

MINUTES
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE UNITED STATES BRIDGE FEDERATION
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2016
10:00 AM PDT
RENO

Directors Present: Greg Humphreys, Bob Katz, Beth Palmer, Josh Parker (by phone) Sue Picus

Others Present: Jeff Aker, Kate Aker, Marty Harris, Jan Martel, McKenzie Myers, Joe Stokes, Stan Subeck, Howard Weinstein, Marcin Waslowicz, Gianarrigo Rona, WBF President, José Damiani, Jason Feldman (part of meeting by phone)

ACBL Representatives: Bonnie Bagley, Sharon Fairchild, Robert Hartman, Bob Heller, Kevin Lane, Al Levy, Dan Morse, Merlin Vilhauer

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Howard Weinstein at 10:11 am PDT.

II. ATTENDANCE: ESTABLISH QUORUM

The president noted that at least a majority of the directors were present at the meeting, thus establishing a quorum for the purpose of transacting business by the Board.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 1/27/16

The Minutes of 1/27/16 were unanimously approved.

IV. WROCLAW HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Jan reported that we have reserved 18 “superior” rooms at 675 Polish zlotys (currently about \$175) per night and 5 Junior suites at 909 zlotys (\$236) per night, all at the Sofitel. We have paid a 1 night deposit, but can cancel 5 days in advance and receive a refund.

V. FUTURE USBCS

Jan reported that the 2017 USBC, Senior USBC & Women’s USBC will all be at the Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg, IL. We will have individual playing rooms for all stages of all events; 4 playing rooms each day are comped, we will pay \$75 per day for the rest; total cost will depend on the number of teams entered. Room rate is \$129 and includes internet.

The 2018 USBC (we do not have Women’s or Seniors in 2018) will be at the Marriott in Houston. Paul Cuneo, the Houston Unit’s hotel negotiator did an

amazing job with the hotel contract. We will have individual playing rooms throughout and are paying a flat fee of \$1000 for up to 20 bedrooms with beds removed. Room rate is \$129 including internet. We have no commitment to purchase food or beverages from the hotel.

We do not have a site for 2019. We explored Minneapolis, but the hotel wanted a room rate of \$175 a night, with no benefits to us; it was just too much to try to reach a reasonable rate. Steve Gaynor in Minneapolis is going to look at other hotels to see if he can do better and Jan is talking with the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, where we've held two Junior USBCs and been very happy – it's easy to get to and the hotel is very nice. The hotel sales person thought something we'd be happy with could be worked out, but we don't know yet. Playing space would be ballrooms for the first 4 days of the Open, 2 days of the Women's and 3 days of the Seniors, and 4 small conference rooms that have bathrooms and can accommodate 2 screen tables each for the rest of the time. Alternatives would be to return to Denver if that works well this year, or to look for someplace else.

Bob Heller discussed having our Junior USBCs in connection with the Myrtle Beach Regional instead of in Atlanta. He will work with Joe & Jan about the logistics of getting players there to see if that can be done.

VI. 2018 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Howard reported that the 2018 World Championships will be in Orlando. USBF is obligated to contribute \$200,000 to that event. Chris Compton will be working on raising money. He would appreciate support in that effort and will be emailing people to ask them to help. Stan will find out when we need to send money to WBF. Al Levy reported that he will be working on the 2018 World Championship. He is the person to talk with about any hotel issues or other things. He has the schedule for the event, which he will email to Jan to send to board members.

VII. TECHNOLOGY FOR USBCS

Symmetric playing cards. M. Damiani explained the reasons for using symmetric cards and discussed the history behind them. WBF has been using them since 2001. ACBL does not use symmetric cards. Should USBF encourage ACBL to adopt them for major events? If ACBL doesn't do so, should USBF purchase enough for our events? There was a brief discussion and the Board decided to look into it.

