

Minutes of Unit 249's Board of Director's Meeting

Via Zoom

Saturday, August 20, 2022

10:30 PM

Present: Jennifer Verdam-Woodward, Hazel Hewitt, Tom Ramsay, Jed Drew, Ted Boyd, Louise Caicco, Lee Gallacher, Gary Robertson

Regrets: Brian Clark, Tom Jolliffe

Absent: Raj Seth

Meeting: A quorum being present, the meeting chaired by Tom Ramsay was called to order at 10:30 PM

Approval of the Previous Minutes:

Moved by Jed Drew and seconded by Gary Robertson that the minutes of the last Board Meeting held June 4, 2022 be approved as circulated – **CARRIED**

Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Jed Drew and seconded by Louise Caicco that the agenda be approved – **CARRIED**

Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report

Attached are two pdf documents:

- BS 2022-08-20 Balance Sheet (Appendix A)
- PL 2022-08-20 with tourn detail (Appendix B)

The balance sheet is in the format you are used to seeing, whereas the PL Report breaks out the Tillsonburg Sectional income and expenses from the Total Income and Expenses. The column headed "Total" includes all transactions for the unit.

As you can see, we lost \$1,765.36 (not including any honorarium) on the Tillsonburg Sectional. Despite this loss, we have still made a small net income of \$1,792.55 for the Unit as a whole, mainly as a result of our share of ACBL annual dues from members.

I will address the specifics of the Tillsonburg Sectional in a separate memo, from my perspective as Tournament Chair of the event.

I am pleased to say that Unit 249 remains in a strong financial position with a bank balance of \$34,940.

Moved by Jed Drew that the financial reports for YTD 2022 be accepted, seconded by Ted Boyd–
CARRIED

Secretary's Report

No correspondence that falls into the purview of the Board

Tournament Chair's Report

As at August 15, 2022

Sectionals have been sanctioned for Tillsonburg, St. Thomas and London. Table counts for tournaments have been 50% of previous counts and we can expect to lose money on each of them.

No further word on tournaments for 2023 except that the Sectionals in Cambridge (May) and Stratford will not be offered and the Guelph Sectional (March) may move to April. Since the schedule has been shuffled, there is an opportunity for tournaments that have been on traditional dates to move. Time will tell.

The Unit previously advised that our objective for the Regional (July 4 – 9, 2023) was to encourage F2F play, fun and not necessarily to make money.

The following is a very rough bare bones budget, given the unknowns.

Our table count in 2018 was 1036 (fees were \$17 per person per game), given reduced fees for novices, the average fee per table was around \$65.00. If our table count is 2/3 of what it was in 2018, the total revenue for 690 tables will be:

At \$12.50 per person per game, approx. \$34,000

At \$15 per person per game, approx. 41,000

At \$17 per person per game, approx. \$46,000

Our expenses, simplified are:

Bingemans: 6 days at \$2,000 per day plus GST, \$13,500

Directors: 4 Directors, at \$290, 250, 250, 160 Cdn per day (\$4,320), per diems of \$98 per day (\$2,350), hotel of \$129 per day (\$3,100) and travel (\$1,500), \$11,300

Sanction fees, ACBL, District, Unit, \$6,400

Caddies \$2,000 including dealing cards

Rentals (tables, Bridgemates, dealing machine), \$2,000

Odds and sods (hospitality, printing, photography, registration desk), \$4,000

Total expenses at 690 tables \$39,200

At \$12.50 per person per session, we lose \$5,200

At \$15 per person per session, we make \$1,800

At \$17 per person per session, we make \$6,800

Bingemans may be lower, and I've assumed 3 Directors plus TA.

Report on 2022 Tillsonburg Sectional

To put it mildly, the major issues we faced in hosting this tournament were related to COVID.

We encountered a major drop in attendance. Hosting activities and hospitality services were impacted by our COVID prevention protocols.

As can be seen in the following tables our attendance over the two days was only 43.3% of our last pre-COVID event.

SESSION

	Sat 11:00	Sat 3:00	Sunday	Totals
# of tables	21	19	30	70
2019 tables	43	40.5	78	161.5
Tables compared to 2019	48.8%	46.9%	38.5%	43.3%

As a result of COVID we had additional administrative expenses, (masks, wristbands, sanitizers, and additional posters). As well, we required more volunteers to perform screening checks.

On the hospitality side our expenses were impacted negatively by the need to ensure all items were individually wrapped. Thus, our purchase of snack items was at considerably higher cost than if we had purchased in bulk. As well, we had no idea how many players would show up and we obviously grossly overestimated the number of players (and hence snacks). However, to offset some of the expense we have reached agreement with the St. Thomas Sectional tournament chair to transfer all non-perishable unopened packages to him for use at the St. Thomas Sectional in September. The cost of the transferred items (\$136.21) has already been re-assigned to the St. Thomas tournament,

For lunches, we were able to get the best price possible from our caterer, but still sold lunches for slightly less than cost (\$10.00 versus \$10.45 cost). We believe that \$10 is probably a break point for offering the type of lunch that we did and that anything more would have been met with great resistance. Approximately 50% of players bought lunch.

