

WBL Board Minutes

October 12, 2022

Attendance. All Board members attended: Hadi Abushakra, Lloyd Rawley, Herb Schulken, Bob Bell, Carole Banks, Kim Gandy, Alex Gretsinger, Clyde Kruskal, Kathy Kopnisky, and Alex Stille. Brad Theurer (Tournament Chair) also attended.

Treasurer's Report. Herb reported that we lost about \$2200 on the September/October sectional, not including a \$300 fee for credit card payment that will be borne by the unit. Attendance at the tournament was about half that in 2019. Herb said that the drop in attendance was consistent with that experienced by other recent sectional and regional tournaments. He noted that the sectional's Thursday night attendance (14 tables in total) was higher than Thursday face-to-face (f2f) attendance in other weeks, but remained well below the Thursday financial break-even point (22 tables). He said that attendance was somewhat better in the A flight than in lower flights.

Herb observed that attendance in our online Thursday evening game has been declining—it had often reached over forty pairs in the past, but is now typically in the mid-twenties. He said that the decline was more severe among less experienced players than among Flight A players. He reported that the online game is now covering its costs, but is not raising significant revenue. He noted that we continue to receive additional funds from ACBL and District 6 when WBL members participate in online games with other sponsors. Overall, he characterized us as “treading water” financially. Alex S. said that less experienced players often prefer shorter and less expensive online games that offer more masterpoints and that this may lead to further declines in revenue.

Herb noted he plans to retire as treasurer after this year. Board members expressed their appreciation for his contributions. Herb said that a responsible player with a strong financial background had expressed an interest in the position and that he hoped to invite this player to the next Board meeting so that he could get a better sense of how the Board functions.

September/October Sectional. The Board discussed lessons learned from our first f2f tournament in over two years. The discussion covered a variety of topics:

- Staff costs were higher than expected, partly because non-directing staff numbers (and costs) were not substantially reduced from past levels. Carole said that, in retrospect, we appear to have been overcautious about the number of staff needed for set up work related to food distribution. Although we had a significant amount of leftover food, food costs were viewed as well-controlled.
- The WBL is no longer renting a storage unit, which had been used for nonperishable food supplies and miscellaneous supplies (e.g., coffee pots). Although this saves \$123/month in rental costs, it imposed some other burdens—volunteers needed to take some items to store in their homes and needed to spend some additional time allocating items for ad hoc storage. In addition, buying in bulk will become more problematic when storage space is not readily and conveniently available. Nonetheless, the Board agreed that, with some process improvements, storage could be managed effectively and significant cost savings could be realized. Hadi said

that David Solomon plans to compile an inventory of items in storage and where they would be stored.

- The Board was pleased with cashless sales of entries. Alex S. urged the Board to commit to a transition to fully cashless tournaments and discounts for players who buy entries online and in advance of the day(s) on which they are planning to play. Herb agreed that these changes are inevitable and would be welcome.
- Hadi wondered if there were additional ways that we could fundamentally change the way we run our tournaments. Bob suggested that, in considering this issue, the tournament committee would need to keep in mind that, as our membership shrinks and ages, both volunteer time and revenue become scarcer.

Novice Lesson. Rochelle Cohen, who teaches the novice lesson at the Unit Game, told Herb that she did not need to be paid for presenting the lesson on evenings when no one attended. The Board decided that it wished to continue to pay her and to take steps to publicize the lessons and encourage attendance. It also agreed that we should arrange for a substitute teacher on days when Rochelle is unavailable. If, despite these measures, the lesson is frequently unattended, the Board would reevaluate this issue in the future.

Committees. The Board reviewed committee assignments. The current list of committees and members can be found on the WBL website. In discussing committee memberships, the Board considered several issues relevant to a possible redesign of its committees: (1) It is desirable, but not required, that committees be chaired by members of the Board rather than other WBL members, (2) An executive committee, which in the past served to enable the Board to act quickly when necessary, was no longer necessary now, since modern technology enables quick action by the whole Board, (3) Before the pandemic, the membership secretary sent a welcome letter to new members with an invitation to play for free at the unit game. To resume this practice, we would need to revise the welcome letter, and (4) There is considerable overlap among membership, communications, publicity, and marketing activities.

Next Meeting. November 15.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell