

NVBA Board Meeting  
January 7, 2024

Attendees:

Georgette Weiss, President  
Jay Simon, Vice President  
Ann Atcheson, Treasurer  
Eric Poskanzer, Secretary  
Joe Hertz, Board Member  
Jamie Dahlberg, Board Member  
Jason Carter, Board Member  
Kevin O'Brien, Board Member  
John Wertman, Board Member  
Lucy McCoy, Newsletter Editor  
Margot Hennings, ACBL Board Member

Unable to Attend:

Ron Kral, Webmaster  
Marty Bley, Prior President  
Howard Stevens, Education Committee  
Jim Gerding, Unit Game Chief Director

Meeting Called to Order at 9:30am

Prior Minutes:

- Motion to approve – John Wertman: Minutes were approved.

Financials (Ann Acheson):

- December financials are still in draft – waiting on Elks (they cashed check for the base rent, waiting for invoice for incidentals). Elks have a new treasurer who may be unfamiliar with the agreements that the Elks have with the NVBA.
- Motion made and passed to accept the budget for 2024 which is based on a 10 table unit game, we are currently 1.5 tables over budget.
- Income from the Southeast Carolina online game has netted \$266 through December, and budget includes an annual projection of \$1,600 (\$150/month estimated as no income history exists).
- Annual deficit is estimated at \$10,000 with a \$14,000 deficit from unit game.
- Kevin believes that we will receive income from our players who play in its community games. So far, over a couple of years, we've received 3 unscheduled checks of about \$100 each.

Action Items:

- Outreach Program: have a list of about 1,200 and 5 volunteers making calls; Jason has called about half of his assignees and gets a lot of voice mails on which he leaves a detailed message and his phone number; when he finishes, he'll aggregate his notes for presentation – some negative and some positive comments; callers are keeping their notes on the distributed Excel list which comes from ACBL data as of 12/1/23.
- Constitution and Position Descriptions: nothing new received from board members in last 60 days; some board members believe that there is redundancy which causes problems so Jay suggested that one person review all positions and recommend changes to the board for approval; Georgette suggested a small group meeting instead of a single person – Kevin, Georgette, John, and Ann. They will meet and report back suggested changes for board approval.

- Braille Cards: Joe and Jim have been trying different approaches (reverse Braille cards, compressing the decks) but these do not solve the problem; Joe sent both decks to the dealing machine manufacturer in England and is waiting a response – we'll wait to hear back from them.
- ACBL reports: QUIP and In-and-Out reports – most people have received them, Eric stopped receiving the In-and-Out report; be sure that you check your spam folder; appears that ACBL has not set-up the email addresses for Unit 218 correctly and has confused our unit with that of Unit 128.

NLM (0-50, 0-199, 0-499) (Kevin):

- From the Bottom Up: Write-up received after the meeting started, so Jay suggested that we take a few days to read and review and take up the discussion at the next meeting.
- Kevin believes that we cannot wait to take this up at the next board meeting as it will be too close to the sectional to enact the program – Kevin took a few minutes to summarize (there is a cost to the NVBA for this program, we'll need at least 2 volunteers with suitable compensation, we'll have a 0-50, 0-199 and 0-499 games, Kevin will run the newcomer game, has a license from Patty Tucker to use the materials, a special partner finding game of 16 boards for 8 people with post-game analysis. Kevin's urgency is two-part: 1) he wants to start it on 2/17/24 at the sectional at the Elks and 2) he wants to have enough opportunity to establish the program before the board pulls the plug on the Unit game.
- We need to know how we find the people to show up to special partner game (Kevin believes that the people will come out to this game once they receive the outreach phone call and the email survey)
- Per Georgette, District 6 has educational grants for programs such as this.
- ACBL has assistance for us via advertising, the Boost Program will send targeted Facebook messages.
- Kevin also wants to run the First Learn program on Saturday and Sunday afternoons at the next Sectional, will require volunteers as table monitors, outreach advertising to BethEl Elks members, sets of boards specifically for this event, and some student handouts. These volunteers will not be able to play at the sectional while assisting this program.
- Margot also raised the question about space to hold this event and that reducing the number of players at the sectional could be devastating to participation. She suggested that this is too soon and maybe have it in April/May, particularly since we need to see if it's doable with the Elks contract that is in place. An event such as this requires a lot of advance effort and coordination and shouldn't be held simultaneously with a sectional.
- As for Boost, they do not target email via Facebook – per Margot.
- Kevin believes that the Elks and BethEl would be very happy to aid us with marketing as this would increase the times their members came to their facility to share in their activities.
- Kevin moved and Jason seconded a motion to delay the decision on the fate of the unit game from June 30<sup>th</sup> until September 30<sup>th</sup>. Motion failed.
- Georgette will talk with BethEl to see if they would be willing to advertise this program to its members and if not, can we buy advertising space in their members newsletter?
- Jay moved to table discussion on this topic until the next board meeting – board members are asked to read all materials that Kevin sends on the topic. Eric seconded, PASSED

