

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of District 16 of the American Contract Bridge League

February 9, 2019

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of District 16 of the American Contract Bridge League was held in the Richmond Room of the Westchase Marriott Hotel in Houston TX on February 9, 2019. In attendance were:

Executive Officers

Rebecca Brown	President
Nancy Strohmer	1 st Vice President
Betty Starzec	2 nd Vice President
Dan Leightman	Executive Treasurer
Tomi Storey	Executive Secretary

Voting Board Members (Unit Representatives)

Rebecca Brown	Unit 172	
Lauri Laufman	Unit 174	(alternate for Kathleen Malcomson)
Jim Bauer	Unit 176	
Cynthia Benton	Unit 183	(alternate for Steve Shirey)
Dave Ticen	Unit 187	
Carolyn Worsham	Unit 201	
Larry Davis	Unit 207	
Gay Roach	Unit 225	
Lynn Sykes	Unit 233	

Non-Voting Board Members

Representing District 16 on ACBL Board of Directors

Paul Cuneo, Director

Committee Chairs

Nancy Strohmer	Charity
Appellate	Jonathan Ernest
Laura Delfeld	Intermediate/Novice
Sandy Potts	Membership
Tomi Storey	Tournaments

Standing Positions

BJ Sanders	GNT Coordinator
Ira Hessel	Scorecard Editor
John Magyari	Internet Coordinator/Webmaster
Bob Morris	Board of Governors

Visitors

Sally Sassen	Unit 207, 2021 Austin NABC Co-Chair
Ken Hudson	Unit 174 President and LSR Co-Chair

Call to Order and Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM and a quorum was confirmed. President Brown again asked that everyone be recognized and stand to speak.

Introduction of Guests

President Brown recognized Ken Hudson and Lauri Laufman of Unit 174 as the Co-Chairs of the Lone Star Regional and thanked them for doing an excellent job.

John Magyari was formally presented to the group as our new webmaster and congratulated him on the great job of updates and new design to our district website.

Sally Sassen was also introduced. She is the Co-chair for the 2021 NABC to be held in Austin.

Approval of Consent Agenda

A motion was made and seconded by to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Written reports also were received from the Charity chair, the treasurer, the education chair, and the GNT Chair as part of the consent agenda.

Unit Reports

Mrs. Worsham reminded everyone of the Beaumont Regional that will be held in September 23-29, 2019. This is held every 4 years and they hope to have great attendance from outside the area.

Ms. Roach also notified the group of the Tyler Regional April 8-14. She reminded us the it is being held in Longview this year, but it is the same easy access. She also said the unit is looking for speakers. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Gay.

Financial Report

Dan Leightman made some remarks on his written report for the consent agenda. Income was up a little from last year with added dollars from the Regionals. The subsidy for the Scorecard is about \$2,000 and that is in line with the part 4-5 years. The NABC surcharge account is now at about \$20,000 and should grow at about \$4,000 per year.

Paul Cuneo suggested that we have a separate accounting for the Grass Roots Fund so that we have a better grasp of exactly what is available for that specific use. Dan will handle this, and have it listed as a separate fund going forward.

ACBL D16 Board of Directors Report

Mr. Cuneo gave a report of actions at the Fall NABC in Hawaii. Mr. Cuneo submitted a written report, as always, but asked that we not share specific financial numbers in the report until the audit is final.

ACBL President Russ Jones attended this year's LSR. A workshop was held with teachers and club owners. Mr. Jones laid out his ideas for incentives for teachers and clubs and got feedback from the attendees. What he is hoping to do is liberalize the ability of clubs to hold silver and gold point games and this is supported by Mr. Cuneo. Right now, the only possibility to do this is by STaC games or I/N Sectionals and Regionals. The idea is to bring those pigmented points to the clubs, since less members are traveling to tournaments, especially in smaller areas where opportunities to get these points are often not in a reasonable distance. This opportunity would be given as an incentive for clubs recruiting, retaining, and growing their own attendance.

ACBL management is also working on a financial incentive program for teachers. This is not finalized, but it would be based on a recruit and retain rebate system each year based over a 3-year span.

Mr. Davis asked if there was any concern that allowing gold points at the club level might affect regional attendance. Mr. Cuneo said yes, but "the ship is leaving port" and this was going to happen.

OLD BUSINESS

Website Updates

Mrs. Storey started by reintroducing John Magyari and thanking him for the excellent work he is doing. She also thanked him for being so responsive to the many requests that she and President Brown have rained down on him in the past few weeks. Pictures

and new biographies are being posted and work is starting on the director's page as well.

Mr. Magyari said that he is really enjoying his new post and was happy to be involved. He requested that if anyone sends in information on the website, please let him know where it should be posted. Often items or photos need to be in several places and knowing that would help him immensely. He will send confirmation when the job is completed, so if you haven't received that, feel free to call at 281-758-8236.

He also told the members that he can create programs to help localize publicity and has the capability to create a single program that could be used by all units in the district. President Brown said this would be discussed with the Executive Committee to determine the feasibility and thanked him again for being so proactive.

District 16 Star Awards

President Brown reminded us that last year the Awards Committee made several recommendations that somehow may have fallen through the cracks in being posted. We have renamed the Texas Star Award to be called the District Star Award, to be sure our Mexico units felt included. Mrs. Storey and Mr. Humphrey are working on a prototype for the new award pin that will be available in 2020. We were also reminded that the presentation of the award is no longer a secret. We felt this increased the attendance of the awardees. The deadline for both the District Star and the Goodwill Awards is December 31. Information and conditions have been updated on the website.

Scorecard

Mr. Bauer began his report by giving some history on the Scorecard issue. A year ago, at the Board meeting in Houston in January 2018, it was voted to implement a 2-year test to see if the Scorecard could be mailed to Units representatives or clubs, rather than to the general membership. After the approval, several logistics issues came to light that resulted in a vote at the July meeting in Austin to defer the test until further study could be made. At that point, President Brown asked Mr. Bauer to chair an ad hoc Scorecard committee to look at ways to evaluate member preferences, as well as look into methods to reduce the cost of the Scorecard. He discovered was that there are years of history and correspondence on the issue, so at the September meeting in Dallas, he accepted the chairmanship of the Scorecard Committee and asked for more time to evaluate the issue. What he found was that there has been little to no change from the status quo over the years. He discovered that the cost to the Unit runs about 90-110% of the rebate they receive from the ABCL for membership.

The District has always subsidized the cost of the Scorecard and he anticipates that this would continue if needed until the Scorecard could possibly become self-sufficient. There are limited targets of opportunity to reduce costs: increase subscription, raise prices of announcements, increased advertising. Ms. Delfeld, as a Scorecard committee member, is continuing to investigate that aspect. She stated that she still needs information on current charges.

Mr. Bauer asked Mr. Cuneo to check into other comparable Districts. Seven other districts were polled and four are all digital, two mail to members, and one mails to clubs. Mr. Bauer said that there were several comments within D16 as to previous surveys, but information on those was not readily available. President Brown had done some research when she chaired a previous Scorecard committee, but got limited response from Units, and the methodology used was not consistent, so Mr. Bauer determined this could not be used as actionable data.

Mr. Bauer concluded that we need to move away from the status quo. He proposed that the District should not go with all digital or all paper, but let the individual units make their own determination. The stated proposal is to conduct a two-year test that would allow each Unit to decide whether they will go all-digital or all-paper. As an aside, Mr. Bauer also said he has gone to a local printer and determined that a unit, club or individuals wanting a paper copy could have one printed for about \$2.00

The current costs associated with the Scorecard are printing, postage, and salaries. Salaries were not and are not being considered for cost savings. If Units chose all-digital copies, they would be charged only for salaries, not for postage and printing.

President Brown clarified two points: 1. The proposal called for a decision from each unit as to whether they wanted digital only or paper only. The Unit boards would be accountable to conduct a diligent survey within their membership as to preferences and to notify the District accordingly. 2. The current subscription price is \$3.60 per member annually. Under the new proposal the price for all digital will be \$1.84 per year per unit member. Units that opt for all paper will be assessed the current \$3.60 per year per unit member; however, please note carefully that it is possible that assessment may be increased depending on the reallocation of fixed costs among a smaller number of subscribers.

Mr. Bauer stated that the unknown factor would be the Unit changes in printing costs. He would like to implement the test starting with the May/June edition of the Scorecard, to allow the editors to make changes and to allow the Units to poll their membership. He suggested a decision deadline of March 31, 2019. Mr. Cuneo suggested that the default be paper, and that Units be allowed to change to digital at any time during the test, in case they are not able to get a membership consensus before the deadline.

Dr. Hessel said in speaking to ACBL President Jones, this had been tried at the NABC with poor results. Mr. Cuneo said there was never an NABC without a bulletin, but they had tried shrinking the material and omitting section tops and that created the issue. Mrs. Storey felt there was a significant difference between the instant gratification of a daily bulletin and the Scorecard, that holds several months of information.

President Brown offered an opinion that March 31 might be a little early. She also wondered if a rolling decision might create problems with the mailing list. The question came up as to who manages the mailing lists. The webmaster handles the information passed to the ACBL. Mrs. Strohmer said that in Unit 174, several members had opted out and were still receiving copies. Mr. Magyari spoke to the concern. Every name in the data base is associated with a Unit. Dealing with the issue individually is time consuming, but it is easily handled unit by unit.

Mr. Leightman asked Mr. Cuneo how many members within our District do not have email addresses. That number is approximately 500. That includes members who keep their addresses confidential. Mr. Leightman says the running average of the District subsidy is about \$2,000 annually and that perhaps this will allow the District to no longer subsidize the Scorecard. Mr. Bauer said that is what this test hopefully will let us see.

Mrs. Strohmer believes a March deadline is tight, but Mr. Cuneo and Mr. Bauer reminded the group that the friendly amendment to allow rolling changes takes care of that. Units will be all paper until a decision is made. Ms. Laufman asked if the current printing costs would hold steady and President Brown reminded her that there is an asterisk by the number, since it is quite possible that printing costs may rise with reduced copies.

