

Minutes of ACBL Advisory Council (AC) regular meeting 3-30-2025

Held via the Zoom platform from various locations

Chairman Richard Popper called the meeting to order as scheduled at 7 p.m.

A quorum was present at the meeting.

The minutes of the Spring special meeting of the AC held on Feb. 23, 2025, were approved without changes or discussion.

ACBL President Margot Hennings gave a brief report saying that the recently concluded NABC Nationals in Memphis had been a great opportunity to foster the collaborative relationship between the Board of Directors and the ACBL staff located in the Memphis suburb of Horn Lake. The Board met with the senior directing staff to help analyze the current state of our regionals, and how ACBL can help Unit and District organizers with staffing, scheduling of dates, and appropriate event planning for smaller and larger tournaments. The Board also met with World Bridge Federation officials, along with representatives of the US Bridge Federation, Canadian Bridge Federation, and Mexican Bridge Federation. Patty Tucker made a presentation on her very successful Jump Start Bridge Program.

ACBL CEO Bronia Jenkins had submitted her Management Report electronically in advance of the meeting. Chairman Popper thanked Jenkins for attending the meeting on her birthday and led members in a "happy birthday" chorus song. In answer to specific questions from AC members, Jenkins said the current ACBL membership stands at about 124,000. In general membership is still declining, but not as fast as during the Covid pandemic and the immediate aftermath. She said the rate of decline had been slowed. Jenkins also said that she understood the concern of AC members that the "glitter games" for which the ACBL authorizes clubs to award small amounts of pigmented points at club games might disincentive people from going to Sectional tournaments, which are still struggling to attract attendance. However, she said the amounts of "glitter" points awarded at such club games are so small as not be a deterrent from attending Sectionals.

Jenkins also presented the litigation report.

Jennifer Webster's Financial report had also been submitted electronically prior to the meeting and she highlighted slightly higher revenues in calendar year 2024 due to increased income from Nationals and from the online BBO platform. She also noted that so far this year, membership revenue is down slightly because more people seem to be renewing only for one year instead of for multiple years.

Chairman Popper's report highlighted the fact that one of the areas that is most down in attendance is the Gold Rush event at Regionals, which is attributed to the fact that many players earned so many MasterPoints during the Covid pandemic that they graduated out of the Gold

Rush ranks and are now hesitant to play in the intermediate or open pairs games at Regionals. It is of the utmost importance to keep these players engaged. Related to this, Popper urged all AC members who have not yet done so to send their suggestions for celebrating player rank advancements to Region 6 Board of Directors member Barbara Heller, who is heading a task force on the subject.

Board of Directors member Larry Sealy gave a report on the use of the EDGAR anti-cheating computer program.

In the standing committee reports, Clubs Committee member Steve Gaynor said the committee is preparing a survey to be sent to all Districts, Units, club managers and teachers asking for ideas on how the ACBL can aid educational efforts.

Steve Allen, chair of the Growth and Membership Committee, said his committee held one meeting and is scheduling a followup meeting for April 13 to receive concrete recommendations on achieving the goal.

Kyle Rockoff, chair of the Bridge Committee, reported his group will meet soon. The anti-cheating committee did not give a report, but Popper reported that it will be meeting again soon.

Chairman Popper called for a vote on a series of ACBL bylaw changes that have been approved at the recent ACBL Board of Directors meetings in Memphis and needed approval from the Advisory Council to go into effect. The changes which encompassed updating language to eliminate the reference to District Directors and making certain changes to the Advisory Council was approved by a vote of 27-1. (Item 251-BY01 on the March, 2025 Board of Directors agenda). The bylaws changes related to publication of proposed bylaws changes passed unanimously. (Item 251-BY02 on the March, 2025 Board of Directors Agenda)

Since the first bylaws amendment eliminated the requirement that the Advisory Council have a secretary, Popper said he had exercised his discretion to appoint a Secretary, and appointed Pieter VanBennekomp as Secretary. That appointment was approved unanimously.

Steve Moese had submitted a series of motions to create Standing Rules for the Advisory Council, but he agreed to postpone consideration of his motions until the July meeting to allow time for further study.

In new business, Chairman Popper announced that a Task Force had been formed to improve the relationship between the ACBL's Board of the Directors and the Advisory Council (AC), and he will represent the AC on the Task Force, along with the chairs of the AC's four standing committees.

Lamya Agelidis, Chair of the ACBL Goodwill Committee, moved, and her two motions were seconded, that new life masters be named life members of the ACBL, and expressed thanks to

the tournament committee, the Memphis Convention Center, and the hotels for the Memphis NABC for their work and cooperation. This was unanimously approved.

Chairman Popper also polled members whether for future meetings, they preferred a start time of 7:30 p.m. instead of the present 7 p.m. A majority of members voted to keep the present 7 p.m. start time.

Chairman Popper adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.