

ACBL Unit 143 Board Meeting Minutes, March 11, 2020

Location: Creve Coeur Government Center Meeting Room 2

Attendees: Dennis Abeln, Maureen Curran, Terry D'Amato, Diane Deutch, Estella Lau, Jan Potts, John Welte, Kelly White.

Absent: Mark Boswell, Doug Larson, Jay Shah

The meeting was called to order by Vice President John Welte at 7:00 PM. (President Mark Boswell was sick.)

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the February board meeting were submitted by Dennis via e-mail. Revision 1 of minutes was approved as submitted.

President's Report:

The board approved the purchase of 100 Bridge Mates, 4 carrying cases, 3 servers, approximately \$15,000.

Mark had received a proposal from the St Louis Bridge Center for using their facilities for future sectionals. He had distributed the proposal to the board members by email. John Welte is scheduled to inspect Maryland Heights Community Center's viability for future tournaments. No further action at this time.

There was extensive discussion about the corona virus and possible impact on bridge tournaments. It appears this month's ACBL National in Columbus Ohio will be cancelled under orders from the State of Ohio. (The tournament was subsequently cancelled.) Unit 143's March 299r tournament, the May Sectional and August Regional are all still a go, but may need to be cancelled for reasons beyond our control. (The 299r tournament was subsequently cancelled by the closing of the St Louis Bridge Center.) If the tournaments are held, poor turnout is possible.

Mike Carmen joined the meeting by teleconferencing. Most of the costs for the Unit's tournaments are fixed, so significant losses are possible. Mike Carmen has initiated discussions with the Renaissance Hotel regarding reducing the number of guaranteed hotel rooms if the Regional were to be cancelled for reasons beyond our control.

To minimize losses should the Regional be cancelled, the board voted to cancel the advertisement for the August Regional in the Bridge Bulletin. The ad had been placed but can still be cancelled. Estella will contact ACBL's Cindy Hill on Thursday March 12 to cancel. Savings of about \$1650 are expected.

Treasurer's Report: Kelly distributed a treasurer's report showing February activity. The unit has approximately \$62,000. The report was approved as submitted.

Tournaments:

Mike Carmen was absent but had e-mailed a note late this afternoon responding to suggested cost savings where he took positions against the changes. Mike was contacted by speakerphone and explained his positions.

The fees for the May Sectional and the August Regional have been published and will not be changed. Increasing the fees for the October Sectional will be discussed at a future meeting.

The high cost of the Sunday lunch at the Sectionals was discussed. Players effectively pay \$8 extra for lunch during the two-session Swiss tournament. The January tournament catering charge was \$2,568 and fed about 180 people for a per-person cost of over \$14. Game fees have been announced so we can't charge more. Alternative food service was discussed but no decisions were made.

The board voted to reduce the May Sectional costs by cutting the hospitality budget by half and by discontinuing beer and wine.

Linda Siebert will not be handling Registration at the August Regional.

Committee Reports

Awards: No report (Doug absent.)

Bidding Boxes & Time Clocks: no report.

Caddies: Maureen suggested setting out a tip jar for caddies like some other tournaments do. After discussion, the board voted not to do this.

Datebook: No activity

District 8 Report: No report. No representative present.

Membership: Jay was absent but had emailed a membership report showing a very small decrease. There was discussion about printing a new Membership Directory, as the last one was done in 2016. No action taken.

Publicity: Estella recommended purchasing credits 50,000 email blasts from Pianola for about \$350. The amount is sufficient for about two years and takes advantage of introductory sale pricing. Motion made and approved.

299er Tournaments: John Welte triggered an email blast using Pianola. John and Diane Deutch will share hospitality arrangements. John circulated a sign-up sheet for helpers.

Unit Electronic Contact: Kelly questioned why the unit doesn't send postcards to players living in Unit 143's territory, saying it would add about 400 postcards, estimated to cost about 50 cents each, or \$200. (This was subsequently determined to be about 800 postcards, about \$400.) Kelly also questioned the effectiveness of sending postcards to players outside Unit 143's territory, which has become more difficult because ACBL no longer shares rosters of other units -- Kelly has to get them from the other units himself. There was also discussion about the effectiveness of emails vs. postcards for newer players, some contending that postcards are more effective. Kelly subsequently committed to looking into how many players come from outside Unit 143. Changing the postcard policy will be considered for the September 299r tournament.

Unit Games: Dennis reported the two Friday evening Unit games were rescheduled as morning games because Bridge Haven dropped their Friday evening games and was the only club running a game in that timeslot. Terry has placed announcements on the website and Milt has updated the on-line calendar. No discussion on November Unit Charity game beneficiary or method of collecting associated charity monies.

Website: Terry reported that Milt is working to fix the problem with full unit membership roster not being available. In the interim, instructions concerning this functionality have been removed.

Hospitality: Diane coordinated hospitality arrangements for the 299r tournament with John Welte. .

Education / Camp Scholarships: No discussion.

Outreach: No report. Doug was absent. No action yet on naming a chair.

Finance: Kelly reported that monthly electronic bank statements are being emailed to Doug Larson so he can spot check them against the monthly treasurer's report. No action yet on appointing Zac Bettis to this committee.

Nominations: Dennis is still seeking a replacement for John Levis.

Rules Review: No report.

Photographer: John Welte will take photos at the March 28-29 299r Tournament.

Old Business:

Replacement signage for the Regional: Jay had submitted proposed artwork by email. The board voted to change 'Registration' to 'Welcome.'

Regional Registration Gifts: Kelly has ordered 500 custom convention card holders at \$1.35 each and will be receiving a sample. The board discussed collecting e-mail addresses in exchange for the registration gifts. The board discussed using registration information to award attendance prizes but backed off after considering the mechanics.

New Business: (none)

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be April 8, 2020 at the regular time and location.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Minutes submitted by Dennis Abeln, Secretary. March 13, 2020.