

WBL Board Minutes

June 13, 2023

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

Minutes: The Board approved the minutes of the May meeting.

Unit Game: Herb reported that the U.S. Treasury Department had approved our request to be allowed to invest our reserve funds in Treasury securities. He also said that we lost \$900 on the unit game in May and that attendance at the sectional was somewhat below expectations.

Herb announced that he was in the process of moving to North Carolina and wished to resign from the Board. The Board accepted his resignation and thanked Herb for his many years of conscientious and valuable service. The Board elected Bob Ives to serve as Treasurer. Bob will prepare the annual Treasurer's report for the WBL annual meeting in August; Herb offered to assist as necessary.

June Sectional: The Board discussed lessons learned from the June sectional. There were numerous complaints about the timing of the sessions, and many board members agreed that sessions at 10:30 and 3 might be better than 11 and 4; some suggested starting with a 10AM session or shortening the lunch break. The food truck that sold meals between sessions, though praised by several players, did not do sufficient business, and adjustments will need to be made (e.g., advance ordering) if we wish to continue to offer this service. There was also some discussion of encouraging players to bring a lunch to consume between sessions. Some board members recommended even earlier start times or a shorter food break. For the August sectional, the Board agreed to run sessions at 10:30 and 3:00 on all three days.

It was also noted that the sectional ran late. The Board agreed that Sunday Swiss team events should, when feasible, play six eight board matches rather than seven seven board matches, since this would save time and avoid matches between teams with very different scores. Alex S. urged the Board to move toward advance sales for entries and possibly to offer discounts for advance purchases, arguing that these changes would lead us to complete play earlier.

Growing the Game: Alex S. reported on the initial meeting of the Board committee formed in May to develop strategies for bringing new players into duplicate bridge. He said that the committee decided to focus on novices and non-life masters, noting that duplicate games targeted specifically at these groups were currently rare and, even when they exist, not well publicized. He emphasized the committee's view that beginning players wanted to feel safe and play against their peers and did not feel comfortable facing experienced competition. Alex S. also stressed that it was important that limited masterpoint games be convenient and readily available and to find effective ways to encourage players to try them out.

Alex S. asked if there was a way to get a list of local bridge teachers, suggesting that they might be able to provide information about recent students who might wish to try duplicate bridge. Bob B. observed that the ACBL might have information about teachers and that Margot Hennings might know more about ACBL resources that might be useful. The committee also hoped to contact national pros who did online teaching to try and get contact information for local students.

Alex S. observed that non-LM sectionals had not been held recently and might be helpful. He cautioned that these would need considerable lead times and lots of advertising to ensure sizable attendance. Brad noted that these had been held annually before the pandemic. The committee also thought that pro-Am games—matching life masters and non-LMs as partners—might be helpful.

Alex S. pointed out that Meet Up groups had been a significant source of new players in the recent past. He said that the most active such groups were in Virginia and that it would be desirable to create one in DC or Montgomery County.

The committee also concluded that it would be best to concentrate our efforts on people who already knew how to play bridge, not on people who were unfamiliar with the game.

The committee noted that its proposals would require volunteers able and willing to donate their time to growing the game and that finding such people would be a challenge.

Historian. Hadi reported that Peter Boyd, the current WBL historian, wanted to be relieved of his responsibilities. Alex S. said he might be interested in taking over this role.

Next meeting: The next Board meeting will be the annual membership meeting, to be held on August 5, between sessions at the WBL sectional tournament.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell