Minutes of WBL Board of Directors Meeting
June 21, 2017

The meeting was held at Rose Berman's home.

In attendance were Board members: Ellen Cherniavsky, Linda Marshall, Rose Berman, Carole Banks, Clyde Kruskal, Alex Gretsinger, Eileen Inglesby-Houghton, Charles Dearolf and Hadi Abushakra. Also in attendance were: Donna Rogall, Bulletin Editor, Chris Miller, Head Director of the Unit Game, and guests Adrienne Kuehneman, Ombudsperson, Gene Kuehneman and David Ruderman.

President Ellen Cherniavsky called the meeting to order at 7:20.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the May 2017 meeting were approved with minor revisions. Changes have since been incorporated and a revised version of the May 2017 minutes has been distributed to the voting and non-voting members of the Board, and sent to the webmaster for online posting.

Slow Play Policy

David Ruderman explained that the NVBA policy on slow play calls for taking a board away from the table, and that WBL's may well be the only game where a player can be penalized for slow play with no prior warning. David suggested that WBL's slow play policy be reformulated to allow for a three-step approach: step one would be to remind the slow player that he/she should play faster, and step two would be a late play or pulling a board. Only after these two measures have been exhausted should the Director issue a penalty, which would be the third and final step.

Adrienne explained that punishing players runs counter to the desire of WBL to grow the game. Chris responded that slow play is a double-edged sword; it, first and foremost, punishes non-slow players.

The Board asked Chris to deal with this matter as an action item, confer with other directors and recommend a course of action to the Board to be considered at the August Board meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Rose explained that WBL was still in the red as of April 30, 2017. The meeting noted that high rent is one of the main reasons for WBL's losses. Other items that have contributed to the deficit were discussed. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Unit Game Report

The meeting discussed the Unit Game Report and accepted it.

Bulletin Report

Donna submitted the Bulletin Report in the form of an email that she sent out ahead of the meeting. The report explains that the May/June Bulletin went out on time, but that it is taking longer than usual to get the Bulletin-related email message out.

Donna also explained that the deadline for the July/August 2017 WBL Bulletin is July 3, and that she would like to post and print the Bulletin by July 24. The WBL Aug 24-27 Sectional will be featured on the Bulletin's cover page.

Donna added that Steve Robinson has made an error in his new Solvers' Club problems, and that the answers to those problems will appear in the September/October issue of the Bulletin. The online version of the Bulletin, however, features the correct problems, but not the printed one.

Donna said that she has started to look into options for printing the Bulletin and mailing it at lower rates but was not ready to present her findings to the Bulletin Committee as yet.

Website Committee Report

Alex explained that the website went live. It can be accessed at http://bridgewebs.com/washingtonbridgeleague/ but is largely missing content. Content will be added in the coming weeks. A meeting to go over some technical details is scheduled to take place in early July. Alex added that WBL will be able to have its own domain URL later this year, using a paid subscription.

Liability Insurance

An inquiry was made as to whether WBL has liability insurance. Ellen advised the Board that WBL, its officers and directors are covered by the ACBL's liability insurance policy.

Ways and Means Committee Report

Rose informed the meeting that the deliberations of the Ways and Means Committee were in the nature of a brainstorming session, and that what transpired were mere recommendations, not decisions. Rose added that the Committee sees opportunities to reduce costs in the areas of the Bulletin, free plays, hospitality and negotiating some relief with Ohr Kodesh on the rent (which has been increasing by 10% every year). On the income side, passing along the extra costs for special events (NAP and GNT) in the entry fees would also help reduce costs. The meeting decided to take up this matter at an Executive Session of the Board to take place at the conclusion of the regular meeting of the Board.

Recruitment of New Treasurer

Ellen shared with the meeting the fact that Herb Schulkin has volunteered to take over from Rose as WBL Treasurer. The meeting deliberated on whether Rose should remain a Board member while Herb acts as Treasurer, but without being a member of the Board. The meeting resolved to postpone decision on this matter and to revisit it in due course.

Increasing Attendance/Growing the Game

Hadi shared his ideas on what WBL should consider doing to grow the game. Some of these ideas happen to have been implemented by NVBA. Chief among them is more NLM-LM games, active mentoring of novices/intermediates and a friendlier atmosphere at WBL games. Hadi also suggested using Bob Levey's connection to the Washington Post to lobby the paper for inserting a telephone number at the end of Frank Stewart's daily bridge column that directs readers interested in joining the bridge community to a specific portal.

Unit Game Stratification

Gene Fisher and Barb Doran have proposed to raise the stratification limit at the Unit Games and at Sectionals. Ellen explained that the Board is authorized to raise the B stratification limit. After deliberation, the Board resolved to defer decision on this matter and exchange views about it via email in the coming weeks.

Policies Update

The meeting resolved that Linda and Hadi should meet in the coming weeks to commence the policies' updating process.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will take place on Wednesday, August 16, at Carole's home.