

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

## **Minutes**

### **Board of Delegates**

New England Bridge Conference

Nashua, NH

Sunday, June 22, 2014

#### Attendance:

Officers: Mark Aquino, President; David Rock, Vice President; Donald Levy, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Ausra Geaski, Past President; Richard DeMartino, District Director (non-voting)

#### Delegates:

EMBA - Unit 108 - Robert Bertoni, Cilla Borrás, Catherine Cooper, Grace Lombardo (L. Procter alt.), Peter Lombardo, Neil Montague (J. Adams alt.) Brenda Montague, Dean Panagopoulos, Adam Parrish, Joyce Pearson, Alix Taylor *Absent: Jane Adams, David Aronson, Athena Panagopoulos, Carole Carlson, Jori Grossack, Lisa Procter, Jan Smola*

CMBA – Unit 113 - Marsha Addis (D. Dreamer, alt.), Bruce Emond *Absent : Donald Dreamer*

CBA – Unit 126 - Larry Bausher, Phyllis Bausher, Allan Clamage, Joan Martin, Phil Olshefski (B. Schneider alt.) Carolyn Olshefski (S. DeMartino alt.) Sonja Smith, Joyce Stiefel, Michael Wavada, Esther Watstein

*Absent: Debbie Benner, Sandy DeMartino, Bernie Schneider, Bill Watson*

RIBA – Unit 145 - Linda Ahrens Joseph Brouillard, Lois DeBlois, Diane Lambert (M. Fahey alt.) *Absent: Maureen Fahey*

NHBA – Unit 150 - Wayne Burt, Sarah Widhu *Absent: Robert Eachus, Daniel McGuire*

VBA – Unit 175 Wayne Hersey *Absent : Frank Hacker, Phil Sharpsteen*

MBA – Unit 189 Richard Budd *Absent: Dottie Kelleher*

WMBA – Unit 196 - Helen Pawlowski, *Absent : Robert Derrah, Shirley Derrah*

#### **Call to Order-**

The meeting was called to order by President Aquino at 8:20 AM to expedite the agenda as the breakfast was behind schedule.

#### **President's Report** - Mark Aquino

President Aquino thanked Wayne and Susan Burt and Sarah Widhu for all their work at the partnership and welcome desk; Karen McCallum for her lecture; Karen McCallum, Dick Budd, Lloyd Arvedon and Lew Gamerman on the Expert Panel; and David Metcalf, Joyce Stiefel and Helen for their preparatory work. Two District 25 members who have reached milestones are Delegate Joyce Stiefel's husband John who reached 20,000 and our District Director, Rich DeMartino who reached 25,000.

2014 is shaping up, to quote Dickens, as the worst of times and the best of times for District 25. Best as we have the Fall NABC in Providence this year. NABC team has been working tirelessly to assure a great NABC this November. It is the worst as this is shaping up to again be a bad year financially. Committees and individuals have been working to make our tournament enjoyable and educational for all the players. We are trying to find new ways to help players from Sectionals to Regionals and Nationals. We have an aging population and the dynamics are changing in bridge. The Audit Committee is reviewing our financial controls and we are again reviewing our bylaws. We have some great events coming up. The NAP finals will be in Sturbridge in October and they will be part of a full regional, which, if everything works out as planned will be a very special one. We face a challenge in trying to get the flight "C" players involved and ready to move up. The ACBL is considering changes that would make this easier. Bob Bertoni continues to work on making the schedules the best he can for all players and Mike Wavada works tirelessly as our webmaster. Everyone should get into the habit of checking out our website, [www.nebridge.org](http://www.nebridge.org) of events, news and the partnership desk that can make it easier for players to find partners before they come to regionals.

## **Secretary's Report - Carolyn Weiser**

A motion was made by R. Budd, seconded and so voted to approve the Minutes of the Board of Delegates meeting held in Mansfield, MA, Sunday, November 10, 2013

## **"B"'s Needs - Ausra Geaski**

### **"B"'s Needs - Ausra Geaski**

The "B" Needs Committee reviewed the changes that have been made since the committee was formed by Mark Aquino over a year ago. Our original purpose was to look **at** things that could be done to make our Regionals more enjoyable and bring the "B" flight players back. We have expanded our scope and now it includes coming up with and instituting new ideas for all players.

We put together a spreadsheet that will be **updated and** put on the website, with recommendations from last year. This year we have instituted some **suggestions** and identified others for the future. Those we have started include the welcome desk which began at Cromwell with greeters. Sandy DeMartino spearheaded this effort and **purchased stickers at Cromwell to give out to players when they registered. These seem to be popular with the players and were** continued by Ginny Iannini at the Senior Regional as well as here **in Nashua** by Wayne and Susan Burt and Sarah Widhu. We started the Expert Lecture Series at the Cape. President Aquino helped get the District 25 experts involved in this. The sessions have gone very well and been well received. Our goal is to continue those things that have **worked** well and keep trying to improve them as we go forward. Mike Wavada has taken photo of event winners, which are posted on the website. Helen Pawlowski has **maintained** the Leader Board, **set up a** suggestion box and **prominently displayed Zero Tolerance signs received from the ACBL**. The goal of the committee is to increase attendance, which is a major issue. Everyone here can help by promoting our programs, taking flyers for the clubs that you attend, encouraging players to attend the regionals and seeing if you can do anything to facilitate this. Due to the high expense, the District had to stop mailing flyers to every club, so your help with this is vital. The action items from our meeting will go on the website. The Board of Delegates members are our best advertisers.

## **Tournament Committee- David Rock**

The Committee reviewed the changes in game time at the Senior Regional. Allan Clamage did extensive work in compiling and analyzing the data from the survey that was taken there, including the possible negative impact of changing our start times. We will continue this in Warwick.

The Regional, dubbed the "Egg" is scheduled for October in conjunction with the NAP finals. The Regional will be 5 days from October 8-12 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel. The format has not been finalized as we are awaiting a vote by the ACBL Board in Las Vegas that could affect what we can offer. R. DeMartino is confident that we will be allowed to do what we want and will be able to make it a truly special event. Check the website after Las Vegas.

## **Scheduling Committee - Bob Bertoni**

The early and late start times are under review. Another decision that will be made by the ACBL in Las Vegas, if passed, would affect the format of our pairs stratifications and make the events more player friendly, especially for the post Gold Rush players. The early week 0-4000 KO was launched and, though we hoped for 3, we were happy with two good "B" brackets. Word of mouth is critical to getting the news out that there is a safe haven for players leaving the Gold Rush. Player can play and get lots of masterpoints playing with their peers. We will unify the games and have the Friday night KO's 0-4000 as well. If anyone has any suggestions, they are encouraged to please contact someone on the committee personally or through the website.

## **Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski**

Full financials were sent out and made available to any Delegate. Table count was substantially down 13% at the Cape. Worst hit was the Sectional. The Regional was down only 8%. Gross revenues fell almost \$7,000. Knowing this, Head Director, Peter Marcus did everything he could do to reduce director costs. Profit was down only half that of revenue as we were able to control some other expenses.

### **Nationals Committee– Joseph Brouillard**

It was five years ago that we started looking into Providence as a site for the 2014 NABC. It is hard to believe that it is only 5 months away. I want to thank all the committee members for their work. Most of the games will be at the Convention Center. The 10 & 3 games will be at the Omni Hotel. Reservations opened on May 15 and we already have 26% occupancy. We hope that after Las Vegas the numbers will go up. The Omni, Biltmore and Marriott are all very close to the Convention Center. The maximum is a 3-minute walk. The Omni connects to the Convention Center and to the Convention Center garage and Mall. All the information on the Nationals can be found on our website: [PROVNABC.org](http://PROVNABC.org), including parking, hotels, schedules, restaurants, site seeing and more. Waterfire is all set for the evening of November 29. It is a spectacular event. We have arranged a discount on the parking at the Convention Center garage. The regular fee is \$12.00 but we have a discounted rate from 7 AM to midnight for \$8.00. The overnight fee is \$18.00 for 24 hours. R. DeMartino asked if this allowed for in and out trips. It does not. J. Brouillard will contact the manager to see if this would be possible. The NABC is only 5 months away. We need everyone to get the information to your clubs. Please take schedules, bookmarks and the other advertising items. If you need more, just let me know. The success of this NABC depends on the attendance of local players.