The overestimation of the table count led to three other expenses which could have been reduced.

- We rented more tables than we actually needed.
- At the request of the D-I-C we prepared two board sets for each planned pairs section at a cost of \$180. If we had an accurate crystal ball we could have cut this amount in half.
- Finally, I had committed to have two caddies on hand for Sunday. In retrospect, I should have reduced to one, but was unwilling to do so on short notice as the two individuals had changed personal plans to be available for us.

One exceptional item was the need to make an emergency purchase of a printer when the D-I-C's printer failed Saturday morning. I have since transferred the \$110.00 expense to the Unit Supplies Account.

I wish to thank Jennifer Verdam-Woodward for reviewing the Tournament Funds Reconciliation Report,

including all receipts and invoices. This is the key source document from which the Tournament Financial Report is prepared.

I wish to thank the many volunteers from the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club for their support. This event is a team effort and I am pleased to have so much help.

Copies of the Tournament Funds Reconciliation Report and the Tournament Financial Report are attached.

In submitting this report, I hereby request repayment for the \$1,042.09 that I am out-of-pocket for this event.

Jed Drew moves acceptance of the Tillsonburg Sectional Report, seconded by Ted Boyd – **CARRIED**

Jennifer moves that Jed Drew write a cheque to himself for the honorarium and the out-of-pocket expense, seconded by Lee Gallagher - **CARRIED**

We have four tournaments scheduled for next year

London Sectional moving from January to October: This is a permanent change. There was some discussion about how to properly market sectional tournaments, and whether some of the decline was due to a lack of knowledge about the tournaments, which starts in part because many people aren't back face to face yet.

Guelph tournament is moving from March to April

Budget for 2023 Regional

We were looking at \$17.50 session fees pre-covid. We are happy to reduce the fees to encourage people to come out. If we charge \$12.50, we would lose around \$5-10k. If we charge \$15, we would break even. If we charge \$17.50, we would make money, assuming 60%. Site fees are \$2,000 a day. There are only two sites in the area where Grand River could run an event that large. Bingemann's is booked for 2023.

Moved by Jed Drew, seconded by Lee Gallacher that Ted Boyd be authorized to book Bingemann's for the 2023 and 2025 regionals – **CARRIED**

Moved by Ted Boyd that session fees be \$15.00 per session for open and gold rush at the 2023 regional, seconded by Gary Robertson – **CARRIED**

NAP District finals moving to Tillsonburg to Kitchener: The NAP district finals will move to Kitchener. There has been some discussion about having a BBO game rather than face to face. Any BBO games will happen on-site with a director proctoring (this is an ACBL suggestion). Both events will happen simultaneously.

Mask policy for tournaments: The mask policy currently is that masks are optional and if you are asked to wear one, you wear one. Tillsonburg had no complaints. Toronto had a few anecdotally. Some people have chosen not to come because everyone doesn't wear a mask. Policy will continue as is.

Education

Review of recently announced ACBL teacher initiative

ACBL takes new approach to boosting membership

From ACBL NABC Daily Bulletin July 20th, 2022

Context

Membership has been a growing concern for the ACBL Board in recent years as the trend line went from flat to a gentle decline to a steeper drop. Last week the Board took action to reverse that, adopting a proposal from the Educational Foundation to create a pilot program aimed at changing the approach to bringing in new members. Robert Todd, the foundation's new president, presented the proposal to the Board. "We need a partnership between bridge teachers who need students, clubs that need players for their limited games, the ACBL that needs new members and the ACBL Educational Foundation that needs to look out for the long-term good of bridge," said Todd.

Summary

- The program will create that partnership between the organizations and teachers accepted into it
- Digital marketing will be used to find prospective students for teachers.
- Teachers must offer in-person lessons and be affiliated with a club offering face-to-face games.

Initially the pilot program will accept 50 to 75 teachers this year, spending up to \$100,000. Plans are to expand it significantly next year.

Process

5. The ACBL will begin advertising classes for teachers in the pilot program, collecting data on prospective students and providing contact information to teachers.
2. Teachers can use this to better recruit students for their classes and then push their graduates into supervised play at a club. Figuring out how to effectively market their classes can be difficult for teachers. Digital marketing is a specialized field, and it has been a costly mistake to rely on teachers to master it for themselves, Todd said. "Teachers don't want to market," Todd said. "Teachers want to teach. Our goal is to let teachers do what they do best: get people to fall in love with the game."
3. The ED Foundation will be assessing the data on what works to get more efficient with marketing, ultimately calculating a cost for member acquisition and developing a lever to convert funding into new members.
4. Teachers interested in participating in the new program should watch out for messages from ACBL marketing.

