

DISTRICT 5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: June 26, 2026 6:00 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE

President - Davis Heussler
Vice President – Steve Grzegorzewski
Past President – Barb Bacon
Assistant Region 4 Liason – Sharon Fairchild
Region 4 Director – Margot Hennings
Treasurer - Sandi Bross
Tournament Coordinator – Pat Levy
Advisory Council; STaC - Dian Petrov
Member - Jim Overcashier
Member – Maureen Loeb
Member – Jim Knirsch
Secretary –Linda Burroughsford

COMMITTEE REPORTS

January 10 Meeting Minutes

Linda Burroughsford provided copies of the minutes and they were approved. It was noted that the minutes of the fall 2025 meeting had not been approved yet. A copy will be provided to the Board in an email and they will be approved or amended at the September meeting in Pittsburgh.

Treasurer's Report

Sandi Bross distributed copies of the financial report. She noted that NAP/GNT attendance was low for the D5 qualifiers. There was a brief discussion about the need for better promotion of these events at the Clubs and in the Units. Barb Bacon moved that the financial report be approved and Sharon seconded the motion. All approved.

2026 Rock and Roll Regional

Jim Knirsch asked that the entry fees for the 2027 event be raised to \$18 in order to cover the cost of providing complimentary coffee to the attendees from 9:30 until 10:30 a.m.. Some of the extra fees would also be used to award door prizes and increase the lunch subsidy coupons. Jim also proposed that the Board consider including the cost of a lunch in the game fee. This matter will be added to the next agenda for full discussion.

Davis Heussler brought forward a suggestion from a player, Saleh Fetouh, that the Rock and Roll Regional be moved from its current date in January to another month when the weather is better, and specifically suggested October now that the Buffalo Regional is gone. It was pointed out that the Embassy Suites Hotel gives very favourable rates because they need and want us there in January. Moving the Rock and Roll Regional to October would also conflict with the new I/N regional that will be held in October 2026 for the first time. When discussing the other months it might be moved to, it became clear that there are too many other calendar conflicts to make this a viable option.

2026 All American Regional

Jim Overcashier reported that there was an increase of 9 tables on day 1 and there had been increases compared to 2025 every day. He also reported that the hotel would be remodeling soon and that it should be completed by January 2027.

2026 Pittsburgh Regional

Maureen Loeb gave a detailed report on the preparations for the Regional to be held from September 14-20. It's being promoted as a "Bridge Festival for All Levels", complete with a new logo and branded merchandise. Maureen reported that there will be a particular focus on the I/N program and Robert Todd, ACBL Educational Foundation President, will be in charge of this part of the Regional.

A marketing company has been hired to promote both the Regional and bridge in general, and the team has been working hard to attract young professionals and world champions to the event. There will be an emphasis placed on combatting the idea that bridge is only for the elderly.

Other concepts being introduced are selling naming rights for events and having music and entertainment in the evenings. Maureen also described the Committee's efforts to obtain grants from the ACBL Educational Foundation and Washington County Tourism Bureau.

2026 Erie I/N Regional

Davis Heussler and Steve Grzegorzewski described the plans for the I/N Regional in October and there was a discussion about what would happen if there was attendance in excess of the 24 tables that the venue can accommodate. Steve said that his research showed these events typically had about 12-15 tables. Pat Levy noted that there are many I/N players who don't realize that a Gold Rush has a 0-99 MP strat. Board members were encouraged to make sure their Club members have as many details as possible about this event in order to make the first D5 I/N tournament a success.

Tournament Coordinator

Pat Levy pointed out that the Roni Atkins Regional had undergone a name change to the Pittsburgh Regional. Barb Bacon and Sharon Fairchild expressed concern about potentially offending Roni Atkins' family and friends. Barb stated that the Atkins family had made a one-time donation to the District after her death in order to honour her memory and love for the game. The donation was made in 2008/2009, leading to the renaming of the formerly Pittsburgh Labor Day Regional to the Pittsburgh Roni [Gitchel] [Atkins] Regional, and that honour had been generously extended for 17 years.

Maureen Loeb noted that she had asked several people in Pittsburgh who knew Roni whether renaming the Regional would be offensive to people or unkind and none of those surveyed had a problem with the name change. She also stated that Roni would continue to be honored by naming a Regional event for her.

