



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee
Individual Regional
Newton, MA
January 4, 2015

Attendance:

Officers: Mark Aquino, President; Bernard Schneider, Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary; Ausra Geaski, Past President

Unit Representatives: EMBA: David Aronson, Robert Bertoni; CBA: R. DeMartino for Esther Watstein; RIBA: Maureen Fahey; NHBA: Wayne Burt; VBA: Wayne Hersey; WMBA: Robert Derrah

Invited Guests: Richard DeMartino, District Director; Helen Pawlowski, Tournament Manager; Peter Marcus, DIC; Dean Panagopoulos, GNT/NAP Coordinator

President Aquino called the meeting to order at 4:55. He welcomed new officers Bernard Schneider and Joe Brouillard. He wished all a Happy and Healthy New Year and stated that 2014 was a great year for the district, culminating with our very successful EGG and Providence NABC, and he congratulated the NABC chairs and their committee chairs for their efforts in making the Providence NABC a success. He encouraged the new board to help lead the district in building upon our successes, and to remain vigilant about our financial status and clear need for building attendance in 2015 and beyond.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes, Executive Committee meeting from Warwick, RI, August 30, 2014 as sent.

Scheduling/Website Committees Reports – Bob Bertoni

The website Committee did not meet. The website is in good shape thanks to the efforts of Mike Wavada.

The Tournament/Scheduling Committee met. The ACBL now expects full tournament schedules with flyers a year in advance. H. Pawlowski cannot buy an ad until both are submitted and approved. We are working hard to get caught up and intend to have all the schedules on a cycle that will assure that they are ready one year in advance. We completed the Senior and Nashua today and will complete Warwick and the Masters in Cromwell. A few minor changes were made in the flyers that were sent out prior to the meeting for Nashua (new Handouts were provided). We added a 10 & 2:30 0-4000 Bracketed KO on Wednesday. The Pro/Am on Saturday evening will be discussed by A. Geaski. The Choice Pairs were introduced at the Senior Regional to provide flexibility and to accommodate those players who complained that they could not play, shop, and site-see too. Players can combine two of the three sessions but must designate which two before they play. We need to get a lot of publicity out to assure that everyone

understands the format. They can play the third as a side game. We added a 2:30 game on Wednesday for the 299er and the Sectional. We had a game last year, which was not on the schedule that attracted a number of players, so we decided to include it this year. The Regional events cannot begin until 7:30. H. Pawlowski reminded B. Bertoni that the 299ers get a discount. Their fee is only \$12.00. This should be on the flyer. R. DeMartino added that though Choice Pairs are controversial, they are very enthusiastic about it in Chicago. H. Pawlowski noted that the inequality regarding the tables size of the 3 Choice Pairs games is similar to the differential in the different sessions of a side game series. P. Marcus stated that the directors would be able to handle it.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the schedule for Seniors and as presented. So voted without opposition.

B. Bertoni asked A. Geaski to review the Pro-Am for Nashua.

Nashua Pro-Am- Ausra Geaski

A. Geaski handed out a Draft Proposal and Flyer for the Pro-Am event. The Pro-Am is the last of the goals proposed by the "B"’s Needs Committee. Based on previous meetings and feedback, we established the Conditions of Contest. We wanted to have the whole of the Nashua tournament to publicize and make partnerships, so Saturday evening seemed best. This event would replace the Zip KO. There would be no competing games at 7:30. Each partnership must include a pro, defined as a Life Master with more than 500 MPs and an Am, defined as a Non-life Master or a player with less than 500 MPs. Pairs would compete in 3 strats determined by average: A-open/ B-1500-3000/ C-<1500. Discussion followed. Publicity is vital. We want the flyers out at Cromwell and the Seniors. We would like to send them to the various club managers in the District. Perhaps we could find a well-known player who might volunteer to be matched by raffle. M. Aquino reminded everyone that a motion was passed last year that we would have Conditions of Contest published for all tournaments to avoid any confusion. D. Panagopoulos suggested that pairs of Am’s be allowed if they wanted to play together, which is what is currently done in EMBA. A. Geaski answered that this was thoroughly discussed by the committee and that the committee took the position that we did not want such partnerships as we wanted an event with some educational value. P. Marcus added that the side game on Saturday night runs about 10 tables and would not match our pro-am model. The success of the event would be measured by how it stacked up against this. A motion was made to amend the Conditions of Contest to allow pairs of Ams to play at the Director’s discretion rather than being turned away. The motion was seconded and so approved.

B. Schneider suggested that there should be a trophy. A. Geaski answered that the committee favored a free play at a regional for the winners as well as having their picture posted on the website. Discussion followed. A motion was made and seconded to purchase a trophy for the event. The motion failed.

