

NVBA Board Meeting  
December 3, 2023

Attendees:

Georgette Weiss, President  
Ann Atcheson, Treasurer  
Eric Poskanzer, Secretary  
Jason Carter, Board Member  
Joe Hertz, Board Member  
Jamie Dahlberg, Board Member  
Kevin O'Brien, Board Member  
John Wertman, Board Member  
Howard Stevens, Education Committee  
Jim Gerding, Unit Game Chief Director

Unable to Attend:

Ron Kral, Webmaster  
Marty Bley, Prior President  
Lucy McCoy, Newsletter Editor  
Margot Hennings, ACBL Board Member

Meeting Called to Order at 9:30am

Prior Minutes:

- Motion to approve – Georgette: Minutes were approved.

Financials (Ann Acheson):

- November financials are still in draft – awaiting Elks invoice.
- Ann presented 4 possible budgets: a) 9 table average with free plays, 9 table average without free plays, 10 table average with free plays, and 10 table average without free plays – free plays cost us about \$2,000 per year.
- Discussed several of the higher dollar amount line items – sectional fees, food costs, etc.
- Agreed that the Sectional is making money and that we should focus on unit game costs and attendance; for example, Georgette reached out to BethEl to see if they would lower our rent.
- We've reduced the number of NVBA Sectionals from 4 to 3 per year.
- Jamie asked if we had access to data of how other unit games are doing – anecdotally from Georgette, WBL is in the same situation as us, Richmond is doing well but has its own building, and some units do not even have regularly scheduled unit games.
- Even though some on the board are skeptical that we can reach break-even, we will still try to turn it around by: asking for reduced rent, looking for another location, reaching out (surveys and phone calls) to our membership, and reach for an acceptable level of loss at the unit game.
- Most free plays rendered are for partnerships, 0-49ers until the end of 2023, and 0-5s; since COVID, we're running at 12% free plays.
- Georgette is writing a letter for the next newsletter letting the membership know of our financial situation and that we will suspend (not give out new and no longer honor) free plays.
- Jay will create a spreadsheet comparing any possible locations (Lutheran, St. Andrews) for the game and present it to the board.
- Jay moved – Eric seconded - that we should approve the 10 table without free plays budget. PASSED
- Holiday bonuses – Jim has declined his bonus; will give the 2 custodians \$25 each for holiday bonuses.

Action Items:

Turnout improvement (Jason):

- Jason still busy but feels that we should just start calling
- Provide data to Jason for this purpose – Eric
- Script for the callers to use of possible lines of questions – Jason (to send draft to Jay, Georgette, Eric)
- What do we do with the feedback? Need to determine how to capture that data – Jason

#### Position Descriptions (Kevin):

- No discussion.

#### Free Plays:

- Free plays at the unit game will be suspended as of January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Jay moved that all unit game free plays be eliminated as of December 31, 2024.
- Georgette suggested dating the free plays so that they expire within a period of time – e.g., 3 months.
- Jamie feels that we first suspend, if the game grows then we can lift the suspension and then announce that free plays will be eliminated at the end of 2024, coupled with dating them and expiration.
- Send out a separate email informing the membership of our financial situation and what's happening to free plays – Georgette will write the letter and get it to Mark for distribution – John requested that she send it to the management group for review prior to release.
- Question was raised if we should differentiate between free plays that are payment for job done versus free plays that are won by competing (section tops) – most of the board believes no; free plays are free plays and treat them all alike.

#### Holiday Party (Georgette/Ann):

- Instead of a dinner, we will have appetizers, vegetable tray, and desserts – no poinsettias; will not hand out any awards.

#### ACBL Reports (Georgette):

- All reports will go to [management@nvba.org](mailto:management@nvba.org) – confirmed by ACBL.

#### Braille Cards (Joe):

- No activity since the last board meeting.

