament and it has gone on relatively flawlessly. Thanks to Sally (Kirtley) and Denise (Bahosh). We may have cracked 500 tables. President Miguel asked those present if there were any specific questions on the financial materials that were forwarded to everyone. There were none.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Year End (2024) Operating Income Statement shows a loss (of \$6,952). For the first time our Strategic Project fund shows a loss, though our funds are doing well, especially considering the market, which is down 20%. There is no reason to panic. Things are starting to get better. This tournament may reverse the trend.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Year End (2024) Operating Income Statement shows a loss and for the first time our history the Strategic Project fund shows a loss. Our funds are doing well, especially considering the market, which is down 20%. There is no reason to panic. Things are starting to get better. This tournament may reverse the trend.

A motion was made by C. Barton to accept the report as presented. It was accepted unanimously.

Regional Director's Report – Mark Aquino

The ACBL is solvent with about 14 M of which 9 M is 1.4 M in the operating budget. The ACBL did not renew the contract with BBO. They make more from table fees than did from BBO. It has opened the "ACBL Club House and the ACBL Community. The membership has dropped to under 125,000. Table fees have been raised for both F-F bridge and on-line. The average age is 75. BBO gave the ACBL a flat rate to have the exclusive right to give out mps. BBO has paid the ACBL \$5,500 a year for this. My understanding is that the annual revenue is probably in excess of 200,000 plus the table fee. The ACBL is not renewing this contract. BBO. They will still have a contract but not an exclusive one. They can still give out masterpoints, but it will not be the exclusive provider of on-line masterpoints, that it is now. Their contract expires in June.

(Pres. Miguel) BBO will continue but there will be multiple vendors as well as international bridge and robot games

(RR. Aquino) The ACBL has two major initiatives, the Jumpstart Program in 236 cities and 35 states with 18,000 students. It is funded by the ACBL and the ACBL Foundation, which supports bridge in schools. Margo Hemmings is considering coming to the Warwick Regional this fall.

The 5-5-5 program has been modified. EMBA did OK with just shy of 11%. The word has gotten out that the clubs do all the recruiting so why should the Units get all the support.

(President Miguel) RIBA gets more money and the clubs get gold point games without charge. Regarding the 5-5-5 program modifies to make it less punitive. EMBA got just shy of the 11% they used to get. The purpose was to try to incentivize the Units to move toward advertising and recruiting new members

(Pres. Miguel) RIBA got more money than it did before and the club are getting more gold point games without extra cost.

(RD Aquino) David Metcalf is a superstar at the ACBL. He is on the Masterpoint Committee and helped to sell the Bracketed Pairs. A special thanks to Peter and Susan for developing it.

This is my last year as Regional Representative. I have held the position for 10 years. The election will take place this summer. Important that you go back to your units and assure that all the electors coincide with the list on the ACBL Unit websites. The cut of usually May 1. The process was briefly explained. C. Weiser offered to help is contacted. RR Aquino emphasized making sure that the Unit information on the ACBL website is up to date. Currently we have two candidates. Adam Parrish from New York and Susan Miguel. President Miguel has a great relationship with Bronia Jenkins. Unit Presidents should avail themselves to the monthly on-line meetings. There are held on the first Tuesday of the month. You should assure that someone attend if you cannot do so. If you cannot attend, you should have someone attend for you.

Edgar is the acronym for the anti-cheating program. Its algorithms are designed to detect aberrant actions in bidding and play in on-line bridge games. It detects aberrant behaviors on on-line bridge. When bridge went on-line during the pandemic inappropriate actions occurred. Individuals are being audited. Punishments are being handed out. People administering this do not have the wisdom of Solomon. Bar you have to have to be flagged a cheated is 200. Hope that the next person representing D-25 will have better luck getting the ACBL to be less draconian

(Pres. Miguel) I supported this wholeheartedly in the beginning. As time went on, and more and more people were flagged, it became clear that the punishments were not always meted out fairly the process is intimidating. What we think of as cheating is not always the case. One couple who are 98 and 95 were forced to resign from the ACBL. She reviewed the case of two players in their 90's, one in a nursing home with Alzheimer's who were accused of cheating as their bidding and play did not follow the "norms" that were expected. After a lengthy and difficult process, they were forced to resign from the ACBL or face expulsion for cheating. The ACBL has to learn to temper punishment with mercy. Remember to have an open mind when you hear of these things in your unit. Discussion followed.

(RD Aquino) After over 20 years of service, I have decided not to run for re-election as Regional Representative for Region 3. Chair of the Bridge Committee I sit on the Competition Committee. I am no longer no longer on the Masterpoint Committee. President Margot Hennings has decided to get away from the motion driven approach for Board votes. She is trying to develop consensus on votes. Being on the Board is a great deal of work especially as the Board has been reduced to 13. Being on the Board is a lot of work.

The two candidates who have declared are Adam Parrish and Susan Miguel. The way the election works is that the votes are weighted in relationship with the population of each District and each unit within that District.

