



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

Minutes  
Board of Delegates Meeting  
Granite State Regional  
Nashua, NH  
June 25, 2023

Attendance-Present

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

Unit Representatives:

EMBA – Unit 108 - 12 of 16 - Peter Clay, Steve Diamond, Lynn Duncan, Paul Harris, Jo Megna-Wallace, Sabrina Miles, Brenda Montague, Neil Montague (S. Agranoff alt.), Ashok Rao, Linda Robinson, Jan Smola, Venky Venkataramani (Rita Vachani alt.) *Absent: Saul Agranoff, David Aronson, Carolyn Bitetti, Abhijit Dutta, Hardin Matthews, Rita Vachani,*

CMBA – Unit 113 - 1 of 2 Shirley Wagner *Absent: Denise Bahosh*

CBA – Unit 126 - 4 of 12 Paul Burnham, Peter Marcus, Michael Wavada, Susan Wavada *Absent: Richard DeMartino, Sandy DeMartino, and 6 to be named*

RIBA – Unit 145 - 3 of 3 Joyce Haley, Susan Miguel, Chris Soares *Absent - 0*

NHBA – Unit 150 - 4 of 4 Lawrence Cheetham, Lucia Carlisle, Sharon Kace, William Kennedy *Absent: 0*

VBA – Unit 175 - 2 of 3 Steve Ackerman, Sue Collinson *Absent- Don Sharp*

MBA – Unit 189 - 3 of 4 - Richard Budd, Dottie Kelleher, Dan Morgenstern *Absent: David Lindley*

WMBA - Unit 196 - 3 of 3 - Robert Brodner, Yan Drabek, Peter Samsel

**Call to Order**

**President's Opening remarks – Curtis Barton**

Bronia Jenkins is a breath of fresh air. She has competed in National Championships and is exceedingly bright and interested in growing the ACBL. She is willing to try new things and willing to move on if they do not work.

The District has turned around. We are at 78% of the 2019 Nashua numbers. Wednesday we exceeded them because of Bridgefest.

We are trying lots of new ideas. If any of you have ideas that we are not doing, let us know. Then we will make you part of the marketing committee.

Regarding the website, there is a team consisting of Neil (Montague), Steve Ackerman, and Gary Peterson that met Tuesday evening that are working to continually improve it.

The next regional is Warwick. On the website is a map showing the mileage from various locations.

Bridgefest has been a success. Thank you, Sue. More is coming. They are the future of District 25. The response was very enthusiastic.

**The Grass-roots Fund**, which is used to provide stipends for D-25 teams to compete in the GNTs is very small. If you have any ideas, let us know. An example would be holding Grass-roots Fund Games at your unit sectionals and at your clubs. Please encourage this.

**Secretary's Report** – Minutes, Board of Delegates meeting, Spectacle Regional, Southbridge, MA, November 19, 2022 - Carolyn Weiser, Secretary

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Minutes from the November meeting of the Board of Delegates as sent.

### **Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard**

All things considered, financially it has been a rough three years with covid and the lack of tournaments. Our Current Assets and Working Capital are down. The Grass-Roots Fund is down. There have been very few Grass-roots games for the last few years. The District spent \$44,000 on the Providence NABC. The National Fund is doing very well. As of May 31, it showed an 8.6% return. It was up in June. We have no debt. (question/ no identification given) What is the National Fund? (J. Brouillard) When an NABC comes to D-25 we use it to augment what the ACBL provides. We use the money to provide extra hospitality and for promotional items to publicize the NABC.

The Operating Income Statement shows that there has not been a lot going on. Tournament Income for 2023 shows a loss of \$825 for this year. Total loss for the year is \$2,449. The money for the GNTs has not yet been accounted for.

(R. Budd) Do you expect that this tournament will make money?

(J. Brouillard) Yes, it should.

(S. Kirtley) I can't crunch the numbers ahead of time. It will be close.

(No name) Tournament income just shows the net. Is there a subset that we can see that shows tournament activity?

(Pres. Barton) That will be available at the next Board of Delegates meeting in Marlboro. Please do not leave any of the financials on the tables. Please take them, or give them to me.

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

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

Attendance here has been fabulous. We are at 75% of our last Nashua regional. We lead the country in regional return to face-to-face bridge. This is due to the hard work of a number of people including everyone on the marketing committee. As Peter (Marcus) said, we need everyone to grab an oar.

ACBL membership is up. It appears we have hit bottom, and that's great. I am very optimistic.

The Tournament/Scheduling Committee has finalized the plans for the remainder of 2023. We will have regionals in Warwick, Tuesday, August 29 through Saturday, September 2, Marlboro, at the Best Western, October 31 to November 4, and Southbridge, April 17 to 21, 2024. We have tried to balance five and six day tournaments. At some locations, hotel availability has determined the days as well as a function of hotel costs and expected attendance. Bridgefest is building. We are trying to attract pro-teams to District 25, but that will take a while.

(L. Duncan) Is Tuesday through Sunday an aberration? Why not revert the rest to five days?

(VP Oettinger) We are experimenting with six (days) to accommodate the pro-teams and we sensed momentum growing. One issue today, is the number of teams. We are testing Sunday. We are cautiously optimistic.

(S. Kirtley) In Warwick, Sunday was not available. Our contracts are currently three-tournaments not three-years out.

(VP Oettinger) For 2024 we are looking for a hotel in June. Currently this hotel is not available. If we cannot find a suitable site for June, we will look for one in February. August (Warwick) and November (Marlboro) are set. We are looking at four tournaments a year.

We will continue to analyze the 5 or 6-day schedule. As the players return to face-to-face bridge, we will try to gauge what the consumers want.

The GNTs and NAPs will mostly be on-line, except for the Semi and finals of the Open and A strats. The current schedule is work in progress. 2024 will mostly be on-line.

The evening games at the regionals are getting smaller and smaller. We are looking at several possibilities that may attract more players. If you have any ideas, please offer them.

(P. Clay) What happened with Springfield?

(VP Oettinger) It was a question of using the facilities. Southbridge was a breath of fresh air. We never got to Springfield and had to give up on Sturbridge.

(S. Kirtley) Many want separate fees up to \$5,000 per day, for ballroom space.

(VP Oettinger) During covid the workforce and our society was dislocated. When the workforce issues are solved, there will be the weddings that were postponed.

(S. Kirtley) We are looking at other possible types of facilities. If anyone knows of any possible sites, please let us know. I will keep trying. We have looked into college campuses, etc. This (hotel) is the model we like. There may be a place where we will be able to find it.

(R. Budd) Springfield has the issue of the separate cost of parking. It was \$25.00. Parking is free at the casino 2 blocks away. However, everyone does not want to walk that far. They still want money for the ballroom space.

(S. Miguel) If you know of a place, please let us know.

(S. Kirtley) Here the room block was 325. We had 419. Two weeks ago we were over 400. This is part of the negotiation with the hotel. In Southbridge we had to buy back 19 or 20 rooms. I try to make the number as low as I can, rather than pay for empty rooms.

(VP Oettinger) The increase in table fees was long overdue. It brought us back. I am very optimistic about the future of face-to-face bridge.

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

Summary of Tournaments to date

Update – Granite State Regional

Tournament Sites

The Update sites and contracts was covered as part of the Tournament/Scheduling Committee report.

(C. Soares) Have you considered Night games with alcohol.

(S. Kirtley) We are thinking of a wine and chess party. We tried to set up a bar but there was a \$150 set-up fee plus the cost of the bartender. We thought of the caddies as “runners” to the in-house bar.

(President Barton) There are liability issues.

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

We have an interesting situation here. As I look across the room, all of you are part of the marketing committee.

My own bridge journey, of five decades ago began when someone asked me to join the ACBL. I am also thrilled with the numbers who run clubs and tournaments. I encourage each and every one of you to ask others you may know to help out where you need help or to join our league or come to our tournaments.

Starting January 1, I will become the new Regional Director of region 2 for the ACBL. I was just the District 25 Director in the past, but my duties have expanded significantly, and now I am the district director for D25 (New England) and D24 – all of NYC and Long Island. There are 25 districts but only 13 Representatives on the ACBL Board of Directors.

The good news is that all of my family is well and I am expecting my 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild, a boy.

The looks to be an exceptional year. We have an exciting new Executive Director, Bronia Jenkins, who began in May. Progress requires working for consensus. That's the way the national board works. My current term ends January of 2025.

Not all the news is good. The NABC entrance fees are going up. Other fees too. The ACBL has looked at on-line bridge as a source of income. The ACBL has had problems with their tournaments and have lost money.

The ACBL has internal structural problems, especially with the IT department. The volunteers have stepped up to provide helpful fixes that will enable us to operate during this critical transition period. There is a huge overhead.

(L. Cheetham) I make a motion that we approve \$200 for a speaker and mike system.

(J. Brouillard) We have two.

(M. Wavada) I second that motion.

Discussion followed.

(S. Kirtley) Most hotels will not let us bring one in. There is the problem of transportation and storage as well.

Discussion continued.

(Pres. Barton) Sally and I will chat and find a solution. A solution might be a small, modern system.

**Old Business-** none

**New Business –**

Nomination Committee Report - Brenda Montague

The District 25 Nomination Committee has named the following for 2024:

Mark Oettinger - President

Sue Miguel - Vice -President

Treasurer - Joseph Brouillard

Secretary - Carolyn Weiser

Any member of District 25 in good standing who wishes to have their name added to the list may do so following the regulation as stipulated in the bylaws. The portion of the bylaws that governs this will be available on the website tomorrow.

(Pres. Barton) They must be fulfilled by 30 days prior to the election.

Presentation of the Weiss-Bertoni Award – Mike Wavada

The Larry Weiss Award was created in the 1980's. The criteria for selection included success at bridge and grace as the table. The last person to receive this award was Bob Bertoni. The Executive Committee decided to retire the award as few knew Larry Weiss and there was no more room on the tray.

Bob Bertoni embodied the criteria.

I remember him as a leader, a team player, a champion of face-to-face bridge at all levels throughout New England.

In honor of Bob Bertoni, we added 4th criteria, to promote face-to-face bridge.

The committee consisted of 2 representatives from EMBA and one from every other unit. There were six women and 3 men. We solicited nominations throughout the district. 99 individuals were nominated. Every email was read and discussed. We voted twice. The new trophy (loving cup with a stand) will hold 18 names. My wife, Susan (Wavada) purchased the trophy and had it engraved. The 42 nominees were posted on the website. They are all good candidates and deserving of this award.

The first winner of the Weiss-Bertoni Award is Joe Brouillard.

(J. Brouillard) I am shocked and honored. This means a lot. I have been part of the District for years and treasurer for 10. I am honored to have won the Weiss-Bertoni Award. I did not know Larry, but I did know Bob. He was a very good friend. I think of him every tournament. He served in many capacities with the District, including working the TSC. He turned the association around. He was a good friend.

I did see the list of nominees. All would have deserved this award. They contribute to making this a great association.

(Pres. Barton) Many thanks to the Committee and to Mike.

Vaccination Policy- If asked at the table, we expect a player to put on a mask, otherwise, if you are sick, don't come. Masks will be available.

Growing the Grass Roots Fund- If you are a club member, suggest that the club run GRF games. It increases the masterpoint awards. The money that comes to the

District from the ACBL from these games is used only to support the GNT and the NAP winners travel.

(M. Aquino) The (NAP) qualifying starts at the clubs and moves up through the District to the Nationals. You can get to be a national champion through this event.

(Pres. Barton) Sue (Miguel) had 32 teams. Two were eligible. Only one is going. It takes money to support this. The ACBL sends 80% of the fees to the District, which is used to support the players.

(M. Aquino) If you are running a sectional you can request that 2 sessions be designated as a Grass-Roots Sectional. That will give the winners as many points as they would have received at a Regional, in quantity, not color.

(J. Brouillard) We received \$18,000 one year. Bob Bertoni was a champion of the GNT Fund. It costs \$1.25 per player. The District gets 80%.

(Pres. Barton) It has come to my attention that the ACBL Advisory Council representatives were not notified of the recent elections.

(M. Aquino) I'll be happy to look into this.

(R. Budd) I make a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed without opposition.

(Pres. Barton) See you in Marlboro.

Respectfully submitted: Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, D-25