Tablets for bidding – Jan would like to consider using tablets for bidding (not play). We would have 4 tablets per table, one for each player. The tablets would be programmed so each player in turn entered his or her bid, including an alert if required. Then the N or S player would click on "send" to transmit the bids to the tablets on the other side of the screen, where those players would also enter their bids. Players would alert their own bids, and the alert would be visible only to the opponents. This methodology would eliminate bidding boxes and the tray, which we have seen can be used to deliberately communicate information, and also often result in accidental communication of information (the sound of the

bidding card being removed from the bid box shows who bid when, for instance). Having the alerts shown on the tablets (by having the bid turn bright red or something of the sort) would eliminate the issues we now have where people don't always see alerts. We could probably have explanations of alerts entered into the tablets also, which would remove debates about what exactly was said. Tablets are relatively inexpensive, and will be easier to transport than bid boxes and trays. Programming and testing time should allow us to use this approach in 2017. Greg will look into this.

Greg reported that he is pursuing use of cameras for recording bidding and play, and thinks it could work, but that is in the future.

We will have video cameras at all 3 USBCs in 2016. We will video all Vugraph tables and may video some additional tables.

VIII. ENDORSEMENT LETTERS

Jason Feldman joined the meeting by conference call, and explained his reasons for wanting USBF support when he is getting visas for foreign players to be able to enter the US to play bridge professionally. Jason explained why he thinks that this is good for US bridge. He explained that there are two situations: obtaining a non-immigrant visa that allows a person to work here (P1 – athlete or entertainer or O1 – special abilities), and people who are attempting to obtain a green card so that they can become citizens. If USBF has supported someone's application, it could withdraw that support in cases of possible cheating and that would prevent the person from entering the US. Board members raised the issue of whether it isn't more appropriate for ACBL to do this, since the people who are getting non-immigrant visas are not playing in USBF events and it was the sense of the Board that USBF should not be involved in writing letters in support of people seeking non-immigrant visas.

Jason said that for people who are applying for permanent residency, it is useful to have letters from both ACBL & USBF. The Board agreed that it makes sense for USBF to be involved for people who are seeking permanent residency. Howard proposed that when Jason needs a letter for someone seeking permanent residency, he should contact the President or Secretary, who would contact the Board and write the requested letter if the Board approved.

IX. WAIVER UPON ENTRY IN USBF EVENTS

Howard raised the issue of whether we should have a specific waiver signed by all players when they enter a USBF event. The Board discussed briefly what the document should say and how to have it signed. Marty Harris suggested that the Board should clarify what it wants to accomplish by this agreement, so that he can prepare a document. Should the document require arbitration? If yes, what is supposed to be subject to arbitration and what are the arbitration procedures? Marty will look into what to do for the future and also whether we should have something stopgap for this year. Marty stressed that whatever we write, there's

going to be some court review possible, at least for players who make their living playing bridge.

X. BYLAW REVISIONS

Howard raised the concern that we not do anything in the Bylaws that would jeopardize our 501(c)3 status. Josh will make sure to keep that in mind while working on the Bylaws.

XI. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Howard reported that we've gone over financial statements briefly, but will defer more discussion to our next meeting. The auditors raised the issue that we should have more review of financial matters. In theory, the auditors would like to have one person write the checks and someone else sign them. This wouldn't work for us. Stan reported that the auditors are willing to accept having someone review the expenditures on a regular basis. So Jan will review the list of disbursements every three months or so when Stan asks her to, in order to make sure that things look right. In addition, Stan will arrange to have Chase send an email to Jan and Howard whenever there is a withdrawal of over some specified amount and anyone who has a credit card will receive a copy of the credit card statement for the card and confirm to Stan that the charges are correct.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Non-Playing Captains: Jeff Aker reported on his team's experience in the World Championships with having an NPC who was not an expert bridge player. He said that there were some things for which an expert player would have been better, for example the WBF screen provisions are different from the ACBL & USBF provisions and someone needed to review those to explain the differences to the players, but in his opinion it was most important to have an NPC who was on top of things and organized. So when USBF appoints an NPC who isn't an expert bridge player, the team also needs a coach who can deal with bridge matters.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be by conference call at a time to be scheduled online.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Howard thanked the ACBL Board members who attended for their interest and participation. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm PDT.