B. Bertoni made a motion that the definition of Pro be clarified as Life master or any player with 500 points or more. The motion was seconded and so voted.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Conditions of Contest to read that a Pro was any player with over 500 points, life master or not. The motion was approved.

P. Marcus suggested that the information should be sent to Sue Miguel to distribute with the I/N materials. H. Pawlowski suggested that we might make this a

Charity game to enhance the master points. P. Marcus said that the gain would be small and that it would not be enough to draw any players.

B. Bertoni stated that in Nashua flyer as handed out, we were using the newly approved two divisions of 3 flights. Open/3000/1500 and Gold Rush with 300/500/750, which was approved by the ACBL. This will provide a transition for those players who have advanced beyond the 750 mark as they will have their own flight >1500. The rest of the schedule is straight forward as printed.

Wayne Burt asked why our Nashua Regional overlaps the Fredericton Nova Scotia Regional by 3 days. H. Pawlowski stated that this is our standing weekend for almost 20 years and that the sanction for this tournament was obtained over 7 years ago. P. Marcus added that we coordinate with D-3 and D-24 but have not coordinated with D-1, or D-2. There are simply not enough weekends in the year to accommodate everyone. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Nashua schedule as presented. Passed without opposition.

Tournament Manager's Report - Helen Pawlowski

Financial reports for the NAPs with comparisons for the past three years were passed out.

Some of the ACBL expenses related to the EGG had to be apportioned as best as possible as there was not always a clear delineation possible. Though we did the best we could, the same was true of hospitality, caddies, etc.

NAP

For the NAP's, the tournament costs were consistent with last year. In 2012, we had split sites, which proved to be more expensive. President Aquino queried regarding the use of Sturbridge for 2015 for the NAPs and GNTs. H. Pawlowski answered that are OK for March for the Rainbow and the GNT's, but October is not set. She will check the physical contracts to determine whether we will be able to use Sturbridge in the fall. If the NAP's for 2015 are a stand-alone (without the EGG) we may have to pay for the use of the site and this would be very expensive. H. Pawlowski will verify Sturbridge and any other viable options for the NAP at or before Cromwell.

The EGG

The EGG has to be considered a success, even though it ended up with a \$671 loss. The players were very happy and pleased with the events. We had considerable difficulty regarding pre-publicity that affected numbers and the costs. P. Marcus did everything he could do to keep the ACBL cost down. If we had the turnout we expected, we would have needed all the staff. Even when tournament numbers shrink, some expenses do not. Bulletin advertising had some issues as the ACBL took away our ability to advertise in the April, May and June issues. Mark Aquino requested a break in our advertising costs and the ACBL accommodated us by offering a 2 page ad at a 1 page price – a considerable savings. The final numbers are not in and the figures regarding publicity may be off as much as \$200. All other bills have been paid. J. Brouillard added that the bill has been paid and the final figure was off by \$200.

R. DeMartino added that the players that came thought that it was a fantastic tournament. We could have cut hospitality but we wanted this to be a great show. We did the best we could to recover from the earlier difficulties. We should be very positive

about this event. It turned out to be a great format. The players had fun and this is our intent. The B's needs Committee made it welcoming. P. Marcus stated that there is always difficulty when we have a new tournament as we do not have any history to guide us. If we do this again, the director costs would be less.

The chart for the Individual from 2006 to 2014 with table count/gross receipts/ACBL Expenses/Net Receipts shows that though we had two small profits, the trend has been consistently down. Tournament expenses and profit-loss indicate that we have gone from a profit of \$262 in 2006 to a loss of \$6,815 in 2014, which was increased due to a snowstorm. This year we added a 10 o'clock game on Friday, which with minimal advertising had 41 tables. Friday evening did very badly - especially in Flt A. The "B" KO was up. We are currently almost 90 tables up from last year but 47 tables lower than 2013. We are currently at 375 ½ tables. DeMartino noted that the figures are clear. He requested information regarding the number of years for which we have contracts for the Individual and for the Senior Regional sites. We have contracts here until 2016. H. Pawlowski will ask for a hold date for 2017 but will sign no contract. We have two great locations on the Cape in Hyannis and Falmouth, where the Seacrest, which is newly renovated, is anxious to have us back. H. Pawlowski will meet with them next week. The Seacrest would expect a contract through 2017. We have a contract with Hyannis for 2016 and we have two locations holding space for later years. One of the issues with Hyannis has been the steps. Specific information on all Cape contracts and options will be reviewed at Cromwell.

D. Aronson asked if the Board has to approve contracts or does the Manager sign for the District. H. Pawlowski signs as Tournament Manager for the District. D. Aronson asked if it should go through the Tournament Committee and/or the Executive Committee. H. Pawlowski answered that this would reduce her ability to make any contract if she had to go back and forth.

Motion was made and seconded to approve H. Pawlowski signing a Cape contact through 2017.

Discussion followed. B. Bertoni asked if we have information on the hospitality and other auxiliary costs. When the Executive Committee approved the move to Nashua, we were unaware of increased costs. H. Pawlowski will review the hospitality and other concession prices up front before any contracts are signed. All of this information will be available for the Executive Committee in Cromwell. W. Hersey questioned if we should even consider moving forward at the Cape, considering its recent financial losses. H. Pawlowski stated that it is a difficult situation to answer. We will get more money from our Regionals this year, as we are no longer contributing to the NABC fund.

P. Marcus reminded the Executive Committee that the Cape is a grandfathered Regional and cannot be moved off the Cape. If it is moved off the Cape or it will be lost. B. Bertoni asked that the issue be put on the agenda for Cromwell. The Executive Committee could review the hospitality projections and other factors and make a decision there. H. Pawlowski agreed to have all the information ready for that meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to table the discussion until then. So voted without dissent.

Treasurer's Report - Joseph Brouillard

President Aquino took a moment to welcome to the Executive Committee and introduce new members David Aronson, Bob Bertoni, and Maureen Fahey as who had entered the meeting after his opening remarks.

Treasurer Brouillard referred to the two sets of figures that had been passed out: the Operating Income Statement and a Statement of Financial Position, both through December 31, 2014. We do not have a final accounting for the NABC as of this date. R. DeMartino noted that we never have included the NABC funds on any balance sheet before and its inclusion distorts the figures. This should be totally separated. The NABC money is not our money or our expense. J. Brouillard stated that he felt that it should be reflected on the Income Statement and that it was a recommendation of the L. Robinson and the Audit Committee. They felt that we needed to show the difference in Net Assets which dropped by almost \$50,000. This had to be reflected on the income statement in some format. R. DeMartino stated that he totally disagreed.

J. Brouillard stated that he had set up a reserve of \$20,000 for any outstanding NABC expenses. C. Soares has not received the information from the ACBL and will have the final accounting will be available in Cromwell.

The Operating Income Statement (profit and loss equivalent) shows that we lost \$7,800 in 2014. Warwick was a bid success and offset some of the loss. A reserve of 20,000 was set up to cover any expenses that may have to be paid for the NABC.

A. Geaski noted that the report indicates that we have money in the NABC account and we could have the \$20,000 reserve taken out of that. She expressed the opinion that this format really tells how much money we have in the district. If we ran out of money, we could use that money that we have set aside for the next NABC.

D Panagopoulos questioned why the report shows expenses for NABC but not money from NABC. President Aquino said both arguments have merit as the NABC funds are not part of our operating budget, but it is a good thing to know that we have a cushion.

President Aquino affirmed that both arguments have merit as the NABC funds are not part of our operating budget, but it is a good thing to know that we have a cushion.

R. DeMartino stated that for all the previous reports the NABC money was not included. President Aquino added that we should key on the total unrestricted assets.

Operating loss for Tournaments from last year declined by \$1,000. The total loss in tournament income was almost \$8,000. We had three big losses in the Cromwell, Seniors, and the Summer Regionals, but the numbers are somewhat misleading in that we not have a Master's this year. It is not really a variance. The EGG is a separate line item. There is no way to avoid the fact that this was a bad year.

P. Marcus added that we were hurt by the weather in Cromwell, which we cannot control.

The issue of Nashua is a huge percent of the loss. The newness is a factor. We lost a large number of tables. We have always had the belief that we muddle along in the winter and make it up in the Summer. If we fix Nashua, the balance sheet looks a lot better.

R. DeMartino observed that there is no possible way that we are going to get the numbers of players in Nashua that we got in Sturbridge. We are not going to get the New York and CT. We are never going to achieve what we did a few years ago.

President Aquino suggested that rather than assuming that we are dead, we have to deal with what we can do with Nashua, which will make the biggest difference.

P. Marcus recommended that on the flyer we call it Nashua, Massachusetts as players think that it is closer

President Aquino stated that we sadly did not parlay the success of the EGG. We need to get those players to come back. We need an after action report on the EGG and focus on Nashua to get the people there and spread the word.

B. Schneider added that we need to find a way to entice the CBA players to Nashua.

D. Aronson questioned as to what we are doing to get the Canadians to come down. P. Marcus noted that we could print the schedule in French and advertise that we have a French-speaking director as Director Wells speaks French, and advertise to the Montreal Bridge League.

