

## WBL Board Minutes

April 17, 2022

Board members attending: Hadi Abushakra, Lloyd Rawley, Herb Schulken, Bob Bell, Alex Gretsinger, Clyde Kruskal, Alex Stille, Carole Banks, and Kim Gandy. Board member absent: Kathy Kopnisky. Ted Ying (Club Manager), Linda Marshall (Communications Chair), Bob Ives, and Brad Theurer (Tournament Chair) also attended.

**Minutes:** The Board approved the minutes of the March meeting.

**Milestones and Achievements:** The Board agreed that it is important to celebrate members' milestone bridge achievements. Accordingly, on Saturday afternoon of the June sectional, the WBL will celebrate Dick Wegman's advancement to the rank of Grand Life Master. Tournaments will also regularly celebrate members who become Life Masters. The Board also agreed that the membership should be informed when members die, possibly by notifications on the website.

**Treasurer's Report:** Herb said that the unit made a small profit in the first quarter thanks to District 6 rebates and despite a loss of about \$900 from the unit game. He noted that unit game attendance was best on the Thursday of the recent NVBA sectional. Herb reported that in late April he would be filing the WBL's form 990, which nonprofit organizations are required to submit to the U.S. government. He added that the U.S. Treasury Department has been slow in enabling us to invest WBL savings in Treasury securities through the TreasuryDirect portal.

**Unit Game:** Hadi summarized patterns in the 108 responses we received to our survey about unit game attendance. He observed that many respondents had never been to the unit game and that significant numbers preferred online bridge or did not have suitable Thursday night partners available.

The Board discussed when and whether to begin running the face-to-face (f2f) unit game every week and what to do about the online unit game in the event the f2f game is held weekly. The Board decided to begin holding the f2f game weekly starting with the Thursday game of the August WBL sectional. The following observations influenced the Board's decision:

- The table counts and profits from the online game have substantially declined from the high levels achieved early in the pandemic. Profits are now about \$150 per session and table counts have dropped from about 80 to as low as 16.
- Net revenue is now only about \$150 per session. The ACBL has recently increased its share of the game's total revenue, which will either reduce WBL revenue further or cause the WBL to increase the cost to the players.
- Several Board members speculated that a weekly game, by being more consistently available, might encourage players to attend more regularly.

- Competition from the NVBA online Thursday game (held every other week) did not seem to have much effect on attendance. Attempts to coordinate with NVBA's Thursday night policies did not seem likely to increase attendance or generate additional revenue.
- For serving the needs of newer players and those who work on weekdays, a game on Sunday afternoon game might be a better alternative than a Thursday night game.
- The survey did not indicate that a large proportion of respondents would attend the game more frequently if there were changes in the way the game was administered.

The Board agreed that it was important to be responsive to member suggestions for changes that might boost attendance. These included playing fewer boards, changing starting times, and giving priority to limited masterpoint games. Herb also noted, and others agreed, that it was important to avoid competing with local f2f bridge clubs.

The Board plans to run the game weekly for at least three months and plans to review its decision when and if the game has lost an additional \$5000.

**Guaranteed Partner:** The Board decided to suspend its practice of guaranteeing a partner for players who come to the unit game without one. Although the WBL will no longer have a partnership desk at the unit game, the director will try to arrange partnerships for players who arrive without a partner. Players in need of a partner will still be able to notify Barb Doran in advance that they need help finding a partner and enlist her help in searching for someone.

**Unit Game Director:** Lloyd Rawley has volunteered to receive training for service as a club director. Ted Ying will train him at the unit game, and the Board anticipates that Lloyd will probably take over for Ted when he decides to stop directing the game.

**WBL Sectionals:** The June sectional will include a two session open pair event (qualifying and final) on Saturday, along with one session limited masterpoint pair events. Saturday will also feature a celebration honoring Dick Wegman for becoming a Grand Life Master. The Tournament Committee has found that attendance declines for the second matchpoint session of each day and is considering whether and how to provide BCD players with a financial incentive for playing both sessions a day at the sectional. Ted warned that coupons that ensure the same player plays both sessions create administrative complications that can cause delays and necessitate a longer break between sessions.

The WBL will no longer provide Friday or Saturday lunch at the sectionals; Kim will prepare a restaurant guide.

Carole reported that plans for the sectional were progressing well, but that the committee needed to finalize the marketing flyers and nail down some logistical details. These details included arrangements for the Wegman celebration, the Sunday sandwich lunch, and discounts (if any) for BCD players who play in two matchpoint sessions in a single day.

Hadi reported that he had signed a contract for three WBL sectional to be held at the Schweinhaut Center in 2024 (January, May, and October).

**Next meeting:** The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell