

Minutes of the District 6 Board Meeting
Virtual Meeting, Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Twenty-three Present:

Officers:	David Rodney, President, Barry Fratkin, Vice President, Kay Hughes, Secretary, Ron Spieker, Treasurer
Unit Presidents:	Anne Atwood (Unit 109), Karen Crowley (Unit 110), Ed Rothenheber (Unit 135), David Butler (Unit 139), Peter Haglich (Unit 146), Linda Marshall (Unit 147), Georgette Weiss (Unit 218)
Other Voting Members:	Barbara Doran (ACBL Board of Gov. Rep.), Margot Hennings (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), Winnie Fratkin (Goodwill), Nancy Golden (Finance), Lucy McCoy (District Tournament Coordinator), Ron Kral (Webmaster/IN Coordinator/Ed. Liaison)
Guests:	Dan Koch (Nominee to serve as Secretary), Doug Grove (Nominee to serve as Treasurer), John McAllister (Chair of D6 Education Foundation)

Welcome:

President David Rodney called the Zoom virtual meeting to order shortly after 10:00 am and welcomed all attendees.

Election of Officers: President Rodney advised that there was no contest for the election of officers. He and Barry Fratkin would be serving again as President and Vice-President, respectively. Ron Spieker would be stepping down as Treasurer, and Kay Hughes would be stepping down as Secretary, and he thanked them for their service. He welcomed Doug Grove and Dan Koch, the incoming Treasurer and Secretary, who he noted were attending the meeting. Barbara Doran moved to accept the slate of officers by acclamation and it was approved. (Subsequently in the meeting, Shawn Stringer advised that the bylaws stated that officers served until the end of August, so that Doug Grove and Dan Koch would be assuming their positions September 1.)

New Education Committee Chair: President Rodney also announced that Ron Kral wished to step down as Education Committee Chair, and that we would be seeking a replacement for him.

Online Bridge at Night. President Rodney then recapitulated discussions that have been taking place by email, his presentation to Greg Coles and Joe Jones and to the ACBL Strategic Oversight Committee about expanding online bridge at night in District 6. The objectives would be:

1. to attract players who have day jobs (whereas daytime players tend to be retirees);
2. not to interfere with any existing games;
3. not to interfere with efforts to resume F2F bridge;
4. not to operate for the purpose of earning a profit; and
5. to run good-sized games, to provide good competition.

It is not important which group organizes the games, so long as they are run well. Ideas included possibly trying STaCs or team games; and whatever would take place would need to be advertised. The ACBL Strategic Oversight Committee gave permission to experiment once a plan has been finalized. He invited anyone interested in helping to contact him.

Change of day on which to meet. At the request of one member, David Rodney will ask by email whether days of the week other than Wednesday might prove equally or more convenient for these meetings.

Approval of Minutes of May 5, 2021 Virtual Meeting: Secretary Kay Hughes advised there had been one correction of a typo made to the minutes previously emailed to attendees. Barb Doran moved that as corrected, the minutes be approved and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Ron Spieker reported that although D6 is in sound financial condition now, one bad regional could change the situation. There is no STaC income, because with clubs not playing, there are no STaCs. Margot Hennings said that there was no good answer right now about whether tournaments in September or October would take place with ACBL support.

Prior to the meeting Ron Spieker circulated summary financial statements as of July 31, 2021, (Attachment #1) and two board resolutions to transfer signature authority over the district's accounts. The resolutions detailed the signature authority of the board members designated in the documents. Ron moved the resolutions be approved and it passed with none opposed. (Attachment #2 & #3).

Committee Reports:

Regional Management: Shawn Stringer, Regional Tournament Chair advised that the venue for the Cambridge tournament was no longer viable due to a management change. The hotel now prefers to keep rooms available for individual visitors during the November time frame rather than leasing blocks of rooms at a significant discount. She is still negotiating a contract with a hotel in Baltimore for 2022, which looks good at this point, with no food and beverage commitment, room rates of \$120/night, with only an 80% requirement on the room block, and she is seeking a 600-700 block. We have until September 8 to cancel. As of now our schedule calls for more events than likely attendance would support, so we should reduce the number of events and could always add them back if attendance warranted.

Jane Farthing reported that for the Williamsburg Regional, 2022, if canceled now would be subject to a 65% penalty (about \$35,000); as of August 28, the penalty would increase to 70%. The contract contains a clause that allows cancellation and limits the exposure to a \$1000.00 deposit, with the hotel's agreement, if rescheduled within one year, i.e., by February 2023. Jane and David Rodney noted that based on the recent survey responses, right now the situation did not look good for attendance, but no one knows what the situation will be like in February. The District has not advertised the tournament, but if it will take place, advertising must start soon.