Treasurer Brouillard returned to the report. We applied to several institutions but were unsuccessful in getting a credit card in the District's name. It would be granted only if we were declined for an individual card first, so we abandoned it. We have a debit card. It is possible if we moved our accounts to another bank such as Citizens that it might be possible, and he will look at other options. H. Pawlowski currently uses her personal credit card on situations that require it, such as when she leaves a tournament on Sunday when the accounting office is closed or at other places. She uses her personal checks at Costco, which will use a debit card. A motion was made seconded and so voted to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

Tournament Committee Report - Bernard Schneider

B. Schneider announced that the Tournament Committee and the Scheduling Committee have been combined into a single committee. He and B. Bertoni will co-chair. Effective with the 2015 Newton Tournament, there will be a Tournament Report prepared for every tournament. Information on tournaments is collected in too many places. All information connected with a tournament should be collected in one place and combined into a 3-4 page report. This should include explanations as well as raw data. It would make the analysis of tournaments easier.

The Chair would like to have a graphic designer review our flyers and improve them. If anyone knows of an individual who is qualified to take on this task, please send that information. B. Schneider will speak to S. Miguel, who had been doing the flyers.

D. Aronson made a motion that we set up a Tournament Report in one month. President Aquino stated that this is a great vision but that we need to identify exactly what we want in the report as well as who will contribute this information and who will correlate it and write the report. B. Schneider stated that if the information is sent to him he will edit and produce a report. It should include the financial information. B. Bertoni suggested that B. Schneider construct a template of he wants included. H. Pawlowski will send the financial information. She added that there is one issue, as that the financial information as received from the DIC is on ACBLScore and not in excel. B. Schneider stated that the raw data is fine. He wants all aspects of the tournament in the report, both the positive and negative. H. Pawlowski suggested that what we do for promotion is also an issue, including hospitality and incentives.

District Director's Report - Richard DeMartino

The ACBL is still struggling with ACBL Score. The new program that they sent out is not working. New formulas need to be developed. He suggested that anyone interested should go to "bridgewinners" for the current discussion. The ACBL is considering allowing Regionals to be run at clubs similar to the STaC structure. Some believe that this would benefit the clubs but we must consider the other ramifications. A committee will review it. R. DeMartino will keep the District informed regarding "RTaCs". It is a very controversial subject.

Old Business

NABC Providence- H. Pawlowski and J. Brouillard

The NABC was very successful. Providence is being considered again for 2021. The feedback from the players was very positive. The ACBL is favorably inclined toward Providence but District 25 makes the final decision. President Aquino requested unit reps to go back to their respective unit boards and get their feedback and support for Providence in 2021. H. Pawlowski questioned why he would want this. Mark stated he wanted there to be unanimity within the District. We need to know in advance how the various Units feel about this decision, so we could better address and resolve any concerns.

Reports from all the chairs have been requested reviewing what worked and what did not. We did have to do some adjusting on site. J. Brouillard added that the only real issue was Travel Planner, that sis not do a good job. The issue regarding direct flights into Providence will be corrected by 2021 as T.F. Green airport runway is being extended. Waterfire was well received. If we go back to Providence, Joe felt that we must do it again. He added that we almost could not get the Waterfire. We had some last-minute hurdles to overcome as the Army Corp of Engineers that controls the Providence River did not want us to have the event at the time we needed it. It required the intervention of a RI Senator.

New Business

GNT Update – Dean Panagopoulos

The GNTs are planned for March 7- 8 in Sturbridge with the Rainbow weekend which will be the 6-7 with the Flight C GNT on the 8th. The Masterpoint limits are A-Open/ A-6000/B-2500/C-500. D-25 receives money from the ACBL from the Grass-Roots Fund games. We will subsidize the entries for those teams who qualify on Sunday and they will play free. As the C-Flight plays only one day, we will provide the same amount of money for extra hospitality for them on that day. These facts will be part of the Conditions of Contest as well as on the flyer, on postcards we will send to past participants, and on the website.

There is an issue regarding the site for the NAP's. President Aquino stated that H. Pawlowski will provide the information at Cromwell regarding Sturbridge and there are lots of options available, which we can discuss them.

2015 Appointments – President Aquino

Mike Wavada will continue to serve as our Webmaster, Bob Bertoni will continue to lead the Website and Scheduling Committees, Ausra Geaski will continue to Chair the B's Needs and Linda Robinson will continue as Finance Committee. In fact, the long list of all current chairs have all agreed to continue for 2015

Only significant changes were that President Aquino decided to form a new Long Range Planning Committee under the leadership of Dick Budd and Bernard Schneider, streamline the Bylaws Committee under a sole chair (B. Schneider), and he decided to replace Tim Goodwin as our District Tournament Coordinator with Luke Gillespie, who had been one of the Unit Coordinators.

A. Geaski made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded and so voted. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25