

Minutes of the District 6 Board Meeting

Virtual Meeting, Wednesday, August 19, 2020

Twenty-two Present:

Officers:

President	Jane Farthing
Vice President	David Rodney
Secretary	Kay Hughes
Treasurer	Ron Spieker

Unit Presidents: Anne Atwood (Unit 109), Carolyn Wood (Proxy, Unit 110), Ed Rothenheber (Unit 135), David Butler (Unit 139), Barbara Duer, (Unit 146), Linda Marshall (Unit 147), Georgette Weiss, (Proxy, Unit 218), John Markey (Unit 231)

Other Voting Members: Barbara Doran (ACBL Board of Gov. Rep.), Margot Hennings (District Director), Steve Robinson (First Alternate, District Director, Recorder/Competitions & Conventions), Shawn Stringer (Regional Manager, 2nd Alt. to District Director, Immediate Past President)

Non-Voting Members: Bill Cole (Grass Roots Chair), Tom Dunck (Registered Agent), Barry Fratkin (Marketing/Communications Chair), Winnie Fratkin (Goodwill Chair), Ron Kral (Webmaster), Lucy McCoy, (D6 Tournament Coordinator)

Guests: None

Welcome:

President Jane Farthing called the Zoom virtual meeting to order at 9:41 am and introduced and welcomed Tom Dunck, the D6 Registered Agent to the meeting.

Approval of June 3, 2020 Virtual Meeting Minutes:

Secretary Kay Hughes advised there were no corrections to the June 3, 2020 minutes emailed to attendees on June 16th. Margot Hennings moved the minutes be approved and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Ron Spieker referenced the report that had been emailed to the board members and noted there was minimal activity. He advised that 3 or 4 people needed to reply on the Conflict of Interest Report previously emailed and required by the IRS.

Committee Reports:

Regional Management: Shawn Stringer advised all contracts for this year were canceled. Looking at next year's previously scheduled events, the May Regional in Richmond's contract contains a small penalty if canceled by Dec. 31, 2020. The Reston contract for July has a large penalty if canceled. For Baltimore there is a 10 day cancel window following the Baltimore Regional (which would have been this week) to cancel the tournament for 2021. Shawn noted that communications have and can be difficult with many of the hotel staff furloughed. After discussion, Margot Hennings moved the board instruct Shawn to contact the appropriate Baltimore staff personally if possible and cancel the Baltimore contract unless they will agree to an additional grace period. The motion was seconded and approved.

District Tournament Coordinator: Lucy McCoy advised the next tournaments on the schedule are the Jan. WBL and the February MBA Super Bowl. Neither Linda Marshall nor Ed Rothenheber expect those tournaments to be held.

Margot Hennings asked if any unit was experiencing cancellation penalties on Sectionals and there have not been any to date.

Grass Roots, NAP, GNT: Bill Cole gave a brief review of the plans for District 6 Grand National Teams and advised that there is a detailed update on the website of the District 6 plan for the GNT competition for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. Jane thanked Bill and his team for their outstanding job finalizing the plan.

ACBL Task Force Update: David Rodney updated the Board on his participation on a Task Force established by the ACBL Board of Directors to consider the future of bridge – in particular, the role of online bridge when FTF (face-to-face) returns. He worked on a subcommittee that addressed the long-term future of bridge. One of the first undertakings of the subcommittee was a survey of club managers and players to obtain their opinions and intentions regarding the future of FTF and online bridge. The survey provided a good snapshot of grass root opinions and prior to the meeting, David shared with the board the summary of the survey results he prepared for the Task Force.

In addition to sharing the survey results, David recapped the conclusions that his subcommittee worked on and provided to ACBL for consideration. Although they initially thought their subcommittee was working on the role of online bridge until FTF returns, the subcommittee quickly concluded that online bridge is here to stay and the discussion needed to center on how online bridge can be complemented by FTF club and tournament play. This will impact the operations of ACBL and will require some changes. Areas addressed were:

- recruitment of new players and retention of members
- the need for increased financial incentives for those who teach and recruit new members
- the current practice of giving 11% of membership fees back to the units with better definition of the purpose of the rebate for new member recruitment and retention
- online teaching is an excellent way to reach out to people with ABTA taking a lead role in the future
- there is a risk that the ACBL will lose its identity and value in a world of online bridge. The ACBL needs to take actions to promote the ACBL brand, including measures such as making changes to online masterpoint awards.
- technology as a video enabler to improve the social aspects of online bridge and serve as an impediment to cheating and other unethical behavior
- club openings are local decisions but ACBL needs to advise Units and Districts when they can plan Sectionals and Regionals based on availability of ACBL TDs to staff them
- establishment of an ACBL wide calendar to determine location and timing of Regionals.

