

ACBL DISTRICT 5 BOARD MEETING
Sunday May 26, 2019

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Officers Present: Marc Sylvester (President), Mary Paulone Carns, (Vice President), Brian Ellis (Treasurer)

Executive Board Members Present: Jan Assini, Barbara Bacon, Sharon Fairchild, Jim Overcashier, Chris Urbanek

Executive Board Members Absent: Ron Franck

Unit Representatives Present: Bob Ryan, Ken Gibson (107); Gary Singer (111); Sharon Benz, Dian Petrov (116); Bill Hogsett, Sally Hotchkiss, Bill Issa, Bernie Greenspan (125); Rick Klapthor (127); Craig Biddle, Bob Flynn, Paul Caplan, Cathy Caplan (142); Sue Becker (213); Barb Grzegorzewski (226); Lois Porter (229)

Units Not Represented: 129, 148, 177, 185

Guests: Elena Steingraf (213); Steve Grzegorzewski (226); Arthur Aronson (229)

WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 PM by President Marc Sylvester.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS/CORRESPONDENCE

Marc thanked all for attending. All attendees introduced themselves. Marc announced that the Ann McGilvrey award was won by Bernie Greenspan, and the inaugural D5 Exemplary Service Award was won by Barb Bacon. Jan Assini achieved the rank of Grand Life Master. Marc thanked Bill Hogsett for a great new website.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The minutes, previously emailed to the members, were approved.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Treasurer's Report — Brian Ellis distributed a written Treasurer's report. All Regionals made money. The January regional was especially successful. Factors were good weather, early start times, and aggressive recruiting of 499ers. He thanked Bill Hogsett for the success. Net worth has increased. There have been some issues with PNC regarding backup withholding.

National Board Items — Brian distributed a written report. He attended his first meeting. He reviewed the following major items:

- The ACBL lost ~\$2 million in 2018. The main factors were:
 - Hawaii NABC had low attendance, activating the attrition clause, resulting in >\$750,000 loss.
 - The previous CEO was fired, but there was a clause in his contract about which he won in arbitration, resulting in loss of >\$600,000.
 - A software project failed, resulting in loss of >\$300,000.
 - Litigation regarding a former board member resulted in a loss of \$200,000.
- The current theme is saving money.
- Those who are guilty of collusive cheating will be permanently barred. They can apply for readmission in 10 years; if the cheating is admitted before proceedings, they can apply for readmission after 5 years.
- There is a possibility of restructuring the board. Current membership is 25; reducing to 9 is being discussed. Brian believes that the ACBL is different from other nonprofits in that it is a membership organization, and people talk to their board members.
- In answer to a question as to why the CEO was fired, Brian reported that it partly had to do with software. Craig Biddle said that there is a long thread on bridgewinners.com for those who are interested.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORTS

All American Regional (ongoing) – Sharon thanked members for playing. She reported that table count to date is down 10 tables. There are some issues with the hotel:

- temperature of the ballroom
- parking is no longer free for overnight guests, but bridge players have a pass. If you are charged, let Sharon know.

There were some comments/questions:

- The cards are in bad condition, Sharon reported that the DIC is having health problems. His supplies were brought but no one

knew that cards needed to be replaced. Thanks to the Canton & Cleveland units for bringing new cards.

- Sharon said that in the future we may provide the supplies ourselves.
- Regarding prize distribution: Some players don't realize that in stratified events all strats get section-top prizes. It was suggested to put a sign at the prize desk regarding this.
- We are using Purple Pass, which is a way to pay by credit card. It helps the district financially and is more convenient for players. It will be used in Pittsburgh & Buffalo as part of a trial. Next year there will be a small fee.

Roni Atkins Pittsburgh Regional – Mary reminded members that the tournament has moved to the Doubletree in Green Tree. The first year will be one week later than usual, and will be a 6-day tournament, Tuesday through Sunday. She brought flyers and asked members to distribute them at their local clubs.

Buffalo Regional – Chris Urbanek reported that the tournament is October 15 – 20. She brought flyers for members to distribute.

Rock and Roll Regional (2019) – Sharon reported that the tournament was successful. There was super advertising, recruitment of NLMs, good weather, and the tournament was a week earlier than usual. It will be the same week next year. Bill Hogsett reported that the new players were mainly 0-99ers. The tournament offered free plays to anyone who had never played in a D5 regional. Marc said that the survey results were very favorable.

Rock and Roll Regional (2020) – Jim Overcashier reported that the tournament starts Jan. 7. Flyers will be out by September. There may be a few schedule changes.

NAOP and GNT

Ron Franck was not present. Barb Bacon reported that the GNTs went well. We have a contract with the Erie Bridge Club through 2020. NAPs are the first weekend of October.

STaC

Mary reported that registration is underway.

Website

Bill Hogsett reported that he has been tweaking the website. If you see errors, or if there are things that you would like to see on the website, let him know.

Membership

Marc Sylvester reported. Information as of March 31:

- We're 24th of 25 in size. We have 3110 members, down 4.16% over 1 year.
- There are 174 new members. Largest numerical gains are Unit 142 with 52 new members and Unit 125 with 33 new members. Largest percentage gain is Unit 213, up 13%.
- In retention of new members we're 4th of 25.
- In average age of members, we're 23rd of 25. Average age is 73.84 compared with 72.50 in the ACBL.
- Average length of membership is 21.25 years, which is highest in the ACBL. This is considered to be a negative, as it indicates fewer new members.

Social Media

Marc said that we have a Facebook page. You can post news and pictures.

Education

Chris Urbanek reported

- District 5 has money for education, which can pay for supplies and extras (not teachers or rent).
- The Howard Lebow scholarship will be awarded to Morgan Douglas, who was nominated by Barb Grzegorzewski. Barb spoke about the ups and downs of teaching. She uses peer helpers.
- Paul Caplan spoke about teaching students in Pittsburgh.
- Sharon Benz reported on the program in Buffalo. There was a feature in the Buffalo news. Their program this year had 24 students, with 8 new. They use a space donated by a local club, on Sundays from 11:30-1:30. Some students are going to the Youth NABC in Las Vegas. Some parents are staying and attending the classes.

OLD BUSINESS

District Director Election – Sharon reported that Brian Ellis is the new District Director. Marc reported that the position of 2nd alternate is open.

Times for Cleveland (May) – Marc reported that Buffalo and the Cleveland January tournaments have early times; Pittsburgh and Cleveland (May, All American Regional, "AAR") are still "standard times". There have been many requests for the AAR to move to early times. Yesterday the Executive Board recommended that the AAR move to early times, approximately 10:00 and 2:30. If that happened, the meeting of the Full Board would be after the second

session, at approximately 6:30. There was a discussion regarding exact times, and what would happen in the evening, and what would happen to hospitality. Negative comments included that having early times sends the message that bridge is for old people, we aren't doing anything to encourage people who work to play bridge, and it is difficult to travel on the first morning that one is playing. After considerable discussion, there was a motion that the Cleveland All American Regional move to early times starting in May 2020. The motion passed, 16-3-1.

District 5 Awards – Marc announced that the McGilvrey went to Bernie Greenspan and the District 5 Exemplary Service Award went to Barb Bacon.

NEW BUSINESS

Sectional Date Conflicts – Barb Bacon, District Tournament Coordinator, discussed. We have a limited number of weeks available. Some units have sites with very little date flexibility. Previous guidelines included that if two units about the same population area, they can't have sectionals at the same time. Because of the geography of our District, that creates the unintended result that most instances of simultaneous sectionals are defined as a conflict. We plan to add some flexibility. We encourage units to get their dates in ASAP, and the coordinator will work with units to avoid conflicts as much as possible.

Meeting in Pittsburgh, Saturday Sept. 7 – Mary reported that because the upcoming Pittsburgh Regional is shorter than usual, the meeting of the Full Board will be held on Saturday Sept. 7, between sessions, instead of the usual day of Sunday. Please note the change.

District Director attending Unit meetings – Brian announced that he is interested in attending sectionals, and Unit meetings, in particular special meetings. Please notify him of these meetings.

Marketing to Working People/Evening Games – Paul Caplan suggested steps that could be taken to attract people who work, such as reducing sanction fees for evening games, increasing masterpoints for evening games, and promoting series games in the evening. Steve Grzegorzewski asked what is the primary focus of the ACBL Marketing Department? He asked Brian to notify the ACBL that we need to promote evening games. We have to create a market for working people.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41.