Survey:

- Susan Miskura sent a memo to Georgette and Jay – Jay will forward to entire board.
- Susan asked 1) what is our objective of this survey, as she believes that nothing has changed since the last survey in 2015?, 2) is there a commitment to how the results will be used?, and 3) how will it be coordinated with other outreach and data collection efforts?
- Some board members do not see its value while other members feel that the new/updated information may prove useful – we need to determine with what issues we are dealing.
- We need to structure (use results of phone calls) so that we useable answers to our concerns, avoid asking to many questions to avoid survey tedium and avoidance, take these findings and build action plans to resolve our problems.

- So far, we have several anecdotes of why people do not play at the unit game – ends too late, my spouse no longer plays, do not drive at night, etc.
- There was a suggestion that we put a comment in the next weekly email that some people are carpooling from western Loudoun/Reston areas to the Unit game and if you are interested, call Joe Hertz.
- Jay moved that we defer the survey until we complete the outreach calls, digest the results, determine our set of data points on which to collect information in the survey, Eric seconded – PASSED

#### Volunteers (Kevin):

- Kevin believes that we do not have enough people to perform all of the tasks that the unit has to perform to support the membership.
- He suggests that we communicate a list of events, tasks, etc. for which we could use volunteers and solicit the membership to become involved. Georgette suggested sending a list of specific tasks for which volunteers are needed and when they are needed to M. Chen to add to the weekly email.
- It was also suggested that we have a pool of volunteers that will come in with suitable notice to help on a specific activity.

#### ACBL Issues (Margot):

- 5/5/5 Program and Return to the Fold
- No longer will the 11% for membership be pro forma; our amount may not decrease but it will take some effort on our part; amount and workload will stay as is for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024
- Margot offered to hold a meeting after January 15th to discuss this topic (Georgette, Ann, Jay, Kevin will attend); Georgette has been sent materials and links to information and spreadsheets that explain this topic
- ACBL has a daily Zoom chat session from 3:30 to 5:00 to answer questions on any relevant topic.
- Margot is unaware of any ACBL initiatives to accommodate ADA accessibility (e.g., Braille cards).

#### Sectional (Margot):

- February is our next sectional; a draft schedule has been published, we will again hold our 2-session barometer event (extra boards will be needed – Jim Gerding is aware).
- The flyer is being sent to ACBL for posting and a copy will be sent to Ron Kral for our website. Hard copy flyers will be printed and made available at our Unit game and to the WBL.
- Mark Lavine has asked if he can hold a sectional Thursday morning game for our sectional with some remuneration to the NVBA. Margot will approach him but there probably does need to be some cash incentive – previously the WBL paid him to hold the game. The suggestion was that he keep all of the income but pay for our expenses – e.g., sanction and director fees.
- Margot and Amy will be working on the February and April/May sectionals with only Amy handling the September sectional. We will only use the ballroom but the downstairs rooms are available if needed.
- Still waiting for an invoice from the Elks for water/liner/other surcharges for the past October's sectional – Margot will reach out to the Elks.
- Obtaining caddies is in the works.
- Margot will talk with Amy about her longer-term commitment to running the sectionals.