The NABC Strategic Planning Committee is trying to make making the NABCs "right sized." They have gotten away to multi locations They like to use Hyatts. Orlando has been set for summer of 2028 and Atlanta for 2029. The Summer of 2031 in Canada is being discussed. (P. Marcus) As a member of the Advisory Council, I used to have access to the minutes of the Board of Governors meetings. Now this board has hourly meetings without journals. The Advisory Council, therefore, has no idea what is really going on. Richard Popper is aware of all of this. It is hard to make change. The Board needs to recognize that the information sent to the Advisory Council needs to be improved.

(RR Aquino) This is a good question. A will take under advisement and try.

(RD Aquino) This year marks my 60th anniversary as a Scout. I am proud to note that Jonathan Klinker earned 140 total merit badges, which is every badge that can be earned. He is one of a small number who have done this

Tournament Manager's Report - Sally Kirtley

We are doing great here. We would, as always like a few more tables. People found the hotel, the rooms the playing area, and the food. It looks as if we will make a small profit. Most like night playing area food. We will be back here next year. We are scheduled for Mansfield, Southbridge, Newton, Warwick, Norwich. Norwich may not be next year. Online region competition Think we will have a small profit here.

(Pres. Miguel) We have great hopes for Newton. The evening Swiss has declined in popularity. We will swap it out for an Individual in Newton. We are already getting reservations from outside of New England. We are trying to become a destination tournament. The potential is there for it being a huge success.

(S. Kirtley) We will have new, larger, bridge tables.

Old Business

Website- President Miguel

Gary (Peterson) goes yeoman work on the website, but it is outdated and not user friendly. Pres. Miguel reviews some of the shortcomings of the current website I have been in contact with "Wicked Good Websites." We learned of this company at one of the online chats with members.

(VP Bahosh) They will do anything we want and work with us. General discussion followed. We sent you the proposal with links to some of the website they have done. We want a user-friendly website. We are big on marketing and getting people to read our emails and come to our tournaments.

(C. Barton) When Bob Bertoni died, we were left in the dark.

Peter Marcus has a great deal of historical information that he is willing to add to the website. Steve Ackerman would be our techno-wizard and act as our point-person. It will be nice to have someone who knows the inner workings and could be our go to person.

(B. Levine) We are still struggling with the CBA website. We have to have a plan for when they cease to exist.

(Pres. Miguel) They are super nice and accommodating.

(G. Peterson) It will be usable on all formats

(Pres. Miguel) The hosting fee per month in the prospective.

J. Brouillard) The fee they are charging to develop a website is an awful lot of money. There are other hidden costs. Bob Bertoni developed and hosted our website at Megahurtz. We should contact them to see if they are interested. They are developing it in Wordpress, which is free.

(Pres. Miguel) They will get a small set-up fee. They understand marketing and set it up so it will be user friendly. We will be able to maintain it ourselves. How much is in the Special Projects Fund?

(J. Brouillard) There is nothing on who owns it. They will own our website.

Discussion followed on the issue of copyright law and how computer software is protected by US copyright law.

(Pres. Miguel) The website is not software.

(J. Brouillard) Of course it is. I've been doing website development for over 40 year.

(Pres. Miguel) Using Wordpress is free. We are hiring them as consultants and then taking it over as our own.

(P. Marcus) I contacted Megahurts. They refused to even respond.

(C. Weiser) The same thing happened with EMBA.

(Pres. Miguel) We will be using Wordpress and using them as a consultant. When completed, we can maintain it.

(P. Marcus) The idea that the company who develops it owns it is not true. If you contract with them, they work for you. The client can require ownership in the contract. We have to be sure that is in the contract.

General discussion followed.

(Pre. Miguel) Thus us not a contract, it is a proposal.

(W. Kennedy) [quoting from the web] The software developer can assign this ownership. I think we can get around it.

(B. Levine) My concern is that we are locked into them

(P. Marcus) We should advertise on the website and see if there is a bridge player who is experienced in such contracts and be willing to review the final contract. There has to be someone in our membership who is knowledgeable regarding intellectual property law.

A motion was made that a sub-committee should be to study and develop a contract that will be sent to the group for comment and vote.

General discussion followed.

C. Barton) I make a motion that we move forward. I agree. Have to assure that this is not their intellectual property.

(D. Morgenstern) I second the motion that we proceed with the negotiations. I would like to add that we should try to find an intellectual property attorney.

Discussion continued

(Pres Miguel) We looked at several suppliers who have a template not have something adapted directly for bridge. This company is locally based. We are hiring artists to design a website for us. Hosting it is a separate thing. I intend Steve (Ackerman) to look into hosting. They do not require that they host.

(D. Morgenstern) We should proceed with the negotiations and also get an intellectual property lawyer to review the contract.

The motion was called. The motion passed with no negative votes and only one abstention (J. Brouillard).

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25

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Postscript (addition sent by RD M. Aquino after the meeting)

Charity Grants

Every five years each district is awarded a major charity grant. District 25 was granted \$30,000 from the ACBL Charity Foundation this year. This is an opportunity to provide funding to a deserving 501 (3) c Non-bridge related organization. Nominations for funding must be submitted prior to October 1. Any Unit that wishes to nominate an organization for funding should contact me or President Miguel for further details.