



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
On-Line Meeting
November 18, 2020
Time: 7:00 PM

Present:

Officers: Jack Mahoney, President; Curtis Barton, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Lois DeBlois, Past President;
Unit Representatives: EMBA- Paul Harris, Brenda Montague, CMBA-none; CBA- Frances Schneider, Michael Wavada; RIBA -Marshall Williams; NHBA -David Lawrence; VBA -Mark Oettinger; MBA- Daniel Morgenstern; WMBA - Peter Samsel
Invited Guests (non-voting) Robert Bertoni, District Director; Sally Kirtley, Tournament Manager; Peter Marcus, DIC
Absent: Vicki Angus, CMBA

President Jack Mahoney called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He thanked everyone present for attending.

Secretary's Report - A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes, Executive Committee meeting of February 15, 2020 held in Sturbridge, MA (Sturwell)

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

The Statement of Financial Position shows that we are in a strong financial position. Our only liability of \$300 is for current vouchers that have not been redeemed.

The Operating Income Statement shows that The Presidential Regional at Sturbridge had a profit. We received the Grass Roots Fund money from the ACBL. This money was down considerably from last year. Without that, we would have income well under \$1,000 for the year.

A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented which was seconded and passed without opposition.

Tournament Manager's Report - Sally Kirtley

Update hotel contracts for Regionals- Update of contract sent

The Hotel in Farmington did cancel. The Springfield hotel is remodeling and it will not be completed in time for our event. They have cancelled. The Sturbridge Host hotel will be willing to host us if we have the Senior Regional. If we sign a contract we can cancel within 30 days of the event with no penalty. We are scheduled to play the Gold Mine at the Marlboro Western in May.

Nashua had already been cancelled due to its proximity to the Providence NABC. Warwick is still scheduled for September.

President Mahoney congratulated S. Kirtley on all the work she had done scheduling the tournaments. We have to decide on how we feel about giving up some of our space in Warwick. D. Morgenstern asked DD Bertoni what was the earliest we might know the ACBL's position DD. Bertoni answered that this would be discussed in his report. President Mahoney added that cancelling hotel contracts is what it may come down to.

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Curtis Barton

An update of tournament schedules was sent. Some of the dates were different from those on Sally's report. Hers are correct. Having the Senior Regional in April would be nice but it is doubtful at this time. For May, we scheduled the combination of the Goldmine and GNTs. We considered a super-regional by combining some of the Nashua (summer regional) events. These can be added easily, if we want. Our 2021 plans are in flux. We decided to establish a generic format for our regional schedules. This was also sent. All tournaments would be the same and run from Tuesday to Sunday. There would be the same basic concept for all with the NAPs and GNTs squeezed in. Just before Covid hit we were considering a "Return of the Egg." The Marlboro site can handle both events in different parts of the building. The Mine and the NLMs would be in one place, and the other events in another. We could cut the tournament back. Until we find out what is going on we won't know if any of the players will come.

(P. Marcus) No one knows anything. Some of the players may be chomping at the bit, but we won't have the old numbers. I think that until we get a handle on the numbers, we should scale down. The last thing we want is to have too many events with too few players in each. We should keep it simple. We should not look at having multiple tournaments in one location until the players come back. We should scale back out plans until covid is behind us.

(Curtis Barton) I agreed with Peter that we shouldn't scale back in size, although we should scale back the variety of our offerings to minimize the chance of six-table events. We could scale down the tournament to four days, but our commitments at the hotel might cost us more than holding the event.

(President Mahoney) at Marlboro, if scaling back would cost us the same amount of money, I agree with Peter that we should scale back.

(P. Marcus) Our contractual agreements will make a difference.

(President Mahoney) Marlboro was planned as two tournaments in two locations at the same place.

(P. Marcus) If we are paying for the space, shouldn't we try to use the space?

(President Mahoney) I agreed with Peter that we shouldn't scale back in size, although we should scale back the variety of our offerings, to minimize the chance of six-table events. If we have paid for the space we should try to use it. At the same time, we should try to control the development of multiple events of small numbers.

(C. Barton) I will take this as an action item and develop proposals via email on this. Option A-streamline the tournament, Option B- Plan is just like 2019.