#### 2024 Unit game Schedule

- Jay moved that we accept the schedule with Lucy's suggested changes, Kevin pointed out the Leo Cardillo game is missing – change the name on the Club Appreciation game in October, Georgette – seconded. PASSED

#### RSVP (Jim):

- In Jim's absence, we will skip this for now and Jay will contact Jim offline.

### Unit Game Logistics (Georgette):

- Several members have inquired if we could change the Unit game to a day game and have it on a weekend.
- Marty has offered her Sunday afternoon time slot (after 2pm) and sanction for us to see if a 'unit game' would work at that time – she and Ross are out of town until early April. It has been suggested that we use March to test this day and time; however, Marty is not sure that she renewed her sanction before she left for her trip.
- Per Kevin, we cannot call it a 'Unit game' as unit games cannot conflict with a club game.
- Suggested that John Wertman approach Marilyn Golias to see if it is all right with her that we have a Unit-sponsored game in that timeslot. Georgette will contact the temple. We will come up with a game plan once we have this information.
- Jaime raised the question that by not having our game on Thursday night we would not the ability to have a Sectional game with WBL on Thursday night.
- Changing the day or time of the Unit game is more difficult than most people think.
- Question raised as to our end point of having a Sunday game – this is just a trial balloon, see how people feel, and as a basis to explain why we do not move the Thursday night game.
- Jay moves to move forward with exploring the Sunday game in March, Ann seconded. PASSED

### Next Meeting

- February 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

Meeting ended at 11:25am.

### Action Items – 11/5/23 Meeting

1. 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
2. Review and devise a strategy to implement the ACBL's Return to the Fold program – Jay
3. Develop and implement a membership survey to better understand why members do not play at the Unit game – Kevin (with input from Susan Miskura)
4. 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)
5. Identify activities for which we can use additional volunteers and post it to the website – Kevin
6. Make 35 decks with Braille cards – can implement almost immediately once we have 35 decks made – Joe – In Process
7. Develop a write-up explaining Speed Partnering for newer players and present to board for review and input – Kevin – In Process

### Action Items – 10/8/23 Meeting

1. Policy and Procedures – complete review of your position description – In Process

### Action Items – 8/20/23 Meeting

1. Identify how to auto-enroll pairs into a specific game – Jim to contact Keith to find out how he does it.
2. Jim to contact Keith on how he increased RSVP use at his club by the players – Jim
3. Work with ACBL to raise the issue of blind players and Braille cards with dealing machines – Joe (in progress but there is a workaround)
4. Update position descriptions and forward to Kevin – All board members (in progress)

### Action Items – 12/3/23 Meeting

1. Create a script (after discussing with S. Miskura) for surveying our members and send to board – Kevin

2. Develop a proposal for a 0 – 50 game – Kevin (in process)

#### Action Items – 1/3/24 Meeting

1. Obtain a final invoice from the Elks for remaining expenses from the October '23 sectional – Ann
2. Complete and report on findings from the telephone outreach program – Jason
3. Review the position descriptions in the Constitution and make recommendations for changes – Georgette, Kevin, John and Ann
4. Follow up with dealing machine manufacturer on Braille card usage – Joe
5. Follow up with the ACBL on report distribution – Georgette and Joe
6. Read all pertinent materials sent out by Kevin on the Increase NLM initiative for discussion at next board meeting – all board members
7. Any board member or committee chair who could use assistance should provide Georgette with a list of activities for which they could use volunteers to assist – all board members
8. Become familiar with ACBL's 5/5/5 program – Ann, Georgette, Jay, Kevin
9. Discuss Amy's interest for a longer-term commitment to run our sectionals – Margot
10. Forward S. Miskura's email re: the survey to the entire board for review and future discussion – Jay
11. Begin planning and organizing for a new Sunday "Unit-sponsored" game at BethEl, including on verifying if Marty renewed her sanction – Georgette
12. Contact M. Goliass to ascertain her willingness to allow us to run the "Unit-sponsored" game in a time slot similar to her game – John