

MINUTES
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION

9/6/2006
8 PM CST
VIA CONFERENCE CALL
CALL TO ORDER

I. ATTENDANCE:

Jan Martel called the meeting to order at 8:00 CST. The following Directors were present, establishing a quorum for conducting business: Steve Beatty, Bob Hamman, Jan Martel, Rose Meltzer, Bill Pollack, Shawn Quinn (for the first part of the meeting).

Others present at the meeting: Mike Becker (for Item III, below), Gary Blaiss, Joan Gerard, Barbara Nudelman, Peter Rank.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MEETING OF 7/6/2006

The minutes of the meeting of 7/6/06 were approved as submitted.

III. 2006 USBC

A. Financial Report from White Plains

The Board agreed that based on the preliminary report from White Plains:

Joan did an incredible job with both the hotel contract and providing volunteers to help with the running of the tournament as well as with both Vugraph and hospitality. The Board was unanimous in thanking Joan for all of her hard work and praising her for its success.

Based on the preliminary financial report, the Board determined that we should increase entry fees next year in order to have the USBC be in a break-even position. The Board tentatively agreed on an entry fee of \$130 per session (the current entry fee is \$115 per session). This increase would apply to the Open, Women's & Seniors, but not to the Juniors.

B. Vugraph & Website coverage

The Board agreed that it is important to provide the best coverage we can of our events and will work towards improving the already good Vugraph and website coverage. Bill Pollack volunteered to discuss with representatives of the hotel for next year to see whether there was anything that could be done to improve the quality of the internet connections for the Vugraph. Bill suggested that given the very rapid improvements in this area, he should do so approximately 2 months before the start of the event. Bob expressed his opinion that it is important to

have coverage of all of the tables in play. The Board considered the possibility of providing Vugraph coverage of all tables but commentary only at some of them, in order to have good commentary. No conclusion was reached.

IV. FUTURE USBCS

A. Sites

Jan, Barbara & Joan will work with Tom Sucher to make sure that the 2007 USBC/USWBC arrangements with the Woodfield Hyatt are the best we can get.

Joan has asked the White Plains Crowne Plaza to make a proposal for the 2008 USBC, to be held in early June. She will report as soon as she knows the specifics. White Plains was a very popular site.

Sites for future USBCs and whether the USBC & USWBC should be held together will be considered later.

Negotiation of hotel contracts for our tournaments is particularly tricky because they are so different from “normal” conventions. We will continue to try to improve in that area.

B. ITT Committee Discussion

The Board questioned Mike Becker about exactly how the ITT Committee works. Mike explained that there are two primary committees – the ITTC, which meets at each NABC and has the final say on what recommendations are made to the Board regarding the USBCs, and the Conditions of Contest Committee, which meets throughout the year, by email, and makes recommendations to the ITTC. The ITTC usually, but not always, adopts the recommendations of the Conditions of Contest Committee.

At this time, the Conditions of Contest committee has been discussing, with considerable heat, the method for choosing the second team in 2009 (in other years, one team is chosen). Bobby Wolff suggested, and some Conditions of Contest Committee members support, the idea of a Pairs Trial to choose that team. The committee has yet to reach a consensus on whether to recommend a Pairs Trials and if so what form that Trials should take. A vote was recently taken where half of those members of the Conditions of Contest Committee voting preferred to continue using a team repechage to select the second team. Although a substantial majority of the Board believe at this time that a Pairs Trials is inappropriate, the Board does not want to limit discussion within the ITTC.

The Conditions of Contest committee will also be considering the format of the 2007 and 2008 USBCs. Mike explained the concepts of a virtually all-KO USBC and a preliminary “qualification round” for the lower seeded teams. At Mike’s request, Jan took a straw poll of the Board on the question of whether entry in the USBC should be restricted based on the prior performance (at NABCs mainly) of teams that sought to enter. 4 of the 5 Board members who were then present (Quinn had left the meeting) approve of restricting entry, either to a

limited number of teams or to teams with more than a specified number of seeding points.

Peter Rank raised the question of whether the USBF has the power to restrict entry. The ACBL Board of Directors passed a motion in the summer of 2000 requiring that Trials to select International teams be open. The USBF was formed in 2001. So it is unclear whether that motion is still in effect or whether ACBL ceded its powers to determine what sort of Trials should be held to USBF. Before the ITTC considers whether to hold a restricted Trials, the Board agreed that we should explore the issue with the ACBL International Events Committee.

Beatty suggested that it would be good to have a process in place so the ITTC wouldn't spend a great deal of time developing an idea that the Board then rejected. No-one could suggest a specific process that would have this result without unduly limiting the ITTC, which everyone agreed has been an extremely effective committee. Pollack suggested that Board members make an effort to attend ITTC meetings. Jan is a member of the ITTC and will keep the Board advised of what the ITTC and the Conditions of Contest Committee are discussing.

V. JUNIORS

A. Reports from Thailand

The Board discussed at length the issues that had arisen because some ACBL Board members and some members of ACBL management were extremely upset about the profiles of the players on the Canadian team and on USA1 published in the Daily Bulletin in Thailand. As a result, ACBL publicity regarding the USA1 victory has been minimal. The Board agreed that although the profiles were a little too casual, and should probably have been edited, they were not terrible and should not have resulted in minimal publicity for our Junior World Champions. The Board instructed Jan to write a letter to Harriette Buckman, ACBL President, expressing our concerns about the lack of publicity the Juniors had received. In addition, Board members will write to their individual Directors.

Barbara and Joan reported that our teams had behaved extremely well in Thailand. Gary passed on a story from Slovakia about what wonderful representatives of USBF and Junior Bridge our World Champion team had been there. Particular mention was made of Joe Grue who received the Sportsmanship Award with more votes than anyone had received in the past.

Barbara reported that we have about \$11,000 remaining in the Junior Fund, so we have a start on future support for Junior Teams and for Juniors wanting to attend the Junior Camp. The Board reiterated their thanks to Barbara, Joan & Charlotte for all the great work they have done for the Junior program.

Joan reported that there is some uncertainty about whether there will be a WBF Junior Camp and competition in the US next year. The WBF representatives are unhappy with the negative reactions they are getting from ACBL Board members

and ACBL representatives to WBF and are considering not holding the Camp here.

The Board reaffirmed our belief that promoting Junior bridge, supporting our international teams, and publicizing the successes of our top Juniors is vital to the future of bridge. We will continue to do all we can to achieve this.

B. FISU GAMES

The FISU University games are scheduled for October in Tianjin, China. Donna Compton has put together a team of 4 players: John Barth, Jason Feldman, Ari Greenberg, and Joel Wooldridge for the event. Rose Meltzer has convinced Ron Smith to be the NPC for the team. Meltzer has also volunteered to help support the team financially. The Board unanimously thanked Meltzer for her support of this effort, and asked her to thank Ron for his willingness to be NPC. The Board agreed that it was important to send the team and authorized Meltzer to proceed with plans to do so.

VI. BOARD ELECTION

Jan appointed Steve Beatty, Arnold Jones, Jan Martel, Rose Meltzer & Shawn Quinn to the election committee, which is supposed to consist of 5 Board members. Beatty has agreed to be the Chair of the committee, which doesn't have to do much work.

Notice was posted on the website on Sept. 2. The election timeline is pushed back a bit because Jan didn't manage to get the notice posted earlier. Election will be in December if we need one.

Jan has appointed Ira Chorush, Rose Meltzer, Dan Morse, Peggy Sutherlin, and Adam Wildavsky to the nominating committee, which will be meeting in two weeks. Gary has agreed to coordinate the committee meetings. Board members who have recommendations regarding possible nominees should give those recommendations to any committee member or to Gary.

The Board agreed that we should revise the election procedures which are really too cumbersome. Jan, Rose, Gary, Barbara & Peter will work on this after this election is over.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Jan reported that the move from the "old" website to the "new" one should happen in the next few weeks. Board members will let Jan know if they have any suggestions for the new site.

No report has been received about the WBF investigation of the World Open and Women's Pairs results.

Barbara is working on getting our finances in order and trying to figure out the ACBL accountings she has been given. She hopes to be able to provide the

Board with some useful financial information at the next meeting. For this meeting, she was working on getting the Junior Fund information and the USBC information in reasonable order.

Jan has appointed Bill Pollack and Lisa Berkowitz as trustees of the Mahaffey Fund to serve with Barbara Nudelman, Jayne Thomas, and Charlotte Blaiss. The fund currently has about \$50,000 and has been doing a wonderful job of supporting the teaching of bridge by young people to young people.

VIII. SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 25th at 8:00 pm CST. Jan promises not to try to convert that to other time zones again!

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 CST.