(President Mahoney) We may have to see if we can cancel any potentially marginal events.

(C. Barton) We can make adjustments. We could try a four-day tournament rather than seven.

(President Mahoney) I was not suggesting that we cut a day, only simplifying the tournament.

(C. Barton) It is easy to cut back the number of events. I will lay out options and make suggestions. We should talk about the possibilities and formulate plans.

(B. Montague) The ACBL could obliterate everything.

District Director's Report - Robert Bertoni

Changes in ACBL District structure and its effect on District 25 Regionals

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to go into executive session.

=====

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

Regarding the NAPs and GNTs they are going to happen on line, both the Qualifiers and Finals.

(President Mahoney) Don't we already have qualifiers for 2021?

(DD Bertoni) The GNTs have qualifiers. On-line points will receive 20% less than live point. No platinum points will be given on-line, only gold, even for the finals. If on-line, GNTs and NAPs winners will not be qualifications for Grand Life Master. If they are live events, they would and they would be platinum. We do have to have our GNT qualifying in from January to May. We can schedule late as the even would be in Providence and there would be no travel plans to consider. If it ends up being on line we have to talk it up even with the restrictions.

(President Mahoney) The restrictions on platinum points will only affect the top group.

(D. Morgenstern) Would the on-line events require zoom?

(DD Bertoni) Yes, with screen mates. We want to make sure that there are no weird phone calls. We are working on the arrangements. Real bridge deals with small numbers. More people need more hands. It will be very expensive.

(President Mahoney) Is Frank Merblum still our GNT coordinator?

(DD Bertoni) I think he will continue.

(President Mahoney) I will contact him this week, Someone has to decide if the qualifying will start in January and go through May. Curtis will set up the methodology with our tournament committee.

(DD. Bertoni) There is a move to devalue colored points. We can't because Bridge Base On line (BBO) bought the rights at full value. The players tend to ignore colorless points because they have less value.

There are strong concerns on the Board when live bridge starts in clubs again. They upped the points for on-line play to energize people to play on line. When club bridge returns the ration will flip in favor of face-to-face bridge. The higher awards will be given at clubs to incentivize players back to the clubs. The consensus is to support live club bridge. No one knows when this will happen.

D. Lawrence explained how NHBA has managed their on-line games collaboratively. Each of their club games are held on-line on the same day and time using their in-person director. When face-to-face games resume, NHBA will not have enough directors to support both the BBO and club games do the competing BBO games will be

discontinued. There are a few BBO games that will continue because there are no competing face-to-face games.

(DD Bertoni) Cross Unit pooling will stop when live games resume.

(D. Morgenstern) Why isn't the ACBL doing the updates on the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKinney races?

(DD Bertoni) There is a problem with the interface with the club results program and the ACBL database. They are working on it. It just takes longer to get the points recorded. I will bring this up at the meeting tomorrow.

(P. Marcus) Does the ACBL still consider that on-line tournaments are all their?

(DD Bertoni) Yes

Old Business

Providence NABC - Joe Brouillard and Lois DeBlois

(J. Brouillard) Lois and I have had meetings with Eric Deguilis and Joe Gibbons. For all intents and purposes, Providence is closed. The convention Center and the hotels are closed. No large gatherings are allowed. Everything is up in the air as to whether the Providence NABC will or will not run. There is no timetable on vaccine availability or how it will be distributed. We are in a holding pattern. We are behind where we were in 2014. We won't spend any District money on an event that might not happen. We cannot predict what the pandemic status will be or if the government will let it (the NABC) run.

(Lois DeBlois) Even though we are behind, we are in position to hit the ground running if we get the go ahead. Even two months out, we could pull it off because we have a committee and our contacts are in place.

(Joe Brouillard): We have selected registration gift, section top prizes and we have the initial design for t-shirts. To Lois point, we could pull the trigger on those things. It would be nice if we get a definitive answer from the ACBL about the feasibility of that. We have a meeting scheduled for the first week in December with Montie Hamblen and Sara Beth Raab. We may know more than.

