

Minutes of the District 6 Board Meeting

Virtual Meeting, Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Twenty Present:

Officers:	President	David Rodney
	Vice President	Barry Fratkin
	Secretary	Kay Hughes
	Treasurer	Ron Spieker
Unit Presidents:	Karen Crowley (Unit 110), Ed Rothenheber (Unit 135), David Butler (Unit 139), Barbara Duer, (Outgoing President, Unit 146), Peter Haglich (Incoming President, Unit 146), Hadi Abushakra (Proxy, Unit 147), Marty Bley, (Unit 218), John Markey (Unit 231)	
Other Voting Members:	Barbara Doran (ACBL Board of Gov. Rep.), Margot Hennings (District Director), Steve Robinson (Recorder, Competitions & Conventions, 1st Alt, D6 District Director), Shawn Stringer (Regional Manager, 2 nd Alt. D6 District Director), Jane Farthing (Immediate Past President)	
Non-Voting Members:	Bill Cole (Grass Roots Chair, GNT/NAP), Nancy Golden (Finance), Lucy McCoy (District Tournament Coordinator)	
Guests:	None	

Welcome:

President David Rodney called the Zoom virtual meeting to order at 10:05 am and welcomed all attendees. Jane Farthing was the Zoom host for the meeting. David congratulated Peter Haglich on his election as President of Unit 146 and welcomed him to the board.

President's Report:

99er Night Game: The evening 99er game has been implemented and thank you to Jay Whipple for offering it to clubs in District 6. The game is averaging 40-45 tables per night. Individual clubs must register with Jay Whipple's organization for their members to participate and part of the table fees are then reimbursed back to the clubs. Jay Whipple sends a check to the District 6 Treasurer monthly with a listing of each club earnings and it is then distributed. Ron Spieker, Treasurer reported that he did not have all the information required to disburse the funds but was working on that as ACBL records had not been updated. He needs to know how to make out the checks and where to send. Once that information is organized, it should not be difficult and will become more routine. David suggested Unit Presidents should remind their club managers to keep the club information current.

Future of Bridge/District 6 Survey: Jane Farthing advised that the survey was sent to 5157 out of 6459 members. Some members have chosen not to get the emails for privacy reasons, some have not been updated and some couples have the same email. The response rate was 27.7% which was excellent and was representative of the unit size. There appeared to be higher response rate from those with more masterpoints.

Jane advised the district now has a subscription to Survey Monkey and this can be made available to the units if desired.

David Rodney went through the results of the survey in detail. Conclusions:

- 80% of the respondents played at least once a week online and the more points you had, the higher percentage of activity.
- Most people played in a variety of games with virtual club games being the highest number.

- Nearly all respondents who played online during the pandemic will continue to play online, but most will play less frequently.
- Approximately 50% of the players will play less F2F bridge in the future. The players who played frequently online during the pandemic will continue to play online and play less F2F. The players who rarely played online will return to F2F bridge. F2F table counts will be smaller in the future.
- A significant number of players will attend fewer F2F tournaments in the future.
- For F2F tournaments, most players want the current published ACBL COVID precautions, but 9% of players will not attend because of these precautions. There was a wide variety of responses to the mask mandate, even if all were vaccinated.
- Regarding nighttime games, most younger players (age<61) are interested in nighttime bridge and a large majority of older players are disinterested in nighttime bridge. There was substantial interest in online nighttime games. We have an obligation to attract younger players.

An extensive discussion followed with several members offering ideas and comments. It was clear there are still many unknowns, and it will be difficult to go back to the old normal. Several board members expressed interest in obtaining further detail by units to provide more insight into Sectional and Regional attendance. David Rodney will cross tabulate the information to provide this information (which has now been done). David will be sharing the survey with the Working Group he participates in and Margot recommended that the information be sent to club owners. As there is an obligation to attract younger players, Margot will send the information on nighttime games to the ACBL BOD task force.

Margot Hennings as the D6 District Director advised there will be ongoing changes in the ACBL requirements in the next six months as vaccinations increase. ACBL has two priorities, staying on top of F2F play regulations and making changes quickly and as needed. The other priority is online sanctions – i.e., can a club have both online and F2F games. Can one section of a F2F tournament be online? The ACBL Board will be meeting on June 4th. Updated requirements for F2F play and a near-term set of procedures for transitioning from online to F2F play will be the focus of that meeting, with communications to club managers and players coming out shortly following the meeting.

D6 Director Update: Margot Hennings, D6 District Director made the following comments related to her activity on the Board.

1. ACBL is working on a preregistration strategy for the NABC in Austin.
2. Margot called attention to the April Bridge Bulletin (pages 30-31) highlighting District 6 charity distribution to the food banks and related organizations.
3. She noted that the May Bridge Bulletin (page 63), shows the Election timetable for implementing the new Regional Director organization replacing the old District Director organization. Margot is running for election as the Regional Director representing Districts 5 and 6.
4. Margot noted that there are 3 Board of Governors Representatives from District 6 up for reelection as well. David will send an email to current members to determine if they are interested in serving. If any openings, he will send an email to the Unit Presidents to solicit interest in running for this position. The deadline is May 31.
5. GNT – ACBL reimbursement fees to winners are under discussion.