### **Charity Committee- Phyllis Bausher**

The ACBL Charity foundation awards grants to different Districts on a cycle. This year we will receive \$30,000 to be distributed within our District. The ACBL will cut 6 checks. At the meeting yesterday, the committee decided to distribute the money to agencies that help the homeless. We will give \$5,000 to each state. Over the summer, we will review specific 501C3 charities and assure that the money will go to those that directly serve the homeless and not to administrative costs. We will have a finalized list at the Warwick meeting of the Board of Delegates.

### **NAPs - M. Aquino for Dean Panagopoulos**

NAP qualifying began this month and will continue through August. Anyone who qualifies at the club level is eligible to play in the District finals, October 11-12 in Sturbridge at the Host hotel. We have received Grassroots Fund money earmarked by the ACBL for the Districts in which Grassroots games were held. The District will use this money to provide free entries to the teams that make it to the final day. C-flight teams, who only play one day, will receive equivalent special hospitality. Players can play up.

### **Treasurer's Report - Don Levy**

Copies of the report were given to everyone. Please hand them in if you do not intend to take them home, as this financial information is not for the general public. The report covers the period through May 31, 2014. The loss from Tournaments is over \$10,000 more than last year at this time. We continue to lose money steadily. Total receipts are down while expenses are up. Our net assets are over \$20,000 less than last year. Table count continues to be the main issue. The numbers keep going down. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the report as presented.

### **District Director's Report- Richard DeMartino**

The NAP's and GNT's are great events. All finalists, from all strats are treated the same. They are very exciting events. Anyone who qualifies should play in the District Finals.

At the National level, I am sorry to have to report that the revision of ACBL Score has been stopped. We have failed. The outside consultant did a great job, but ultimately we could not pull it together. We will start over, but we will have to scale back. I will make a motion in Las Vegas regarding this. I apologize for the National Board. I will know more in July and will report back.

We are addressing the 750 - 1500 group. We are working on motions that will allow Gold Rush events independent of what is going on elsewhere during the day. Currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> flight gets no gold. The proposed changes would allow gold to be won in events without and A/Ax above. Currently the points awarded to A/Ax

on Gold Rush days are inflated. The awards will change based on an “estimate” of the size of the game over various days in an attempt to equalize the awards.

Another proposed change would also allow 3 strats in the Middle flight. This would allow for a separate flight of 750 to, say, 1500 that would allow those who have exceeded the Gold Rush total to play against that peers. I am almost certain that this will pass. There would be three strata above the Gold Rush in one game, probably 750-1500, 1500-3000, and 3000+. Another possibility is to have 3 flights: 3 separate groups, something like a top group, say 2500+ with 2 strata, a middle group, say 750-1500 and 1500 to 2500, and a bottom group, say 0-300, and 300-750. This is being referred to as a 2-2-2 type game, i.e. three flights, each with 2 strata. The basic problem with this approach is that we are creating 4 strata above 750, where there are presently only 2 (A and X). There are not enough players in most districts to have such games and further such a plan could lead to significant masterpoint inflation. All the motions have yet to be submitted.

**Old Business-** none

**New Business -**

P. Bausher asked if we would continue to have the June regional at Nashua. H. Pawlowski stated that we are under contract for the next two years. We are here through 2016. Every time we move, we lose a few players. Hopefully the numbers will grow. Attendance figures are down 30% from 2011. We had a few issues that will be discussed at the exit interview with the hotel. The needs of bridge players are unique and it takes time for a hotel to adjust. The numbers are down. The June regional is usually bigger than the Labor Day weekend when we were here before. It is important that those present go back to their constituents and emphasize the good things rather than the complaints that will be addressed. We need to establish a positive buzz. The hotel is a step up from Sturbridge. We have 0-4000 games. The bracketed KO did run. Once you tell me of problems, I will address them with the hotel. We are already working on the lighting. It will be much improved next year. R. DeMartino asked the delegates to please be positive in their comments.

A. Parrish suggested that the body consider dropping one tournament. Our attendance is going down. One possible solution is to cut a tournament. President Aquino stated that we have considered this but that we are under contractual constraints. H. Pawlowski will bring the sites and committed dates to the next meeting of the Board of Delegates. We have no contracts after 2017. R. DeMartino added that both the Individual and the Senior Regional are grandfathered. If we were to drop one, the Individual would be the most logical. If we were to drop the individual, it would help us keep the Senior Regional.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 AM.

Carolyn Weiser, Secretary, District 25