(Lois DeBlois) I am going to short cut what I was going to say regarding the ACBL and the Board of Governor's letter. Bob clarified a little bit of my personal angst with the ACBL. I wanted a motion before the board as to how we handle the execution of funding the 2021 NABC, if we have it and if the ACBL is still not allowing any fundraising through bridge (Regionals). I don't think we need do anything now, but we should be thinking how we handle our bank account and the ACBL if we aren't allowed to make any money. We haven't made a dime this year and from what we hear they are making money hand over fist. For them to refuse to pay for part of hospitality and expect it to come out of our funds is ludicrous.

John has chosen the prizes and the tea shirts. We are ready to pull the trigger as soon as we get a definitive answer from the ACBL. We have a meeting scheduled for the first week in December with Monte Hamlin and Sarah Rayes. We may know more then. I am going to short cut what I was going to say regarding the ACBL and the Board of Governor's letter. I do not know how we can handle our finances if we are not allowed to raise money. We have made no money this year for the NABC. The ACBL has refused to pay for hospitality. Expecting us to pay is ludicrous, as we have no way to raise any money.

(DD Bertoni) I am on the committee that has rewritten the Handbook for NABC Tournament Chairs. We have removed the line that says that the ACBL pays only for evening hospitality, leaving it open so that local chairs could decide if they want it in the morning instead of the evening. The amount of the budget didn't change.

(L. DeBlois) My point was whether we allowed to share those funds, it's still going to be a lot less, if we want to put on a good nationals, we need more. I think they owe to D25, being the first nationals in 18 months, to help us make it better for the players.

(DD Bertoni) Agree with you in principle, but at some point, someone has to suck it up and decide or not we want to provide more or less.

(L. DeBlois) Should it be that way?

(DD Bertoni) We can't just do nothing and screw the players.

(L. DeBlois) Not quite what I meant. What I would really like is be prepared to present to them a request to provide more funds than they would have in a normal year.

(DD Bertoni) I agree with that. We should blow it out and make it the best NABC but the ACBL is afraid of losing money. Getting that commitment will be tough.

(C. Weiser) The ACBL does not allow the District to run the NABC special games that have used in the past.

(Jack Mahoney) This is a real issue and I would certainly be part of any effort to support what Lois is proposing, when the time comes.

(L. DeBlois) I Think we should be patient until the right time comes.

(DD Bertoni) The Board should support the first live NABC. We need a commitment from the ACBL. They have made money on the virtual Regionals. The budget for 2021 doesn't look good.

(P. Marcus) If the NABC isn't well received by the players, the majority will blame the ACBL. Their name is on the tournament.

(President Mahoney) What Lois says makes sense, I would support what Lois is saying when the time is right.

(D. Morgenstern) Will Jack (President Mahoney) call a meeting as needed?

(President Mahoney) Yes.

New Business

Compensation

(President Mahoney) The secretary has done 90% of what she does in a normal year and has received no payments.

(C. Weiser) We have had two Executive Committee meetings of the usual five and all other regular duties have continues. In addition, all facets of the annual election were handled.

(President Mahoney) I spoke privately to Joe (Brouillard) who said that he would wave his stipend.

(J. Brouillard) Both the treasurer and the secretary receive cash stipends. The treasurer and secretary also receive free rooms at the regionals.

(President Mahoney) She should be paid a percentage for the work she is doing.

(The secretary excused herself from the meeting so that candid discussion could take place.)

Discussion followed.

D. Morgenstern made a motion that the secretary be paid a portion of her salary. The motion was seconded and passed 9-4.

(President Mahoney) Sally (Kirtley) was very involved in hotel cancellations during the first three months.

(S. Kirtley) I would like to wave compensation.

(J. Brouillard) No mileage reimbursement was submitted.

(President Mahoney) We should at least pay mileage.

(S. Kirtley) I do have another employment and business. I would just as soon not get any (compensation).

David Lawrence introduced a problem he has experienced with spam emails that have been sent through his nebridge email, which appears on the D-25 website. He has received as many as 78 in one day. DD Bertoni suggested that the alias email be changed. No one else has experience any similar problem. Discussion followed. The fact that no one else has received any small from the D-25 website list suggests the site is not the issue. M. Wavada will make an adjustment in the referral email for the NHBA representative.

A motion was made, second and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25.