After discussion, no decision to cancel was made now. Jane will continue discussions with the hotel, and determine how long they will give us to exercise the 1-year rescheduling clause, and get back to the board ASAP. Lucy McCoy noted that February 6-12, 2023 would be the Hilton Head Regional, and Jane said rescheduling would probably be for late February 2023.

District Tournaments: Lucy McCoy, District Tournament Coordinator proposed that a STaC be scheduled to support clubs resuming F2F play, probably 12-19 December. There will not be a STaC in October since there are already two sectional tournaments in October.

Finance: No report.

Grass Roots, NAP, GNT: Bill Cole, Grass Roots Chair advised that the 2021 NAP would be conducted entirely online for flight B and C. There had been some effort to preserve live play for the Open, but it will also be `online. He invited calls to help decide live vs. online for the GNT next year.

Goodwill: Chair Winnie Fratkin asked that Unit Goodwill nominations of deserving people be sent to her by August 31.

Education: Chair Ron Kral wishes to step down. President Rodney solicited suggestions for new chairpersons.

Website: Barry Fratkin asked that proposed changes to the website be forwarded to him, and that he would approve changes and pass them along to Lauren Brown for implementation. With experience, he will authorize others to send changes directly to her. In response to a question, he confirmed that she was being paid \$30/hour, and commented that she was doing a great job so far.

Appellate/Judiciary: No report.

D6 Director Update: Margot Hennings, D6 Director, had previously circulated a report summarizing the recent activity of the ACBL Board. She commented that F2F tournaments for the fall now remain fluid; before the recent flare-up of the Delta variant, some districts were going forward with tournaments, and had hotel bookings exceeding their room requirements. Moving forward, the Board will probably edge towards a regional (geographic) approach, giving the districts more input about whether to conduct tournaments. Discussions continue concerning the role of online bridge as F2F resumes Attachments #4 & 5).

New Business: Barbara Doran moved that the draft minutes of meetings be sent to the entire Board, rather than just to the attendees, as is currently the case. All members receive the minutes after formal approval, but the draft minutes are much more timely. After discussion, the motion was approved.

Education Update: John McAllister spoke about the BridgeWhiz program, designed to teach bridge via an online game and bring young players into the game. The ACBL Foundation is supporting the free 20-week program. Each week will be a 90-minute class, with the first 15 minutes teaching via Zoom, after which the students move to Shark Bridge. On that platform all students play the same problem that was just taught, with no one playing dummy or defense. D6 has an Education Foundation that was formed in 2002 but has been largely dormant. As president of the Foundation, John is asking everyone to spread the word about BridgeWhiz in any way they can. For example, Unit 139 President David Butler sent an email to all members, encouraging them to bring it to the attention of likely attendees. Susan Bricken in Unit 231 in Blacksburg is working with a local TV station, among other activities to publicize the program.

In the Q&A, John explained that the target ages were grades 4-12. The ACBL Foundation was spending \$100,000 to distribute flyers to middle schools via the Peachjar service, which would reach about 40% of the middle schools in our District; his foundation will pay \$900 to print flyers for the balance. But for schools not on the Peachjar service, it is not as simple as just printing flyers and delivering them to schools, because the schools have an approval process. Al Bender, who helped start Seattle's successful program will be directing the BridgeWhiz program for ACBL.

President Rodney left at this point and Barry Fratkin presided for the remainder of the meeting.

Board of Governors Report: Barbara Doran reported that this body will seek to become the voice of the members, and has renamed itself the Advisory Council if approved. She has become the secretary of the group.

D6 Member Survey: Jane Farthing had previously sent a summary of the responses. The 14.4% response rate is considered quite good for a survey of this type. Generally speaking, the survey results predicted that live attendance at tournaments would be down. Barry Fratkin noted that for every tournament, the projected future (as contrasted to current or soon) attendance was higher than past attendance, which was a positive sign. Linda Marshall noted that the survey responses were completed before the rise of the Delta variant, and that the answers might be different today, with which Jane agreed.

The discussion focused on logistics for tournaments, such as having volunteers check vaccination status once at the beginning of the tournament, and giving persons hospital-type wristbands, with instructions to wear them throughout the tournament; on subsequent days, volunteers would check players for wristbands, and direct any players without them to a desk to prove vaccination status and get a wristband. If sectional tournaments take place in September or October, they will generate experience useful for a regional. Ed Rothenheber and Barry Fratkin requested that a report on experience at any sectional be shared with the board. Shawn Stringer has asked that this data be shared on a national level and is willing to collect the data.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Kay Hughes & Dan Koch
Secretary, D6

Attachments (6): Agenda Att. #6; ACBL National Directors Report and Motions; Two Treasurer's Motions; Treasurer's Report.