#### NLM Games at the Unit Game (Kevin):

- Run these special games on a mid-month game.
- 0-50 players will play a 15 – 24 board game and play with all other players to see if they can form a partnership
- 0 – 5 will come back since they'll play for free and 5 – 50 players will have a person that they can play with; Kevin will direct that game so no added costs.
- Jay asked for a write-up of Kevin's proposal – Kevin said that he'd get one written for review.
- Kevin believes that the survey results from 2015 are still valid; of all the suggestions from the survey, the only one that seemed to work was starting a 0 – 20 game which died out for 2 reasons (per Kevin): a) he didn't have an email service provider so that he could easily reach this group and b) Kevin burned out with the activity.
- Georgette suggested Jason reach out to Susan Miskura for input to the questions we ask when we phone the membership.
- Using a lower MP limit allows the game to be instructional with the players receiving guidance as they play.
- One suggestion is to start this program at 6pm with about 30 minutes of instruction and 30 minutes of supervised play, then they can either join the open game or if enough people play a full 0-50 MP game. Howard pointed out that once they get too many MPs and move out of this group, there is no other game to move into except the open game.

Volunteers (Kevin):

- Hold discussion for now.

New Business (Georgette)

- We have a long list of action items with which we haven't dealt.

Carolina Game (Georgette):

- No apparent down side or added costs – playing in any of these games can result in income to the unit.
- We decided to 'join' based on the Unit Game if we can run the appropriate reports to populate their database; if these lists come from face-to-face club games, which club gets the refund if a person is listed in multiple clubs. Georgette and Jim will work out the particulars of joining.
- We should announce this to the membership so that the Carolina game is a 'preferred' online game.
- Will this adversely impact club directors as we're promoting playing online?

NVBA/WBL Scheduling Meeting:

- With Georgette, Jay, and Ann unavailable, Jim will represent the unit.

Next Meeting

- January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

Meeting ended at 11:06am.

Action Items – 11/5/23 Meeting

1. Finalize the October '23 financial report – Ann – DONE
2. Be aware of violators of the Zero Tolerance policy at the Unit Game and take appropriate action – Jim and entire board – DONE
3. Organize and call members to invite them to the Unit game and better understand why they do not attend – Jason will organize (based on data supplied by Eric) – In Process
4. Review and devise a strategy to implement the ACBL's Return to the Fold program – Jay
5. Develop and implement a membership survey to better understand why members do not play at the Unit game – Kevin (with input from Susan Miskura)
6. Review and update board position descriptions in the Constitution and By-laws and Policy and Procedures and return to Kevin – all board members (some are done)
7. Identify activities for which we can use additional volunteers and post it to the website – Kevin
8. Review the number of free plays authorized to support the Unit and recommend changes as needed – Eric
9. Review with Georgette the status and plans for this year's holiday party – Jay – DONE
10. Schedule a meeting with WBL, if they are still having a weekly unit game, to set next year's schedule for sectionals and special games – Jim (If no WBL Unit game, Jim will make recommendations solely for our unit) – DONE
11. Make 35 decks with Braille cards – can implement almost immediately once we have 35 decks made – Joe – In Process
12. Develop a write-up explaining Speed Partnering for newer players and present to board for review and input – Kevin – In Process
13. Discuss with Georgette the possibility of having a cake to celebrate bridge's 98<sup>th</sup> birthday at the November 30<sup>th</sup> game – Jay – DONE

Action Items – 10/8/23 Meeting

- Policy and Procedures – complete review of your position description – In Process
- Awards – think about who should receive each – Jay moved to eliminate awards this year – PASSED

- Provide Kevin with feedback on tomorrow's weekly email – DONE
- Recontact ACBL on reports distribution list – Georgette – DONE

#### Action Items (Uncompleted) – 8/20/23 Meeting

1. Have ACBL change the report distribution list to new distribution set up by Joe (omits Margot and Marty) - Georgette – Doesn't appear to be done – Georgette to recontact ACBL (Joe to send Georgette the correct email list) – DONE
2. Identify how to auto-enroll pairs into a specific game – Jim to contact Keith to find out how he does it.
3. Jim to contact Keith on how he increased RSVP use at his club by the players – Jim
4. Work with ACBL to raise the issue of blind players and Braille cards with dealing machines – Joe (in progress but there is a workaround)
5. Update position descriptions and forward to Kevin – All board members (in progress)

#### Action Items – 12/3/23

- Prepare spreadsheet of members to send to join the Carolina game – Jim
- Create a script (after discussing with S. Miskura) for surveying our members and send to board – Jason
- Draft a letter to members informing them of our situation – Georgette
- Develop a proposal for a 0 – 50 game – Kevin