

**MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION**

**Thursday, September 13, 2001
Via Phone @ 7:00pm CDT**

Directors Present: Michael Becker, Arnold Jones, Dan Morse, Nick Nickell, Shawn Quinn, Bruce Reeve, Wayne Hascall, Bob Friend and Alan Popkin

Others Present: Gary Blaiss, Rena Hetzer and Galen Hardy

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Michael Becker, USBF President. The President noted that all the directors were present at the meeting, thus establishing a quorum for the purpose of transacting business by the Board.

At President Becker's request the meeting began with a minute of silence to honor all those who were victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 21, 2001 and the August 29 meetings were approved as presented.

Report of USBF/USOC Membership Committee Meeting

Even though Rank and Nickell reported having a "good feeling" after their appearance before the USOC Membership Committee, the USBF application for membership in the USOC was denied. Nickell and Rank gave a verbal report of their appearance before the committee which included the following observations:

1. The 15-member committee included 3 athletes from the sports of rowing, taekwondo and the pentathlon plus "suits" representing various other sports including shooting, curling and synchronized swimming.
2. Four or five of the committee members had played bridge at some time in their lives.
3. It appeared the committee had read the quite "thick" application and as a result was well-prepared to ask questions.
4. There were a lot of polite "negative" questions.
5. With the possible exception of the Taekwondo athlete, the committee seemed open to arguments that bridge was indeed a sport.
6. The USOC Membership Committee pointed out that our budget did not include monies for drug-testing which would be a major expense.
7. After the decision was rendered, Peter Rank was assured by a committee member that there was no fault to be found with the application itself.

8. Since our application was declined, the committee would not make any report regarding USBF application to the full USOC Board.
9. The reasons given (informally) for declining the application were:
 - A. Bridge is not a sport
 - B. The USBF has no experience in conducting a trials
10. The USBF will receive in due course a letter from the committee which will formally state the reasons for declining the application.
11. It was interesting that the committee – perhaps as a result of the USBF appearance before them and the arguments heard in favor of bridge as a sport – formed a sub-committee to contemplate the definition of what is a sport.
12. The committee said that the letter from Damiani had no meaning to them and that they had never heard of an International Olympic Committee Grand Prix bridge event.
13. Rank stated that we should reapply every year.

It was agreed that Wayne Hascall would report the USOC decision to Jose Damiani, President of the World Bridge Federation. Nickell also suggested that it would best for Damiani to talk to him or Rank in order to get a firsthand, full-flavor report.

Salt Lake City Event

Becker will report the decline of USOC membership and other matters to the members of the SLC teams, the ITTC and the WITTC in a USBF “Update” letter.

It was agreed by all that the SLC event is now more important than ever and should really be a “barn-burner” in terms of publicity. High profile celebrity captains should be vigorously courted to appear at the event. Warren Buffet has indicated he is willing to be an honorary captain, but will not be in SLC. Jill Meyers could be asked to pursue Martina Navratilova as the Women’s Team NPC. Nickell suggested that baseball great Tim McCraver might be a possibility as NPC for the open team. Other names were mentioned. Board members were to provide their suggestions to Hetzer, who will compile a list and Email it out. A decision on how to proceed was deferred until the next meeting.

Reeve stated that proper uniforms would be a must. Whether to have uniforms similar to the USA Olympic uniforms or just have players dress similarly or nicely was discussed. No conclusion was reached. Deferred until next meeting.

There was a discussion on Vugraph commentators. Audrey Grant was suggested as a commentator. Hascall will ask Damiani about whether the USBF or the WBF should supply commentators or whether we should seek celebrity commentators. The importance of getting the local bridge population to attend was reiterated, and Hascall reported that the matter was being worked on by the local bridge unit.

Salt Lake City Open Team

As Meckstroth and Rodwell did not accept the USBF invitation to be members of the SLC team, stating prior commitments would conflict, the board unanimously selected Richard Freeman

(Nickell did not vote) and David Berkowitz to fill out the Open team. Nickell excused himself from the meeting to call Berkowitz. On his return to the meeting he reported that Berkowitz is honored to join the team. Nickell will contact Freeman but stated that he felt certain that Freeman would accept.

Becker reminded the board that Damiani should be notified of our final teams so that he may formally invite them to the SLC event.

Sponsorship Update

Quinn and Nickell reported that they were preparing a draft letter was being prepared to solicit corporate sponsors.

ACBL Renewal Form and \$1.95 Donation to USBF

Becker mentioned that no Board member responded to his request to review the wording of the ACBL renewal form, and the Board asked him to re-send his Email. Board members were to review and comment on the wording.

Website Update and Timetable

Quinn reported no progress, but still hopes to have a WEB site in early 2002.

USBF Charity Event

Becker suggested that the USBF Charity event be tabled because there were more important matters to deal with. It was suggested that approval for the event be sought at the spring, 2002, NABC and the event be run in the summer or fall 2002 NABC. Hascall thought it was not too late to run an event in Houston. No action was taken.

Financial Update

Hascall reported that the USBF has nearly used up the \$50,000 that the ACBL lent it. A discussion of finances was deferred to the next meeting.

Date of Next Board Meeting

Hetzer will arrange the next meeting via phone approximately one month from September 13.

Other Business

1. A USBF subcommittee, consisting of Nickell Rank Reeve and Morse, was created to consider its drug policy. Hetzer will ask the WBF for a copy of its official drug policy. The committee will report back on drug policy on matters such as: cost of drug testing, drug testing in the trials, SLC pre tournament drug testing, release forms, advance notice requirements.

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2. Morse asked for names, addresses, etc of the USOC committee has he wants to contact them for the purpose of inviting them to the victory Banquet in SLC.