5. To better organize information on interested parties, the plan is to set up a form teachers can submit. And don't be discouraged if you aren't accepted right away. Though the program is starting small, it could increase fivefold next year.

Additional context

Todd's presentation analyzed the change over time in ACBL membership. For about 15 years into the 21st century, membership was stable, with about 11,000 new members each year replacing 11,000 exiting members. Then, for a few years before the pandemic, it tilted slightly: We were losing about 12,000 members a year and bringing in 10,000, for a net loss of 2000 members per year – not much more than 1%. In 2021 we lost 15,000 members and brought in only 4500, for a loss of 10,500. That was a drop of about 7% – fast enough to shrink the organization by half in 10 years.

While the number of exiting members has been increasing, it's the plummeting numbers of new members that are primarily driving the decline. "It's the closing of the clubs," Todd said.

As the Board weighs how to integrate online bridge with face-to-face, it's not lost on them that this drop in membership has occurred on online bridge's watch. Though online teaching has been promoted as a superior way to transmit bridge knowledge to new players, the ACBL isn't seeing the gains from it that were hoped. "The problem with online teaching, it's not getting us new members," said Joann Glasson, the ACBL president. "We want to support face-to-face teaching efforts." Whatever people think about the merits of online bridge, Todd said, "It's real that virtual clubs don't bring in new members and physical clubs do."

Todd noted that the ACBL's approach to membership has been passive and reactive. Teachers can get reimbursed for advertising and earn bonuses for recruiting, but it's all up to them. "We would like to change that to a proactive standpoint," Todd said.

Existing members can still be a great resource for getting their friends and family interested in bridge. "Teacher and bridge players will organically bring in members. That will always be a part of it," Todd said. "But we need a proactive way to create members."

Hazel has not found any interest from Unit teachers for participating in the program

Education Report

August 20, 2022

Submitted by Hazel Hewitt

1. The new ACBL initiative was widely advertised among known teachers, and no one displayed any interest to me in being part of it.
2. Online lessons continue to be offered by many teachers and mentors in the Unit.
3. The larger clubs (London Bridge Centre and Grand River Bridge Club) are now offering some in person courses. The newsletters and websites from both are featuring Face to Face lessons at all levels. Anyone in the Unit is welcome to apply.

4. In London, a one-day free seminar will be held on September 18 at 1:00 pm called A Taste of Bridge. It will be held at the Club at #9-1106 Dearness Drive in London. All are welcome. The following courses are also coming up. Check the LBC website for details.
 - a. A Taste of Bridge
 - b. Bridge Basics 1
 - c. Advancing Your Game
 - d. Bridge Basics 2
 - e. 2/1 Game Force
 - f. Tuesday afternoon Bridge Lab

For details and registration see the LBC webpage.

5. At Grand River, Learn Bridge In A Day is scheduled for October First at 10:00 am. Learn Bridge in a Day is a one-day session which is normally offered two or three times a year. The next workshop will be offered in person from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm on Saturday, October 1, 2022, in the teaching room of our club at 2481 Kingsway Drive in Kitchener.
 - a. Learn Bridge In A Day
 - b. Beginners Part 1
 - c. Beginners Part 2
 - d. Counting at Bridge
 - e. Basic Bidding
 - f. Intermediate Bridge Lab
 - g. Opening Leads
 - h. Playing Face to Face
 - i. Play of the Hand (Suits)
 - j. Intermediate Bidding, Part 2

Check the GRBC website for information about details and registering.

Jennifer had some conversations with Guelph because they were not aware that they could use the Learn Bridge in a Day. They should reach out to Hazel if they are interested.

Lee commented that Owen Sound ran six-week lessons earlier in the summer and attracted 18 new members. They will run lessons again in September.

Gary asked how these courses are marketed and Hazel said that each club handles the advertising themselves.

Membership Report

The membership stands at 1,266, which is down 6 from the previous month.

17 members from our unit were transferred to a new Unit #166, and another 17 members became inactive.

Raj Seth has indicated that he does not want to serve as membership chair any longer. Jed will speak to Brian when he returns from Europe.

Supplies

No report

Webmaster

No report

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Discussion on the draft policy on record-retention (attached as Appendix C) postponed to the next meeting

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 14, 2023 at 9:30 am on Zoom

The AGM will be held September 11th at 10:00 am

Adjournment: Moved by Ted Boyd that the meeting be adjourned - **CARRIED.**

**CLUB MANAGERS and DIRECTORS,
PLEASE, POST and ANNOUNCE THIS
ASAP TO THE PLAYERS IN YOUR AREA.**