Approval of January 27, 2021 Virtual Meeting Minutes: Secretary Kay Hughes advised there were no corrections to the January 27, 2021 minutes emailed to attendees in early December. Barbara Doran moved the minutes be approved and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Ron Spieker had previously emailed the Treasurer's report to the board prior to the meeting (Att. #1). He noted that the accounting software, QuickBooks has discontinued support for the 2018 version currently being used. After discussion with two units that also use QuickBooks, it was decided to continue to use the unsupported version as the new costlier version was not necessary for their requirements.

Ron recommended that the District invest in an alternative to processing checks to and from the district (GNT entries, STAC payments, etc.). After investigation of several options, Ron is recommending PayPal and made a motion with this recommendation. David Rodney seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

Committee Reports:

Regional Management: Shawn Stringer, Regional Tournament Chair advised there are no outstanding Regional contracts for 2021. A Williamsburg Regional has been scheduled and the room block has been reduced by 40%. Shawn is working on the layout. She is working with the hotel for the scheduled Regional tournament in Baltimore Aug. 22-28, 2022 to reduce the room block. She noted this one can still be canceled in September if necessary.

It is doubtful that a future Chesapeake Regional can be scheduled due to unfavorable terms and change in the corporate direction of that location in Cambridge, MD.

Richmond is booked for May 2023 with details on room blocks to be finalized. Reston is booked for 2023—2024 with reduced room blocks. Baltimore is still on the schedule for 2023. Shawn stresses caution on signing future contracts currently.

David Rodney asked Shawn Stringer to report on the ACBL Working Group which she chairs, and David is a member. She reported a beneficial exchange regarding management of Regionals. The committee worked with three focus groups with participants actively involved in managing Regionals. Shawn will share the final recommendations with the board. Highlights included:

1. It is generally agreed there are too many Regionals. Some districts have already cut back to three.
2. The Regionals are over staffed and generally staffed with directors at the higher rates. Both director and sanction fees will be going up. Utilizing local directors would be financially beneficial as well as increasing the director staff so there would be different levels of expertise available for tournaments.
3. All expressed concern about financial risk of future tournaments and the related contracts with members sharing ideas.
4. Preregistration has no benefit for long range planning but will help in the short term.
5. Events schedule needs to be significantly reduced. Ideas ranged from eliminating knockouts, adding bracketed Swiss teams, cutting the number of days, changing the date range to eliminating evening games.
5. Flexibility is key with the ability to eliminate a scheduled game at the tournament if not profitable based on attendance (currently regulations require a three-table game be run if attended)
6. I/N games may need to be eliminated.
7. ACBL has not been good at sharing data on tournament attendance and this feedback is critical. The committee would like to see this data after the first scheduled Regional this year and how it compares with the last Regional at that location. This may have to be provided by local Tournament Chairs if ACBL will not provide it.

District Tournament Coordinator: Lucy McCoy advised that a NLM Sectional had been requested for Aug/Sept for Unit 146 and when the final date is finalized, it should be added to Tourney Trax.

Finance: No report

Grass Roots, NAP, GNT: Bill Cole, Chair stated that attendance for the recent GNT competition was above average with 68 tables as compared to 53 in the past with the increase being in Flight B & C. The national contest will be online, and this will significantly reduce D6 costs as not paying for trips. Bill discussed other relevant issues and noted that D6 was the first district in the nation to run the GNTs. He is waiting for guidance from ACBL regarding NAP.

In the future, the district board will determine if the GNT is online or F2F. He is forming a committee to recap the issues and make a presentation to the board. He is training Mary Peters as Coordinator and Bill will chair the committee.

David Rodney noted and thanked Bill for the incredible effort he had put into the GNTs this year.

Goodwill: Chairman Winnie Fratkin was unable to attend the meeting and Barry Fratkin reported there are no nominees for 2020 and 2021. Winnie will contact the Unit Presidents for nominations for 2022 and would like to continue with an upgraded reception to be tentatively held at the Baltimore Regional.

Education: Chairman Ron Kral was not present, but John Mackey reported that there had been communication with Al Bender who is teaching youth in schools in the state of Washington and will be receiving feedback from the board members of the Education Foundation.

Website: Barry Fratkin, Chair of the Website reported Brenda Egeland had recommended Lauren Brown to maintain the website and would be paid an hourly fee. All contributions to the website will be funneled through Barry for the immediate future. Karen Crowley moved Lauren Brown be retained as Website Manager. Ed Rothenheber seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Appellate/Judiciary: No report

New Business and Other: David Rodney noted officer elections will be held at the next meeting. A nominating committee needs to be formed and Barbara Doran volunteered to chair the committee and welcomes any recommendations. Kay Hughes, Secretary will not be up for reelection and Ron Spieker, Treasurer would like someone else to take over that position.

The next virtual board meeting will be Wednesday, August 11th from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.

David Rodney thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Meeting was adjourned at 12:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Hughes
Secretary
District 6