

NVBA Board Meeting
February 11, 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
Ron Kral, Webmaster

Unable to Attend:

Marty Bley, Prior President
John Wertman, Board Member
Lucy McCoy, Newsletter Editor
Margot Hennings, ACBL Board Member
Howard Stevens, Education Committee
Jim Gerding, Unit Game Chief Director

Meeting Called to Order at 9:30am

Prior Minutes:

- Motion to approve – Jay Simon; Minutes were approved with the removal of the word, 'vehemently'.
Note: though not found, the word 'adamantly' was found and removed.

Financials (Ann Atcheson):

- The financials reflect the Thursday night of the WBL sectional held at BethEl and there was small profit – see page 2 of the financial statement.
- We have a cash reserve of approximately \$84,500.
- The income from the South Carolina online game is running between \$200 and \$450 for the three months; difficult to determine what our average receipts will be at this time.
- Motion to approve the financial statement made, seconded and approved.

Action Items:

- Outreach Program: Phone calls are still being made; results include: voice mail or no answer, non-working numbers, and some conversations with members.
- Comments have included: no longer drive at night, have found an occasional member to be deceased. One consistent comment from a relatively from some of the respondents that stood out was that people did not want to go to BethEl on Thursday nights as it is too far, don't night drive and game is not flighted. A van pool probably is not going to solve the issue for these people.
- Some people have accepted the invite, were paired with a partner and played in a game.
- Reminder that this is not a data gathering exercise and leave this to a future survey; however, the callers will review what information they were given and see if there are any common threads.
- Ron raised the idea of forming a network of van pools to possibly alleviate the 'not driving at night' issue. With multiple people, the HOT lanes can be used for free and the commute time is greatly reduced. Some people from southern Maryland who carpool when possible. Similarly, it was suggested that we find UBER/LYFT drivers who want to play bridge to drive people for free.
- Constitution and Position Descriptions: no new changes received recently from board members.

- Braille Cards: Joe contacted the dealing machine people in England and they're having problems with the cards sticking together in the machine; they have to talk and work with the person in Australia to resolve the problem – they will probably have to send him the cards. Time for resolution is unknown.
- ACBL reports: QUIP and In-and-Out reports – ACBL changed the protocols (DKIM) that it is using to send out the reports and this is causing our problems receiving the reports as the system thinks it is spam. This change was precipitated by GOOGLE. It appears that ACBL implemented it incorrectly. Suggestion is that we go to Bronia directly or possibly Margot. In the interim, Joe will forward the reports to the other board members. Georgette will talk with Margot about this problem. For further information on this issue: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V2nfKLzc84>

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

- Kevin distributed an email with many very good suggestions on building up attendance at the Unit game and membership in the NVBA.
- After a discussion, Georgette asked Kevin to identify which of these various programs should be implemented first. He recommended that we first go with the weekly, partner-finding individual and on those weeks that we do not have that person, we have supervised play. Georgette suggested that we couple this with calling the players in Kevin's target audience and that we advertise in the newsletter that we will help them find a partner finding and have supervised play if we have at least 4 people.
- Kevin that we include our efforts (partner finding person, 0-50 game, 0-499 game and supervised play) in the weekly RSVP announcement from Jim Gerding. It is hoped and presumed that these opportunities will reduce newer players' discomfort (due to lack of flighting and inexperience) and increase their desire to come out to the Unit game.
- The sooner we can get to multiple sections (flighting) at the Unit game, it is believed that we will have a draw of even more players. However, of the 0-499ers who regularly play now, most of them seem to prefer playing in the open game.
- The resurgence of the GP program was discussed and it is believed that having a GP with free plays does not cost us out of pocket. Kevin moved: The motion I will propose is: Revive the Guaranteed Partner program for each section/level, so solo players who have requested a partner by Tuesday are always guaranteed a partner. Partnership Chair recruits at least three GPs -- Open, Limited, and 499er/199er (more need for volunteers! Provide additional incentive to volunteer, show appreciation of volunteers by enabling them to play the game they love more often and at lower cost, most probably increasing participation in events.) For NVBA, the bottom line is the financial benefit of 1 \$PAID entry fee + 1 Free Play is better than \$ZERO. Non-playing GP goes home with a \$FREE Play; if there are two, they partner each other and play in the higher-limit or Open Section. GPs are also required for the 199er/499er Section when it exists. While we can no longer guarantee every player a partner, if we have the player request a partner in advance (no walk-ins for a partner), we will try our best to find them a peer player. The director is available to play in some situations. This motion was scrapped for the following moved by Jaime: In the newsletter we should have a statement that says if you need a partner every effort will be made to match you with a peer. Please contact either Jason Carter at the partnership desk, Jim Gerding, or Kevin at RSVP. Motion approved.
- Moved by Jay that Kevin will hold scheduled, supervised play if interested by at least 4 players to be held concurrently with the Unit game and a person to lead this is available. Ron volunteered to run the supervised game, if needed, he also said that he would invite his students to this supervised game. Seconded by Joe. Motion approved.

