

ACBL Unit 143 Board Meeting Minutes, March 9, 2022

Location: The meeting was conducted on-line using ZOOM.

Attendees: Dennis Abeln, Don Chase, Maureen Curran, Terry D'Amato, Diane Deutch, Jan Potts, John Welte, Kelly White. Non-board members: Mike Carmen (tournament director), Debbie Romero (District 8 representative.)

Absent: Mark Boswell, Ken Obrecht, Mark Zellmer

The meeting was called to order by President John Welte at 7:08 PM. Eight board members were in attendance, satisfying quorum requirements of six.

The minutes from the February board meeting were approved as submitted.

Kelly reported no activity occurred in the past month. Bank balances total \$70,064.

Kelly has ordered the Mini-McKenney awards. They will be presented at the May Sectional.

John reported on arrangements for the 499r Sectional tournament scheduled for March 26 & 27.

He presented on-line data showing COVID-19 cases are dropping off, and expects masks will not be required.

Proof of Vaccination and Booster shots if eligible will be required in accordance with the St Louis Bridge Center's policies. John reported that the Bridge Center will share their records of who has submitted proof.

John reported that the Bridge Center had agreed to let Unit 143 use their facility in return for the entry fees. John said the Unit 143's costs will include ACBL sanction fees, director's fees, publicity (\$120 spent on flyers and postcards) and hospitality.

John sent emails to Unit 143 members with less than 500 masterpoints. Postcards have been mailed to those members without email addresses. Kelly used Pianola to send an email blast to about 1000 people in the four nearby units at a cost of \$10. Flyers have been distributed to local and nearby clubs.

Debbie reported that Mark Zellmer had asked her to explain Swiss game structure and movements 15 minutes prior to the start of the Swiss session on Sunday, but she isn't available. Mark will need to find someone else.

Jan Potts volunteered to be COVID Safety Coordinator, which will help her greet newcomers as part of her New Member duties. She will cover the 10AM Saturday and noon Sunday sessions. Maureen Curran volunteered to cover the 3PM Saturday session.

No caddies needed.

Hospitality will be limited to beverages and prepackaged treats. No finger food.

Diane Deutch will get trophies from Mark Boswell. Trophies will be awarded for each event, Flights A, B and C.

John led a discussion on Sectional tournament scheduled for May 13-15, 2022

Mike Carmen reported that Sectional sanctions and dates have been set for Unit 143 Sectionals through 2025. He said the unit has an open contract with Blanchette.

Kelly questioned whether the unit could continue to sustain the losses incurred at the pre-Covid sectionals. Kelly questioned whether we need the space that Blanchette offers. After discussion, it was agreed the May Sectional would be held at the Blanchette facility. Mike agreed to check whether Blanchette rental fees could be reduced by our not using the basement.

Debbie Romero explained that past sectional session time-slots have each had a head caddie to assist with hospitality to free hospitality people to participate in the tournaments. Tasks include replenishing snacks, ice, cups, soda, coffee, cream, sugar, napkins and to set out the food after the evening sessions. There was a discussion about having the Blanchette attendant take on this work so as to avoid the cost of a head caddy for pairs sessions. Mike Carmen will talk to Blanchette about this, and get back to Maureen who will inform John.

John reported that ACBL director Peter Wilke will provide scoring devices for a fee. Per arrangements made for the cancelled January Sectional, Peter will also make the boards for the first events. Details of who makes the boards for the subsequent events need to be worked out. There is a separate fee for making the boards.

A second ACBL director will be used. Costs for directors will be higher than in the past due to them not being St Louis residents. (Our two St Louis-based directors have both retired.) Additional costs include travel, hotel, and per diem.

The January Sectional had committed to having the 499r games in a separate room at Blanchette to avoid disruptions from the Open events ending before the 499r events. Mike said two directors might not be able to support this if open section table counts are substantial. The separate rooms line will be removed from the May tournament flyer.

Fees for the May Sectional will be the same as the most recent sectional in January 2020 which charged \$12/session for open events, \$10/session for 499r events, and had discounts for students under 25 with IDs and free plays in 499r events for players with 0-5 master points. ACBL policy sets the student discount – the directors collecting the fees know the details.

Lunch between the two Sunday Swiss sessions will be handled the same as planned for the cancelled January 2022 Sectional. Players will be given instructions to check the Unit 143 website for details on how to pre-order and pre-pay for lunches. Lunch break will be about one hour.

The unit will need to arrange for tables and bidding boxes to be transported to and from Blanchette, same as in the past sectionals.

Arrangements for transporting the Unit's boards to and from the Bridge Center will also be necessary. In the past, the local ACBL directors have stored the boards and the duplicating machine at their homes and have taken care of making and transporting the boards.

Hospitality has not been decided. The board had previously decided to cut hospitality budget in half for the May 2020 Sectional which got cancelled.

Mike Carmen agreed to prepare a cost estimate of the May Sectional costs based on the above changes along with a 50% turnout compared to the previous May Sectional.

John said he would work with Publicity Chair Ken Obrecht to prepare the May Sectional flyer and get it reviewed by ACBL.

Discussions on St Louis Regional in August 15-21, 2022

Debbie advised the Regional flyer (schedule) is normally finalized in March to be able to take flyers to the Spring National. Too late for that this year. The flyers get submitted to Crystal Mann in the ACBL tournaments department who replaced Debbie Vicknair who retired.

Debbie said our Regional is usually advertised in the Bridge Bulletin. The unit had previously decided to scale back Regional ads for the 2020 Regional from two issues to one issue of a full page ad to reduce costs. The schedule for submission deadlines of Bulletin Ads is published in the ACBL Bulletin. In the past, Cindy Hill was the Bridge Bulletin Ad Contact and needed our ad copy usually on the 1st of the month preceding the month the Bulletin was to be issued, i.e., the ad copy for the June issue of the Bulletin needed to be submitted by May 1. However, current deadline requirements need to be reconfirmed. Debbie offered that delaying our advertisement until the July Bulletin would allow the Unit to know the St. Louis May Sectional and Crystal Lake Regional attendance before committing to the cost of placing any Bulletin advertising. The Bulletin people also need additional advance notice of our intent to place an advertisement as well as the Ad Size. Debbie said we need to contact the Renaissance Hotel to let them know if we expect lower headcounts so as to reduce our room reservation commitments by the contract deadlines.

Debbie had created a 14-page detailed set of instructions for the Publicity Chair's job which she gave to Estella Lau. Debbie will send the file to Terry to get it posted on the unit's Drop Box so that everyone has access to the information.

Maureen said she has some caddies lined up for the Regional. Debbie said caddies should be at least 13 years old and that their total calendar year earnings must be kept below \$600 to avoid IRS reporting.

Debbie gave the following report on District 8:

Nationally, regional tournaments have been seeing 38-50% attendance compared to pre-Covid 19.

District 8 STAC will be May 23-29, which is the usual time slot of the Champaign, Illinois Regional which has been cancelled for 2022.

District 8 will participate in the ACBL Royal STAC sometime before our May Sectional which may hurt attendance at our Sectional. The Royal STAC will award Black, Silver, Red and Gold points. This is an ACBL event. No further details available at this time.

District 8 Grand National Team Finals will be held online May 21 and 22. Preregistration and team check payment will be required approximately 2 weeks in advance of the event. District 8 winners in Championship, A, B, and C flights are eligible to compete in the GNT Event at the Summer Nationals which can go for 5 days. District 8's winning teams who compete will receive a \$300 subsidy per team from District 8, down from previous years due to District 8 finances. Debbie reported some units have committed to supplementing this subsidy for any of their teams that win and suggested Unit 143 might want to consider some financial support as well. No action taken at this time.

District 8 has decided to reduce costs by temporarily reducing the District 8 Advocate from five issues per year to three issues for 2022.

The ABCL's Board of Governors has been renamed the ACBL Advisory Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Submitted by Secretary Dennis Abeln March 10, 2022.