

## WBL Board Minutes

April 30, 2024

Board members attending: Hadi Abushakra, Ron Zucker, Bob Ives, Bob Bell, Carole Banks, Kim Gandy, Clyde Kruskal, Alex Gretsinger, Melanie Manfield. Board Member absent: Alex Stille. Lloyd Rawley (Club Manager) and Linda Marshall (Communications) also attended.

**Minutes:** Bob B. was unable to draft the minutes of last month's meeting, but plans to draft them within the next 10 days.

**Unit Game:** Lloyd reported that the face-to-face unit game had been attracting about 10 tables of players in the past few weeks. The April 25 online game drew 13 tables. Lloyd will be unable to direct at the July 11 unit game. He will seek a substitute director and will arrange for an online game if no one is available.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob I. reported that we have been consistently losing between two and three thousand dollars quarterly. He has begun looking into ways to invest the WBL's savings; certificates of deposit are not viable, but a money market account might work.

**Election:** We have only two incumbents (Carole and Melanie) running for the three two-year positions as Board members. Various Board Members said they would reach out to suitable WBL members and encourage them to join the Board. Linda Marshall will run the election.

**Round Robin:** Melanie said that about 10 ten teams had registered thus far for the open round robin, but only one or two for the 0-2500 round robin.

**Growing the Game:** Melanie, Kim, and Alex S. have been working on a new initiative to teach bridge to new players. It is modelled on a project that Bob and Ann Schwab, WBL players who live in San Francisco for part of the year, have initiated in the San Francisco area. Dick and Alice Wegman, players affiliated with the WBL Education Foundation, are also involved, along with club owner Mark Lavine. The Schwabs plan to run a seven-week beginner class at the church where Mark's Saturday club meets. Various details remain to be worked out; formal support from the Education Foundation is likely. Kim agreed to be the Board's "contact person" for this effort.

This initiative targets "true beginners," not people who already have some familiarity with bridge. Although it is expected to charge a modest fee to those who enroll, this is more in order to increase commitment among the attendees than to raise funds. The Board discussed ways that participants might be recruited. Suggestions included using neighborhood listserves and developing attractive flyers that could be posted widely and easily circulated. Ron stressed that widespread, relatively indiscriminate distribution of information was more effective than trying to narrowly target publicity to reach the kinds of people who we think are most likely to attend.

Hadi promised to send Board Members information on how to document their efforts to encourage ACBL membership renewals via the ACBL's 5-5-5 program.

**Sectionals:** The May Sectional will feature a customary array of bridge events. The WBL annual meeting and Board elections will take place on Saturday between sessions. It will be followed by a celebration in honor of players who have achieved Life Master status during the past year.

Because the Schweinhaut Center will not be available for more than one Sectional per year in the future, the WBL has been searching for an alternate site for its April 2025 Sectional. Carole recommended the Silver Spring Civic Center, which has two adjacent rooms that, between them, are expected to accommodate all our attendees, plus a third room that can be used if attendance is unexpectedly large. She said that Ted Ying and Bill Cole had visited the site and thought that it would meet the WBL's needs. Carole has made a \$100 deposit to reserve the rooms for the April and October 2025 sectionals.

Carole noted that the site is very convenient to a variety of restaurants in downtown Silver Spring and a short walk from the Silver Spring Metro stop. Abundant free parking is available on Sundays, but the lots charge for parking on Friday and Saturday. The Board may consider offering a parking discount to two session players.

Carole said that school sites, though less expensive than the Civic Center, had numerous important disadvantages: they required taking down tables at the end of each day, they didn't enable storage of tables, and they were unavailable on Fridays. The Elks Lodge in Rockville had high rates for rooms and food.

The Board approved the Civic Center as the site for the April and October Sectionals in 2024.

**Annual Player Competition Awards:** The Board discussed whether to resume making annual trophy awards to the WBL players at different experience levels who earned the most masterpoints in WBL events for players in their category (e.g., Woolridge trophy for novices; Tubbs trophy for non-Life Masters). Ron volunteered to contact the ACBL to ascertain how difficult it would be to acquire the data necessary to determine who won these awards; some Board members expressed skepticism about reinstituting these awards if the necessary data were not readily available.

**Online Partnership Desk:** Melanie said that she planned to model the online partnership desk on what had already been instituted in San Francisco. She said the initial focus would be on partnerships for games sponsored by the unit, but that she hoped it would eventually include local face-to-face club games.

**Recognition:** The Board paid tribute to Linda and Hadi for their leadership and judgment in guiding the WBL through the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.

**Next Meeting:** The Board's annual membership meeting will be on Saturday, May 18 between sessions of the WBL sectional.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell

Secretary