Volunteers (Kevin/Jay):

- No discussion; however, volunteers may be needed by Kevin for his new endeavors authorized and discussed above.

ACBL 5/5/5 Program (Jay)

- There are new ACBL policies that define how we get compensated by the ACBL.

- Ann is aware and it's Jay's opinion that the board members don't need to get the details here as they're available on acbl.org and Bronia James has sent them out several times.

BOOST Program (Jay/Margot)

- Per Margot, this ACBL program does not appear to have traction so there is nothing to really discuss or do at this time.

Return to the Fold Program (Jay)

- There is a dynamic list on the internet that we can all access and it identifies elapsed memberships who are not active.
- This program rewards for getting these ex-members to renew their memberships and getting non-members with 0-5 MPs to join.
- We can call them or email them. They remain on this list as an 'exposure' until we can determine that they've given up bridge, they're deceased, moved away, and we update the ACBL database. This list generally runs about 60 names.
- Jay will be targeting this list of 60 names in the next 30 days. He will attempt to make use of Jason and Jaime's contact efforts to reduce the number of calls he needs to make.

Unit Game Logistics (Georgette):

- Marty does not want to give up her timeslot so maybe it does not make sense to pursue this option.
- John reached out to Marilyn Golias about having a 'unit-based' Sunday game opposite her game. She didn't have a particular opinion at that time.
- Based on all of our findings on making this a possibility, the board agreed not to pursue this.

Carolina Game (Joe)

- One of our members was concerned that the Carolina game got his email address even though neither he nor the Unit provided it – presumably they got it from BBO and/or ACBL. If they wanted to bring it to the ACBL, they could and we would provide any information that we had.
- The offended person was all right with this explanation.

NVBA Website (Ron)

- We need to clean up the club listing on the website.
- Georgette spoke with John and he is doing this task. Georgette will work with John to get an expected completion date (hopefully by next month) and notify Ron.

New Business

- Kevin suggested that we run Learn Bridge in a Day on Monday July 1st at the Reston Regional. He believes that we need the approval of District 6 and the Tournament Chair. He feels that we should also have a post-class reception for the graduates. He's raising it now so that it has time to get in front of the people who review and approve these proposals.
- Georgette indicated that is a District 6 issue and Sean and then Marty have say over what goes on at the regional. Additionally, Georgette indicated that we cannot bring food into the regional and a reception would probably run several thousand dollars.
- Per Kevin, historically this program was run at the 2015 regional. Margot was very active in making this occur. These participants (approximately 80 people) each paid \$15 - \$20 for the program.
- Bridge University also runs on the first day of the regional.
- Kevin needs to talk to Marty to see if this is even feasible – it's not a Unit 218 issue, it's for District 6.

- 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 have 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

Survey:

- Not discussed this meeting – resume in second quarter

Next Meeting

- April 7th at 9:30am.

Meeting ended at 11:23am.

Action Items:

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 – in process – Jay
3. Develop and implement a membership survey to better understand why members do not play at the Unit game – deferred until the second quarter – 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
8. Identify how to auto-enroll pairs into a specific game – Jim to contact Keith to find out how he does it.
9. Jim to contact Keith on how he increased RSVP use at his club by the players – Jim
10. Obtain a final invoice from the Elks for remaining expenses from the October ’23 sectional – Ann – Done
11. Complete and report on findings from the telephone outreach program – Jason
12. Continue to follow up with the ACBL on report distribution – Georgette and Joe
13. Read all pertinent materials sent out by Kevin on the Increase NLM initiative for discussion at next board meeting – all board members – done
14. Become familiar with ACBL’s 5/5/5 program – Ann, Georgette, Jay, Kevin – done
15. Discuss Amy’s interest for a longer-term commitment to run our sectionals – Margot – in-process
16. Plan and organize for a new Sunday “Unit-sponsored” game at BethEl, including on verifying if Marty renewed her sanction – Georgette – done
17. Contact M. Golias to ascertain her willingness to allow us to run the “Unit-sponsored” game in a time slot similar to her game – John – done