

ACBL Advisory Council

Minutes: July 11, 2026, Meeting

(hybrid meeting held in Minneapolis and via Zoom)

Richard Popper, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 p.m. EDT (8:31 p.m. CDT local time in Minneapolis), and shortly afterward, it was established that a quorum was present between in-person and online attendees.

OPENING REMARKS: Chair Popper opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, including one AC member attending his first meeting, as well as guests, members of the Board of Directors and ACBL staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the previous AC Special Meeting held on June 26, 2026, were approved unanimously without discussion.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Cindy Shoemaker, President of the ACBL Board of Directors, noted that the Board, during her presidency, hasn't just met three times a year at Nationals, but has held continuous meetings throughout the year via Zoom in the ongoing efforts to grow the bridge community, recruit new members and retain existing ones. She also noted major improvements to the ACBL website to aid in this effort.

LITIGATION REPORT: Happily, no litigation is pending involving ACBL at this time.

FINANCIAL REPORT: In her report previously distributed electronically to all members, ACBL CFO Jennifer Webster reported that the financial condition of the ACBL shows little difference from what it was a year ago. She highlighted that the capital expenditures are in line with what small and medium-sized private companies are expected to spend on systems modernization.

NOMINATIONS: Chair Popper elicited nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Council for next year, since he had previously announced he would not be running for re-election. Three nominations were made from the floor for Chair (Steve Moese, Doug Couchman and David Sizemore) and one for Vice-Chair (Henry Robin). It was subsequently clarified that any of the unsuccessful candidates for Chair may still become a candidate for Vice-Chair.

Chair Popper said he will in the near future organize a candidates forum via Zoom where the candidates for Chair can air their views, and the election will take place on Sunday, December 13, following the Fall NABC in San Diego.

BYLAW AMENDMENTS: A pending amendment would remove the requirement that the Advisory Council have certain standing committees, instead letting the Council have such committees as deemed necessary at the time. There was an objection to the wording of one of the clauses and the use of the word “assign” which made it sound like the ACBL Board of Directors of Staff could give orders to the AC, but the bylaw amendment was approved as written with 5 votes against and an overwhelming majority in favor. Chair Popper had pointed out that any further bylaw changes would start the cumbersome amendment procedure all over again.

REVIEW OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACTIONS: Chair Popper reported that the ACBL Board of Directors had been extremely busy during the Summer Nationals in Minneapolis and had finalized several actions:

FN04 provides for the posting of ACBL audit results on the ACBL website within 2 weeks.

BR01 allows for the use of Spanish at ACBL events in Mexico, similar to allowing French in French-speaking parts of Canada.

BD03 alters the composition of the Conventions and Competitions Committee (C + C) to consist of a total of 13 members, 9 nominated members plus 2 members of the Board of Directors and 2 ACBL staff members.

INT01 allows ACBL management to adjust the international surcharge on prime events at Nationals to help the national bridge federations of the U.S., Canada and Mexico pay their dues to the World Bridge Federation. ACBL Executive Director Bronia Jenkins said an increase from the present \$40 card fees to \$43 is contemplated.

BR04 adjusts the rules of contest for 0-10,000 Knockouts to ensure that all participants will play at least one full day.

BR05 cleans up the language regulating local Sectionals and allows them to reward MasterPoints at 100% of Open Sectionals rating.

MP01 adjusts MasterPoint awards, as of 1-1-2027, according to complicated formula to reward higher-rated and lower-rated events at Regionals while keeping MP awards for Mid-Flight events steady, as they had been inflated so far. Doug Couchman noted that the new formula seriously increases MasterPoint inflation, but no further opposition to the new MP formulation was voiced.

MP02 adjusts rewards for team competitions to remove the incentive for odd numbers of teams, such as 7 or 9.

MP03 increases from 33% to 50% the gold point percentage in I/N Regionals.

NEW NATIONALS SITES CHOSEN: Chair Popper announced that the following sites had been approved for future NABC's: San Francisco Spring 2029, Montreal Spring 2030 and Los Angeles Fall 2030.

NEW BUSINESS: Dennis Abeln of District 8 presented a motion that would reverse the present ACBL policy for charge-backs to Districts whose members participate in the annual Grand National Teams (GNT) competition. Abeln said the Districts are facing declining revenues while the total cost of this charge-back, estimated to be about \$21,000, should not be a significant item to the ACBL as a whole.

The motion passed with 22 votes in favor and 4 against, with several members abstaining or not voting, and Chair Popper vowed he would present and argue for the move at the next Board of Directors meeting during the Fall Nationals in San Diego.

CLOSING REMARKS: Chair Popper asked ACBL Executive Director Jenkins to convey thanks to all ACBL staff for their help in setting up the hybrid meeting. Goodwill Committee Chair Lamya Agelidis added a motion, unanimously approved, to express sincere thanks for the success of the 2026 summer Nationals in Minneapolis to the National Board of Directors, host District 14 and its Units, Region 5 Director Dennis Carman, tournament chair Patti Stuhlman and all the other chairpersons and numerous volunteers, as well as to the Sheraton Minneapolis Downtown for its fine cooperation.

ADJOURNMENT: After a motion to that effect was made and duly seconded, Chair Popper adjourned the meeting at 10:47 p.m. EDT (9:47 p.m. CDT in Minneapolis).