Mr. Bauer said he was amenable to Mr. Cuneo's friendly amendment to allow rolling changes during the testing period since we now know this can be done easily. He felt it also allowed us to stay with the suggested March 31 deadline.

Dr. Hessel asked to be heard. He stated this has gone on for over 3 years. He says he has been involved for 25 years and that the Scorecard means a great deal to him, but he feels no one has ever been given the proper background. President Brown spoke on behalf of all of District 16 to thank Dr. Hessel and Mrs. Hessel for their commitment and service to the District and the Scorecard. A round of applause was given by the membership. Dr. Hessel said that digital would be easier for them. President Brown asked for a call to the question at this point. Mr. Davis called the question and moved we accept the proposal as amended, seconded by Ms. Strohmer. Motion carries. Mrs. Storey will send out a statement to all unit representatives prior to the minutes so they can notify their Boards to begin polling their membership.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of new 2nd Vice-President

David Pearlman had previously resigned his position as 2nd Vice-President and Betty Starzec had accepted President Brown's appointment as interim VP. We are now in the position of electing a new VP per our by-laws and President Brown placed Mrs. Starzec's name in nomination, seconded by Ms. Strohmer. There being no other nominations, Ms. Starzec was elected by acclamation.

New Chairs and District Contacts

Sandy Potts has been asked by President Brown to take over for Kim Brinkman as Membership Chair. Her appointment was ratified unanimously.

Hugh Hilliker has asked to resign as District Recorder. After input from the Executive Committee, President Brown asked Jack LaVigne of Unit 174 to take over those duties

and he accepted. He is already doing training. This appointment was also ratified unanimously.

NAP Report

There has been a substantial falloff in the B and C Flights since 2015. This year continued that trend. Because Roxie Tom was unable to attend this meeting, President Brown submitted Ms. Tom's proposal to allow qualification at the club level only and eliminate qualification at the Unit level, allowing participants to go directly to the District finals.

Mr. Davis said this would essentially allow everyone to participate. Mr. Bauer said that when he was GNT Chair, at one point they required Unit qualification for the GNT's and eliminated Club qualification. Removing that seemed to help, if you can compare GNT and NAP. Ms. Roach said this issue directly affected one of her Unit members and she thinks it is a good idea to increase participation. Mrs. Sanders feels the more the merrier. Mr. Cuneo says he feels the real issue is publicity. Mrs. Storey says it is incumbent on the District to publicize the event and get players to the District level and we want the pool of players to be as large as possible. Dr. Hessel feels we need to build a better product. Ms. Potts says we change the conditions of contest of the GNT so frequently, that it seems trying this for a year couldn't hurt, but possibly help. Mrs. Storey made a motion that we implement eliminating the Unit level qualification for a year to test the participation theory. The motion was seconded and passed.

2021 Austin NABC Fundraising Games Report

Mrs. Strohmer reported that the following weeks are sanctioned as fundraising games prior to the Austin NABC:

November 17-23, 2019

November 15-21, 2020

August 22-28, 2021

Recognition of the D16 Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Starzec congratulated Buck Buchanan from Fort Worth as the winner of this year's District Teacher of the Year. She also commended the other entrants, Betsey Dubose and Julie Halperin of Houston, Pam Lashelle, Gayle Moyers and Sally Sassen of Austin, Lisa Looney of East Texas, and Stephen Segall of Lake Chapala, Mexico. Thanks to all of them for their hard work and dedication to the game of bridge.

Going forward, the Teacher of the Year presentation will be at 2:20 before the start of the second session to eliminate this year's issue that some honorees were still playing.

Request from Unit 174 for ABTA Function Funding

Betty Starzec is again having a party at her home, inviting all ABTA teachers and District 16 teachers to meet Robert Todd. She asked for \$150 from the District to subsidize this function again. A motion was made and seconded, passing unanimously. Mrs. Starzec also suggested that other Units investigate this when they have an excellent speaker in attendance at their regionals.

Education Foundation

In addition, Ms. Starzec is a trustee of the Education Foundation. They have given her a pool of funds for teachers, so she suggests that anyone with ideas for teachers and doing something new, put together a proposal. The Foundation is looking for ideas that your unit is behind as well, because they can match funds.

Best Practices continues to train instructors. Tom Rush from Unit 174 will be training in Las Vegas. Now that TAP is no longer available and has been replaced, there is no way for those teachers to take refresher courses. Since Best Practices costs \$125, the foundation will cover the difference between \$50 and \$125 for any already accredited TAP members.

Action Item Review and Meeting Critique

President Brown thanked Unit 174 and Tournament Co-Chairs Ken Hudson and Lauri Laufman for an excellent regional and a well-run event. She also reminded the membership that the 4th of July Regional in San Antonio will be offering the full Club Directors Course,

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Tomi Storey
Executive Secretary, ACBL District 16