

## WBL Board Minutes

March 24, 2021

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

**Minutes:** The Board approved the minutes of the January meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Herb reported that the Thursday night game, though still above the break-even point financially, experienced a decline in total attendance in January because there was only one WBL-run January game (the WBL received revenue from an extra December game by mistake. He said the Monday game has been holding its own, though attendance was down in the most recent week, which included online national events over the weekend. The Thursday 0-20 game has not been able to exceed four tables recently. Herb noted that Quick Books, the desktop software that he uses to record financial data, will no longer be supported. He said that this will not immediately impair overall functionality, but that we will eventually need to allocate funds for new software.

**Communications Committee:** Linda said she would like to reactivate this committee and consider whether we need to improve our communications practices or alter the format for future communications.

**Future Plans:** We will hold our next annual meeting in the fall. At that time, we will elect a new President and will need to add a new Board member even if all current Board members up for reelection decide to run. There was general agreement that an in-person meeting would be more desirable than an online meeting and that a September meeting would be somewhat preferable to an October meeting. But there was considerable skepticism that an in person meeting in September would be feasible. The Board plans to decide on an annual meeting date in either September or October at its May meeting.

After a brief report from the Committee on reopening, the Board had a lengthy, broad ranging discussion of factors that would affect when and how in person bridge would be resumed. Noteworthy considerations discussed included the following:

- It would be helpful to educate players about how to make the game safer (e.g., hand washing, discourage attendance by sick people).
- Given the age of our population, we should err on the conservative side in assessing when it is prudent to reopen. We are concerned about our ability to retain use of space at Ohr Kodesh if someone acquires a Covid infection at our bridge game. For resuming in person activities, we are clearly going to be followers, not leaders.
- Serving food at unit games and tournaments raises sanitary issues. In the absence of food, tournament game times would probably need to be adjusted to allow longer breaks for meals.
- We would need to coordinate what we do with the practices and guidelines of Ohr Kodesh, local governments, and the ACBL.

- We might want to maintain an online game after in person bridge resumes. This might, for example, entail keeping the Monday evening online game or sometimes having an online section of the Thursday evening game. We should be prepared to experiment.
- In person games build community, enabling people to find partners and teammates. They also make cheating more difficult. But online is popular—no evening travel, no site rental costs, better hand records.
- It is unclear how many people will wish to resume playing in person. This raises numerous questions—do we need different sites (e.g., better ventilated, suitable for a smaller turnout), should we require “vaccine passports”, to what degree are we ready to lose money during the rebuilding period.
- Is it feasible to change the format of in person bridge—bigger tables, outdoor games (e.g., under a tent), supplying tablets to enable players to avoid touching cards?
- Can surveys help us figure out what will work? There was general agreement that surveys, if used, should wait until we are closer to resuming in person play, since risk perceptions will change as time goes on.
- Would we want to have advance sign-up processes when we begin in person play?

The next meeting will be April 28, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell