

This is an unofficial summary of the Advisory Council meeting to inform District 11 members. Please see the Board of Directors motions for official actions taken by that body.

Chairman Richard Popper called the hybrid meeting to order at 8:30 PM EDT. Henry Robin hosted the zoom access and Steve Moese communicated with Richard when online questions and comments arose. Richard confirmed the zoom link. He mentioned only AC members are permitted to vote. People in the room have paddles; online members raise zoom hands.

There were no first-time AC members present.

Richard asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the special AC meeting on July 13. Seconded in the room. Having no objections, the minutes were adopted.

Richard suspended the AC meeting agenda to initiate the general membership meeting

President Margot Hennings – Welcomed everyone and mentioned that the Board meetings were very productive with a number of motions regarding board governance. We discussed many topics including relationships external and international stakeholders, major committees like competition and convention and masterpoint committees comprised mainly of non-Board members, also the US Bridge Federation, Mexican Bridge Federation, Canadian Bridge Federation, and the North American Bridge Federation and the World Bridge Federation. We had many other key topics of discussion that Bronia will discuss with you (sapphire points, titanium points, and reimagining the NABCs). So, in the interest of time Jennifer Webster will give the finance report and the litigation report followed by Bronia with her management report.

Jennifer Webster Finance Director – I will update the [financial report](#) since March 2025. The balance sheet / statement of financial position shows growth. Deferred membership revenue down since 2023 – reduced membership and a big sale at the end of 2023 (amortized in 2024). Net assets have grown so we keep adding to our bottom line. 2024 Income statement revenues are higher than both budget and 2023. Much higher NABC attendance than budgeted. Our objective is to break even across the three NABCs. We are a not-for-profit and not for loss. We strive to have the best experience at breakeven earnings. Market value of investments up strongly. Retirement healthcare plans are evaluated annually by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Capital expenditures modernizing computers, software and data management – called Backoffice. Spent \$549K spent 2024, and \$400K in 2023. We still have more investment in 2025 and 2026.

Current comparison with year ago shows higher results. Accounts Receivable are down. YTD Revenues are as expected. We are up for Memphis and Regional/Sectional activity. Club table fees are down. We have an unrecognized gain in investments. We have about \$1MM more than expected at this time but that's because we haven't spent all committed funds yet. Jennifer reviewed the IT expense status.

**Litigation Report** – There are three actions underway.

Nic Hammond awaiting a judgment on a motion hearing for a declaratory judgment on whether there is infringement or not in the next several months.

Barbara Clark - Member suit seeking to vacate a ruling from the IBA – Not what arbitration is.

Arthur Linderman - New suit in small claims court for defamation.

Hugh McSheffrey D19 - How much has the ACBL spent on the several cases?

Bronia Jenkins Executive Director –

In the Nic Hammond case we are being represented by a different firm. We have spent only a few thousand dollars. In the Barbara Clark case, we have spent about \$9K because we had to do some research. She sued in Illinois. Art Linderman case – defense is pending so we haven't spent anything. Small claims action has a limit of \$15K liability.

### **Bronia Jenkins - Management Report**

There is no quorum for a membership meeting. Happy to see so many people here in person. All of the special events here have been run very well and were very well received.

We are doing a lot of things. No slides. Just talk about the things we are doing.

- **Recruiting** - We've changed the way you become a member. Everyone will now become a guest member first. It's simple to do it. Name, email, and password. That password will access MyACBL. System is robust to user error. Guest membership is free forever – it never expires. We are working on benefits outside the firewall and inside the firewall.
- **Online Bridge** - We are expanding online bridge to other platforms for masterpoint and other games. This means we want a simple way for people to join without a barrage of questions. Funbridge did a drive in the past two weeks and in 3 days we got 950 new guest members. Now we have to take these members and convert them to full membership.
- This is part of what I call **PRE-BRIDGE**. We want to get people who are not card players to come and join us. Bridge War is an example simple game where people can play immediately and have fun. This can be done online too.
- New players get the **sapphire program** – engagement and tracking. We recognize achievements in addition to performance. The recruiter who gets that -person will also get access to their record of their bridge journey.
- **IT Update** – we are moving slowly. We are midway through the migration from the AS400 to the cloud. Current system is written in RPG moving to a more modern language and database. Somewhat completed membership and payments, and now working on masterpoints.

- We are also doing the **connection** work with bridge services so we can exchange records. We are working to connect to other scoring programs so that we are not dependent of ACBLScore. Let others create cool stuff that we can connect to.
- **Discipline** - changes near and dear to my heart. On February 1 2024 we instituted an automated cheating detection system that went back to January 2020 and ran statistics on players to identify cheaters. As with any program, we used the first few pilots to learn how the system worked and what needed to be improved. We made recent changes. If you were someone who stopped cheating in 2021, you will just receive a warning. The warning counts as a first offense. The second big change is that if you are convicted of cheating online you will still be eligible to play in certain club games at the discretion of the club manager.

### Questions -

Peter Boyd Bowman D7 – It sure seems like the intent of EDGAR was to go after cheaters aggressively. When we went looking for bad people, we found that many were husband wife pairs who were the backbone of our clubs.

Bronia – How big is the change we are making. In asking people to defend themselves in 2025 about hands they played in 2020 and 2021 is a difficult burden. We do not have a statute of limitation but there is a nuance that needs to be fixed.

Peter – I've seen the EDGAR reports. Not understand what hands were played is in no way exculpatory.

Bronia – During covid people were sitting on the couch playing together. The ease of exchanging information caught many people up in the practice.

Chair – Remember we have a special meeting on Aug 15 for this topic. Please consider stating

AI ??? – EDGAR speaks for itself. It's about the statistics.

Bronia – People have told me directly that they were talking on the phone and have admitted they did the wrong thing. They did it hundreds of times. The warning is a first offense and if they continue, they will be expelled. Deterrence and rehabilitation are our goal, not punishment.

Lori Laughman (sp) D16\* – is this retroactive to players already under punishment.

Bronia – Yes – we will review all cases to decide how to make fair change.

Unknown person – What about professionals?

Bronia – the League has no visibility to who is a professional. We are using masterpoints as the dividing line.

Jay ??? – DO you know how many people will be impacted.

Bronia – about 20% or so will be rescored.

Sue – How many did stop after 2021?

*(where ??? means no last name shared, and \* is a general member not an AC Representative)*

Bronia – Many did. 2021 was a long time ago. It was a very unusual time.

Dian Petrov D5 – Will online platforms issue glitter points?

Bronia – All platforms – colors are a work in progress. No exclusivity with BBO. Funbridge (also a part of 52 entertainment), IntoBridge, Shark Bridge, Real Bridge, OK Bridge, and Swan Games. I want to use our colors to drive our people to new platforms. People will go to good sectionals so hold a good one. People will go to play where they want to play. We need to drive people to new places. We want to use our currency to drive them to new places so they try them and perhaps want to go back.

Gary Hann – Why not ding the 2020 and 2021 cheaters 10% of their masterpoints.

Bronia – we are given them a warning. It is not a published discipline but it is a first offense. Part of the reason we do the warnings we want to get through the first screening of all online players. We gain little by taking away 10% of some online cheater's masterpoints.

Mary Hirschman – was anyone other than club managers polled about the return of cheaters to clubs.

Bronia – Polled no. Talked to at length yes. This is an issue dividing club owners and members. More phone calls complained about banning people from clubs. There are more complaints than compliments. We talk to many people. Many people think club games are about social interaction and connection; People are old in their 80s and 90s. Bridge is where they go for their lifeline. The way the CDR was written they couldn't even be on the premises.

Lorraine O'Donnel D17 – why didn't this go to the local club board?

Bronia – We polled the clubs.

Loraine – so they go to the club manager and not to the Unit board?

Bronia – yes. A club can bar anyone for any reason that is not a protected class. Clubs get to make a lot of independent decision. A STaC, Local Sectional, Unit Championship they cannot play. We are granting them their social lifeline. They are not earning masterpoints.

Chair – We have a special meeting on this topic on Aug 15.

Anne – They get out of jail and are rehabilitated. You have a black mark against them. They do have a black mark. They are not identified as cheaters if they get a warning.

### **NABC Tournament Structure**

Bronia – We've done a lot of work on sectionals and regionals. We are working on a new design for management experiments. Here's the frame of a new look working with Competition and Conventions, the Board and leadership: A North American Tournament with NABC events only. All events other than the main feature will be 2- or 3-day events. If you are knocked out you fall into another NABC event (Think consolation rounds). Flighted schedule mirroring the GNT so 0-750, 0-3000, 0-6000, and Open. There is nothing good walking into a room filled with empty tables. Use preregistration to source more cities that we haven't gone to in a while. One problem is we do not spend a lot of money. Most people spend \$1MM on food and beverage. We spend about \$250K. We are a low budget event for the venue. Imagine three rooms – pairs, teams and screens. Always have a pair event and a team event for each flight. In conjunction with that we will issue Titanium Points for all flights. They will be used like Gold Points for Rank purposes. If you really want to play in games that are more limited, we want you to go to your regionals. We want to support those regionals. We want to give them resources for Learn Bridge in a Day and guest speakers.

Steve Moese D11 – Is there any thought to an I/N NABC Championship?

Bronia – that's what the 0-750 flight is. There is no thought for a 0-20 championship or something more limited than 0-750.

Steven Graham D12\* Unit 200 Midland Michigan. We just lost about \$100 on our regional. The reason was the cost of the Director. When you have a smaller regional there needs to be a more cost-effective director requirement and infrastructure.

Bronia – we are looking at that to see what we can do. It costs money for directors. The costs of services and living are rising everywhere. It's really important for the tournament sponsor and the TD to get together.

