

WBL Board Minutes

January 13, 2020

Attendance: All Board Members attended: Linda Marshall, Hadi Abushakra, Herb Schulken, Bob Bell, Carole Banks, Chuck Dearolf, Alex Gretsinger, Clyde Kruskal, Lloyd Rawley, and Mary Tenenbaum. Isabelle Thabault (Novice program) and Brad Theurer (Tournament chair) also attended.

Minutes: The Board approved the minutes of the November meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Herb reported that 2020, though not ideal in other respects, was the WBL's best financial year in memory, with a net gain of over \$13,000 (He has moved \$10,000 to a money market fund). He noted that attendance at the unit game was up, fixed costs (e.g., rent) were not an issue, and other direct costs were small. He said that quarterly revenue from membership fees, which had averaged a little above \$1600 in the previous four quarters, was under \$1500 in January; this is consistent with the trend in overall ACBL membership revenue. Herb said that January will not produce much revenue, since the WBL will receive funds from only one Thursday night game.

The Monday night game has remained steady, with a total of 9 to 11 tables in the two games combined. Board members speculated that the attendance at this game suffered from our inability to offer numerous separate games for players with different levels of experience—Thursday features five separate games.

Herb expects to prepare an annual financial report for the Board, which would then be posted on the web.

Isabelle asked about novice game attendance. Herb responded that December showed a decline, with three or four tables of novices, rather than the six or seven tables we had before Thanksgiving. Linda asked whether we had a mailing list for novices. Isabelle said that she had about 50 names, but didn't know if there were additional beginners or beginner classes. Linda noted that the most recent monthly ACBL membership report had 13 new members, more than the usual five to seven.

Machlin Award: Bob reported that the Machlin Award committee had unanimously recommended that no award be made this year, and the Board accepted this recommendation. Members noted that many of the sportsmanship and mentoring activities associated with the award were closely associated with in person play and that, in addition, that it would be impossible to highlight these activities in an award presentation at a sectional. Because the Machlin honors ongoing characteristics and not one year achievements, the Board agreed that it might consider making more than one award next year.

Future Plans: Linda called the Schweinhaut Center and asked them to pencil in our September Sectional on their schedule. This does not create a firm obligation. Clyde promised to check whether Jewish holidays would close Ohr Kodesh on any Thursdays in the fall and create a need for alternate space. The Board decided to hold the next annual membership meeting in the fall, since the last one had been in September and no one expected an in person meeting in May would be viable. Noting that all District 6 regionals for 2021 had been cancelled, Hadi opined that in person bridge was unlikely in the near future.

The Board had a broad ranging discussion of factors that would affect when and how in person bridge would be resumed. The Board formed a committee (Linda [chair], Carole, Bob, Chuck, and Mary) to recommend how the WBL should address reopening issues.

Topics discussed included (1) the role of recommendations and regulations from other bodies (e.g., CDC; federal, state, and county government; national, district, and local bridge organizations), (2) new precautions to reduce virus transmission (e.g., having a set of boards for each table rather than passing boards, masking requirements, distancing requirements, having East-West pairs carry their bidding boxes from table to table, vaccination requirements), (3) food and hospitality (e.g., not serving food, serving only packaged food, charging for refreshments, maintaining a hospitable atmosphere without freely available food), (4) enforcement issues (e.g., proof of vaccination, players who defy new requirements, burdens on directors), (5) format changes suggested by online bridge (e.g., fewer boards, speedball games), and (6) attendance issues (e.g., smaller games; amount of temporary and permanent loss of attendance due to availability of online play; financial, scheduling, and space implications).

The next meeting will be February 24, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell