

Minutes from District 14 Full Board Meeting August 13, 2023

In attendance: Regional Director Dennis Carmen, District 14 Director Deana Liddy, District 14 President Anne Beaurivage, District 14 Vice President G.S. Jade Barrett, District 14 Secretary/Treasurer Keith Thompson, Tournament Chair Terry Beckman, NAP Coordinator Vickki Shelley, Unit presidents Rosella Vanek, Brian Hardy, Carol Panzer, Sue Greenberg, Steve Gaynor, Myrna Sullivan, and Scott McIntyre. Also attending were Unit 178 Board members Sue Sanger, Jane Schmidt, and David Trevor, and Justin Graver from Unit 241.

After some initial difficulties getting people logged into Zoom, Secretary Keith Thompson asked for the ACBL report from District Director Deana Liddy.

League finances are sound overall, but fee increases will be coming in a number of areas at the end of the year. Unit rebates for membership retention and educational use will be changing. Units should expect to be able to justify funding received. Deana suggested each Unit start a membership committee if one is not already in place.

Jade asked about sanction fee increases for sectionals. Dennis thought it would be regionals more specifically affected.

Questions were raised about getting increased member participation for future D14 meeting. It was determined that bylaw changes might be required to allow that. Deana also pointed out bylaw changes necessary due to District Directors being replaced by Regional Directors.

ACBL report was accepted.

Keith Thompson delivered a report on the April 2nd meeting of the District 14 Executive Committee.

Main points for discussion were District STAC dates, and use of the District Pianola account. Tournament Coordinator Larry Brobst had trouble logging in, and joined halfway through the meeting. Dates were put in place along with provisions for the first two STAC weeks being Royal STAC's where players can earn gold, silver, red, and black points. Pianola use was discussed, and it was agreed to place it on the agenda for the full District meeting in August.

Executive Committee report was accepted.

Keith Thompson delivered the financial report.

At the start of the year the liquid assets were \$34,800. As of August 1st, the balance was \$34,500. With outlays for the GNT teams during that time frame, District finances are proving to be stable. In addition, there are two Certificates of Deposit, not immediately accessible but District financial assets, of \$5200 and \$5300 respectively.

Discussion ensued about increased GNT expenses because our top flight team was able to process much further this year than in years past. Jade and Terry brought up insights into past GNT practices, with recommendations to change some policy language to reflect District support for all teams through to the final stages.

Jade mentioned Matt Belau's contributions to the Grass Roots Fund through District-wide online games he promoted. Contributions were in excess of \$2000. Keith remarked that there should be more recognition given to people who volunteer their time and efforts towards the benefit of our bridge community. Jade suggested that maybe a Goodwill Committee award should be explored to recognize these people.

Financial report was accepted.

Webmaster report: As Richard Freedman had stepped down earlier in the year, the executive committee launched a search for a new webmaster. After checking numerous leads, and finding no interest for the position, Larry Huiras was contacted and accepted the position. He was relocating the Bridge Center of St. Paul to a new location at the time of this meeting, and will be introduced at the next meeting.

He has plans to make the site more useful, attractive, and informative, and has started on those changes already.

Webmaster report was accepted.

Jade Barrett gave the GNT report.

Jade hopes for more promotion of team games online. He expects more participation as people come back into club games. He encourages monthly Grass Roots Fund games to keep District finances in balance. There will be an increase in the cost per session for future GNT playoffs.

There was a discussion how we could promote greater participation in the GNT's. Questions were raised about the qualifying period, which has been shortened by the ACBL. Jade said he expected he could get an extension for our District.

The GNT report was accepted.

Vickki Shelley gave the NAP report.

She had been pushing players to get qualified. The date of the online finals was set to send players to Louisville in 2024. Many compliments were given for her flyer on the NAP finals. The payouts for the 2023 NAP's was discussed. Even though not all finalists went to the Nationals, participation was good. Keith noted that everyone who did qualify got a letter of recognition from the District, thanking them, and looking forward to seeing them on the national stage in the future.

NAP report accepted.

Terry Beckman reported on District tournaments.

He started with a discussion on non life master regionals. He wondered if there should be a minimum table count requirement for smaller localities. There was discussion of pairing I/N tournaments with sectional tournaments and how that might affect attendance. Rosella gave a report on getting 'kitchen table' players into duplicate bridge. There was general sentiment for helping small tournaments. Even though attendance may be low now, this is a growth opportunity that the district should back. It was clarified that there would be no Sioux City regional even though it still showed on the master tournament calendar.

Tournament report was accepted.

At this point Sue Greenberg requested that election of District officers take place. This action was accepted. Anne Beurivage conducted the election. Two units did not have representatives at the meeting to vote, Units 216 and 235.

Steve Gaynor was elected new District 14 President.

Jade Barrett was nominated for District Vice President. He accepted the nomination and was voted in.

Keith Thompson was asked to stand for a full 2 year term as Secretary/treasurer. He accepted the nomination and was voted in.

Anne asked for a 2 year appointment for Larry Huiras as District Webmaster. This was accepted and Larry was voted in.

The position of Tournament Coordinator was mentioned. Jade asked that this subject be postponed to another meeting. This was agreed.

Steve Gaynor now assumed the position of District President, and took over the meeting from Anne Beurivage. Jade offered thanks to Anne for the great service she had given to the District. This was acclaimed by all present.

New business:

Is there a need for an assistant tournament coordinator? This was postponed until the Tournament Coordinator position gets resolved.

STAC promotion: promote through club managers rather than on the player level. Sue Greenberg pointed out the need to minimize the bookkeeping work involved if you wish to enlist the smaller clubs in this sort of game. Jade suggested that 2 directors are needed for running STAC games, as all the clubs involved deserve better customer service if they run into problems. Jade wondered if the ACBL headquarters could be of help on this matter.

(Sue Greenberg left the meeting at this point.)

It was agreed that more information on the STAC games should go out, and much earlier than is currently happening. The DIC should contact all district clubs at least 2 months before the scheduled games, with Pianola blasts to the District players as STAC week approaches.

Next item was the Pianola account. Anne requested a distinct District policy on Pianola usage. There needs to be a list of authorized users. If Units wish, they could get their own Pianola account. The District could then 'match' pianola blasts to help units promote specific items.

Jade asked that we use Pianola as an investment in visibility. Keith concurred. Steve Gaynor thought that pianola use could expand the bridge universe to people who may not otherwise be exposed to it. Future blasts should contain links to the District and Region websites. Would a policy update be required? Do we need to restrict access to the District account? It was suggested that discussion be closed to move along. A motion was made and accepted that Jane Schmidt become District Pianola Coordinator.

Next item was about a cashless policy for future regionals. Jade made the point that processing charges will be going up. Will the ACBL cover the extra cost or will individual tournaments cover additional fees? It was decided to let each tournament determine whether they will be cashless or not.

Charity nominations were next on the agenda. Nominations need to be in by October 1st to be considered.

Discussion of administration of the GNT's was postponed.

It was noted that policy changes will be necessary to account for the change from District to Regional administration.

Terms of the Executive Committee were discussed. Carol Panzer and Rosella Vanek were renominated to the Executive Committee.

Game fees for young people was discussed. It was decided to charge \$5 for anyone under 19.

The ACBL Advisory Committee terms were discussed. If the Regional representative is unable to attend, how can the District maintain a voice? What needs to be codified to assure that?

When is the next meeting scheduled? Some time in March to be decided later. With that, at 2:26 the meeting was adjourned.