Steven – Focus on the cost of the infrastructure to support the director. Happy to discuss offline.

Bronia – lower costs often come from planning with the TD.

Shelly Burns – President of the Canadian Bridge Federation\*. Why can't we have registration ahead of time so we know how many people are going to attend.

Bronia – Preregistration is critical. I want to have it. In 2028 when we finish these changes we will have preregistration. Entry Express is a very troubled system that we are working with and trying to make better. We've made it better. If we open it to all the regionals and

sectionals, we might not have the support to keep it running properly. What we're working one know is making it better for directors. Our goal is to sell all entries through entry express. It needs to happen, only when?

Mike Cassel D14 – If a weaker player has no interest in a multi-day event what could they play in?

Bronia – If they are coming to an NABC why wouldn't they want to play in a 2-day event. There are all sorts of what-ifs in these changes. We cannot cater to all possible choices. We are trying to make it better. I'm copying what Australia and Europe do. If you are playing in a new NABC event, you might play for the cup (finals) or for the plate (consolation).

Marty Hirschman D12 – Confused about the \$0.5MM for marketing. How will that be spent?

Bronia – we don't spend any money on marketing until we are ready to support the new approach with a good product. We are still in the process of developing a good product. We are just opening up online. We have just started Bridge War and the Sapphire program. We have to innovate.

Do a jump start bridge event around the country but the event is targets to specific social groups. Get them in the same room and let them find each other.

Membership is down 5+% and we are in trouble.

Marty – How much do we spend on discipline?

Bronia – We spend a lot on discipline. We have 4 people working full time on discipline – that's more than we have in marketing. We have lawyers who cost us money defending lawsuits. One of the good things about discipline – our IT people have put a focus on reporting. You will have a sortable report that is updated daily.

Andrew Risman D2 – Say I go to a tournament and stay for 6 days. What happens I get knocked out on the 5<sup>th</sup> day.

Bronia – You are never knocked out. You simply play in a consolation event for.

Joe ??? – I think you're doing a great job Bronia. Entries are expensive at NABCs. Why charge a 6-person team more than a 4-person team.

Bronia - This was brought up at the last board meeting and was voted down. We charge per person and not per team. Why not pay per team.

Al ???– what's the answer to recruit new people. We need to go after the youngsters.

Bronia – we are absolutely going after the youngsters. It doesn't happen overnight. Let people find the game they want online (bridge, bridge war, spades, etc.) and then find the club.

Cathy – Entry Express when can we split the cost between pairs/partners.

Bronia – never. There are many ways for people to send each other money. That change is too complicated.

Richard reconvened the Advisory Council Meeting.

We do have a quorum for the AC Meeting. The general members are welcome to remain and participate. This is the first time since Las Vegas that we have tried a hybrid meeting. The staff has done a wonderful job – thank you everyone.

Richard shared the report of actions taken. All actions were discussed at our meeting 13 days ago. I propose we skip over this unless there are any questions.

#### **Discussion (Chair):**

Multi 2 ♦ the rules of multi defenses are well described. There is no expansion of event in which Multi may be played. However no written defense will be allowed in NABC events.

The election process changes the filing deadline from May 31 to March 31 to deal with problems when many people run for one position leading to runoff elections. The Board wants to avoid this problem.

#### **Reports of the AC Committees**

Steve Grzegorzewski D5 – Committee for education supporting clubs and membership. Reached out to over 2200 contacts about education plans and providing educational services Got less than a 7% response. It will take more effort on our part to make growth happen. I encourage everyone to get education focus and output as a major effort by our organization.

Chair – we encourage AC members to participate in District meetings and to write articles for the District news bulletin. Coordinate with your Regional Representative to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Chair – called to motions for reconsideration on any matter except the CDR changes.

Hugh McSheffrey D19 – Is there reciprocity between the ACBL and the USBF for enforcing discipline.

Bronia – yes.

Hugh – Why was Sylvia Shi allowed to represent the USA.

Bronia – She served her suspension. She petitioned the board of the USBF and they accepted their petition. The ACBL does not control that. Curtis Cheek was readmitted similarly.

Lamya Amelydis Goodwill Chair – moved we recognize new Life Masters. Passed by unanimous consent. Extended sincere thanks to District 4 and its units, Regional 3 Director Joanne Glasson, the many volunteers, the Marriott Hotel, and John Dickenson (ovation).

Shelley Burns CBF – We are starting a new online game on Real Bridge 7 PM Eastern Time. Online cheaters cannot play in that game.

Bronia – that's why we need a new system to give games current information. It is the club manager's responsibility to ensure they are eligible to play. People are not allowed to participate in ACBL activities who are on suspension. If someone plays in the game and you miss it, that's ok, just don't miss it again.

There being no more business before the Advisory Council the meeting adjourned at 10:01 PM.

Submitted Respectfully,

Steve Moese K082411

D11 Representative to the ACBL Advisory Council