Following David's presentation, a topic of concern to the Unit Presidents focused on how ACBL planned to require the use of the 11% rebate back to the units as well as documentation as to how the money was used. District Director Margot Hennings addressed this issue and following the meeting sent a recap of the discussion and motion that would be voted on in the near future. If the motion is approved, there will be gradual phasing in of the requirement to spend the 11% on both member recruitment and retention, with emphasis on the former since without new members, retention becomes moot.

The relationship between BBO and ACBL was discussed in some detail. Margot Hennings explained that when the decision was made several years ago to align ACBL masterpoint awards with online play, BBO was the only platform with the capacity to host the magnitude of online games projected. BBO had to expand its capabilities significantly to serve ACBL's requirements when the pandemic created an explosion in online bridge. Currently, BBO is contractually the sole provider to ACBL for online bridge. Jane Farthing suggested that a summary document be sent to the District Presidents, again stressing the importance of marketing and communication from ACBL.

Board of Governors Rep. Barb Doran advised that forms are being sent to the Directors regarding incentivizing teachers, teaching clubs and centers to recruit new members.

D6 Director Update: Margot Hennings had sent out a recap prior to the meeting.

1. Margot noted that most clubs from different areas that have experimented with re-opening have failed, closing after a few weeks. Barbara Duer, Unit 146 President advised that their experience had been the same although there is an ongoing discussion about opening after Labor Day.
2. ACBL annually honors volunteers and Margot would like recommendations for the National Goodwill Committee and the National Charity Committee which are required by October 15. She noted that the unit recommendations to the District 6 Goodwill Committee are also due soon.
3. The yearly \$1,000.00 Charity Grant from the ACBL Charity Foundation will again go to Fisher House, which provides accommodations for families when a family member is in a military or VA medical center. This year, D6 will receive an additional \$30,000 charity grant (each district receives this larger grant every four-five years, as districts are on a rotating basis for its receipt) and recommendations are needed. David Rodney will be managing this after he takes office. Qualification details are in the attachment and the deadline is 12/15/20.
4. The motion for the restructuring of the ACBL Board to reduce the size from 25 to 13 directors has now passed. This has taken 3 years and two votes with a 2/3 majority for passage. It is important to note that there will not be any changes in the district with respect to district boundaries, grass roots events such as NAPs and GNTs or district treasuries. However, contiguous districts will be combined based primarily on population to form a Region, so there will be 13 Regional Directors instead of the current 25 District Directors. District 6 will be combined with District 5 which is the Cleveland/Pittsburgh/Rochester area and will be known as Region 4. The reorganization will not start until the end of 2021 when the first 8 Regional Directors will be elected (our Regional Director will be elected in 2021), then 4 in the following year and 3 for the final year as current terms end. It is suggested that a District Liaison board position be created to communicate with the Regional Director. This will require a D6 bylaws change. Other district bylaws changes will also be needed.

New Business:

Goodwill Nominations: Jane Farthing reminded everyone that unit Goodwill nominations are due. Jane recommended Brenda Egeland for the National Goodwill Committee for developing the D6 website.

Election of Officers: David Butler, Nominations Chair presented the slate of officers.

President – David Rodney
Vice President – Barry Fratkin
Secretary – Kay Hughes
Treasurer – Ron Spieker

There were no nominations from the floor. Shawn Stringer moved that the slate of officers be accepted by acclamation. The motion was seconded, and the slate was approved by acclamation. The current officers will serve until September 1, 2020. Ron Spieker reminded the board that he would be serving only one more year and to be thinking about a potential successor. He recommends at least a 2-year commitment.

Barry Fratkin introduced and welcomed Anne Atwood as the new President of Unit 109. He also thanked Jane for her service and accomplishments as President of our district.

Jane advised that there were still open positions for the D6 Education Chair and suggested that a renewed liaison with the D6 Education Foundation is important. Richard Ferrin is the Education Foundation President, but all members of

the board will need to be reappointed as needed once this Foundation becomes active again. Ron Spieker reminded the board that it has no authority regarding this Foundation.

Jane Farthing advised that Zoom could be shared across the District for bridge-related activities and a schedule would be needed so there would be no overlap.

David Rodney thanked the board for electing him as President and he looks forward to working with all board members.

Jane Farthing suggested the next Zoom meeting be scheduled towards the end of October and Wednesday morning seems to be a good time. Definite date and time to be advised later.

Jane Farthing thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Hughes
Secretary