Pat confirmed that she had renewed all sanctions for the next 5 years and pointed out that the very successful Penn Yan Regional will conflict with the current Pittsburgh Regional dates in 2027. Maureen stated that the Pittsburgh Regional could be moved to a week prior. There was also discussion about the Buffalo Spring Sectional being at the same time as the Titusville Sectional. Linda Burroughsford stated that she had researched the dates of both tournaments and that Buffalo had always held its Sectional on the same weekend every year but the Titusville Sectional kept moving. She provided the following dates for the Titusville Sectional in the past 5 years:

2022 – March 25-27

2023 – March 31-April 2

2024 – April 12-14

2025 – April 4-6

2026 – April 10-12

Steve Grzegorzewski conceded that Titusville was somewhat at the mercy of the Cross Creek Management since they were using the tournament as a shakedown opportunity prior to opening

the Golf Club for the season. The conflict affects only a handful of players and remains unresolved for now.

Advisory Council Report

Dian Petrov provided a copy of the Council's report. Highlights are that ACBL membership fell 5% and now sits at 117,813, new memberships are also down by more than 50% (1508 to 701), and guest memberships have increased from 914 to 2482, suggesting potential for growth among these players. The Council will maintain a focus on retention, expanding participation and improved data tracking.

EDGAR has processed more than 50,000 players through its system, identifying 1812 violations, which is approximately 3%. As cheating is caught and disciplined, it's expected that continued screening will reduce the violations further.

The Bridge Committee is working on refining the masterpoint system and restructuring tournaments. A Task Force has been created to redefine staff responsibilities, create a Regional Tournament Guide and develop a centralized information platform.

The Real Deal digital platform is expanding and attempting to become a community-centric digital clubhouse which can replicate in-person social interaction and support long-term player engagement.

Finally, the ACBL is moving towards selecting NABC sites that align with projected attendance in order to optimize costs and player experience and mitigate financial risk.

NAP/GNT Report

Steve Grzegorzewski asked if the ACBL gives money to the Districts for NAP's and GNT's. Sandi Bross explained that the Grassroots fund supports the NAP's/GNT's and the receipts from the ACBL are recorded as a line item on the D5 Income Statement.

STaC

Dian Petrov provided his report on the number of tables and revenue. He was asked what happened to the Royal STaC's which were introduced during covid. Dian stated that they were discontinued once face-to-face bridge resumed.

Margot Hennings – Region 4 Director

Margot gave a synopsis of the agenda of the Summer ACBL Board meeting in Minneapolis. These items include allowing Sectionals to award 100% silver masterpoints using a local Director; alignment of masterpoint awards across the ACBL for all games and events; Entry Express improvements and expansion; creation of a Unit Task Force; building local partnerships (sponsorships); obtaining Tourism Grants; and Education and Membership development efforts. Attached is a chart providing D5 membership by Unit and a Sponsorship Program Guide.

Marketing Report

This report was deferred to the full meeting of the Board to be held Saturday, June 27, 2026.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Brian Meyer's NAP/GNT request

Steve described his efforts to address Brian suggestion to book the NAP's/GNT's at a venue that can provide a better overall experience for the participants. Such a location could be at a full-service hotel (restaurant and bar) so players didn't have to leave the building after the games. Steve gave a detailed description of his search for such a place, which included visiting or talking to at least 10 venue managers. The local hotels command up to \$10,000 for weddings on Saturday nights and we cannot compete with that. The Erie Convention Center seems very vacant, according to their online calendar, but they aren't interested in hosting bridge players. Steve talked to the Casino team and there is mixed space on the premises but they have nothing available in the short term. The Hotel Conneaut in Meadville has lots of playing space but insufficient rooms. Keeping the NAP's/GNT's in their current Erie location is desirable because it's very central to all the Units. At this point in time, there doesn't seem to be a venue that can accommodate the needs of the District and the ability to provide the fullest experience for the players.

D5 Non-Profit Status

Sandi Bross noted that the District's not-for-profit status must be renewed every 5 years and would be due in 2027. Brian Ellis last renewed the status and was the sole possessor of the login ID and password to do this, but he's had a stroke and it's unknown whether or not the details can be obtained from him. Barb Bacon indicated that she would contact Brian and try to get this information.

Unit Officer Changes

Linda Burroughsford mentioned that the agenda and minutes had not been directed to all of the appropriate Unit Officers because she was unaware that Officers had changed. She asked that the outgoing Unit Officers advise the Secretary of leadership changes and make sure that incoming Officers have the materials if they were forwarded to the outgoing Officers by accident.

Pittsburgh table storage charges

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

District	Unit	Total Members	Region
5	142	631	4
5	125	487	
5	116	253	
5	107	199	
5	127	97	
5	213	78	
5	111	75	
5	148	53	
5	129	44	
5	226	42	
5	177	13	