

**2023 FALL NATIONAL BOARD REPORT**  
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The ACBL Board of Directors held its fall meetings face-to-face (F2F) Monday, November 20 through Wednesday, November 22 in Atlanta. The Board, Task Forces and Committees continue to meet regularly through Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

## FINANCE

The 2024 operating and capital budgets were approved. Budgeted revenues for 2024 total approximately \$16.4M while estimated operating and administrative expenses total approximately \$16.7K; an estimated loss of approximately \$313K. It is believed that the revenue derived from 2024 online special games will substantially reduce the loss. The capital budget totals \$543K, the majority of which will be spent on the modernization and migration of applications that reside on the AS400.

The United States Bridge Federation (USBF) receives \$50K annually from the Junior Fund to send junior and youth teams to international competitions. They are to be held in restricted funds for junior team travel, entries, and uniform expense. Item 233-FN01 moves to increase this amount to \$65,000 to cover the increased cost of travel. Distributions are subject to the timely receipt documentation and review and approval by the ACBL Board.

Carried: 14-0-3. Three representatives were absent at the time the vote was taken.  
Effective: Immediate.

I voted in favor of this motion. I am not happy with a budget that projects a six-figure loss, but we must migrate from the AS400. It is a 30+ year old system and we only have one (long-term) employee who is well versed in using it. In addition to online Regionals, we will have an online NABC (national events are rated NABC, not NABC+). This NAOBC will run for six days and have Regional events on three of them. Hopefully, this NAOBC will help reduce the loss.

Item 233-FN02 moved that the annual distribution of Grass Roots funds be capped at \$25,000 per year per District. The Grass Roots Fund was established in 2011 to offset District costs associated with conducting NAP and GNT events, primarily to subsidize travel expenses for players advancing to the NABC Finals. A few larger Districts raise considerably more than \$25,000 while the vast majority of Districts raise far less. This motion failed (2-13-1 with one Board member absent) as the Board and management work toward a more equitable approach and formulate plans to increase attendance at NAP/GNT events.

I voted no. Since this would not affect any District at this time, this motion was defeated. More thought needs to go into any modifications to Grass Roots funding.

## MEMBERSHIP BUILDING TASK FORCE

Item 233-MTF01 moved to amend the Codification, Chapter III - Administration of Operations as it relates to the 11 percent full dues payments and life master service fees allocated to Units. Per the motion, Units would receive 5 percent of the payments/fee allocation to build and retain membership. ACBL management would then develop a program to enable Units to earn up to an additional 10 percent based on reducing the percentage of Unit members that lapse during each calendar year and increasing the percentage of new Unit members recruited during each calendar year.

Carried: 15-2-0.

Effective: March 31, 2024.

As a result of this motion, ACBL has developed the 5/5/5, a Unit-level membership building and retention program that will launch April 1, 2024. Units will automatically receive a base of 5 percent for the intended purpose of building and retaining membership. Units will then have the opportunity to earn an additional 10 percent -- 5 percent for renewing lapsed and at-risk members and 5 percent for recruiting new members -- a total of up to 15 percent. ACBL is providing the tools, training and resources necessary for success. Communication opportunities, primarily conveyed to Unit Presidents during Unit President meetings, are ongoing.

I voted in favor of this motion. It is one of Management's ideas to combat continued membership loss. Units will be paid based on how well they do in retention of existing members and adding new members. Some of the additional 10% Units can earn will be quite easy (2.5% simply for populating the new Retention Tool provided by Management. This tool is needed so that Mgmt has proper contact information for lapsed members. Full details were communicated to all clubs soon after the Board meeting.

## APPEALS AND CHARGES

The Appeals and Charges Committee reported on hearings it held since its last report to the Board in October 2023: Seven reviews of negotiated resolutions and four Automatic Reviews. Hearing reports are available at the Ethics & Disciplinary area of the ACBL website: <https://www.acbl.org/ethics/>

An agreement was reached to use EDGAR, a computer-based online cheating detection tool, an update to the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) is needed. Initially, an update was planned for Atlanta. However, it became apparent that we needed more time to work on the (significant) changes required. The CDR will be updated in time to begin using EDGAR on February 1.

## GOVERNANCE

At this meeting, as part of its continuing effort to streamline Board processes and procedures, Governance developed four “housekeeping” motions that addressed the responsibilities of the Audit Committee (233-GV01), deleted unneeded content from the Codification regarding Audit procedures (233-GV02), summarized rather than specified terms of the Executive Director employment (233-GV03), and deleted employee and consultant policies having to do with employment constraints, recognition awards, retirement policies and educational and health benefits (233-GV-05). The first three of these items were on the Consent Calendar, having passed unanimously in Committee with no non-Committee members objecting. GV-05 passed unanimously during Full Board 16-0-0 with one member absent. All are effective immediately, i.e., on the date of their passage - November 20, 2023.

An Action Item was approved to ensure the regulations regarding employees and consultants were added to the *ACBL Employee Handbook*.

These motions were very benign. As noted, they were mostly just cleaning up redundancies and superfluous language. The Consent Calendar is for motions passed unanimously from the assigned committee. I voted in favor of GV-05 and did not object to the items on Consent.

Item 233-GV04 proposed changes to the motion passed in spring 2023 that reduced the number of Goodwill receptions from three annually to just one, which would alternate once every three years in each of the three geographic areas in which NABCs are held: East, Central and West. The original wording of this motion for Atlanta was to hold that reception every year in the spring, but further discussion during our Full Board meeting resulted in the once-a-year reception that honors the Goodwill Member of the Year, the Volunteer of the Year and the Honorary Member of the Year being held every summer at the location of that NABC. Summers are traditionally the best-attended NABCs and provide the most opportunity for Goodwill members throughout the ACBL to participate in extending our appreciation for these special volunteers.

I had mixed opinions about this. I did not vote in favor of the motion in the Spring to reduce from three to one banquet. However, given that we are now having only one, it makes sense to have it at the NABC with the highest attendance. Ultimately, I voted in favor.

Carried: 11-5-1.

Effective: January 1, 2024.

An Action Item was approved to request management and committee chairs to develop procedures to transcribe their meetings electronically and archive them for the Board to access for information as needed. As Advisory Council members and other volunteers are added to Committees and Task Forces and all continue to interact with Committees

comprised of primarily non-Board members, accurate summaries of topics discussed will be increasingly important to foster communication and coordination of strategic and business initiatives.

This was not a motion, so no vote taken. I will be the Appeals & Charges (A&C) Chair in 2024. Most of the A&C meetings involve disciplinary hearings and must be private. We are not allowed to share any of our private discussions and details of deliberations. Therefore, we would not be able to provide this.

## BRIDGE

Item 233-BR01 moved that Codification, Chapter IX - Regionals, A Regional Tournament Sanctioning and Scheduling be amended, stating that the ACBL Tournament Department will use distance as the criteria for determining whether there is a conflict (overlap) with any previously scheduled sectional or regional (or traditional date regional). Who will resolve conflicts within the same District, between different Districts within the same Region and between different Regions was defined.

Carried: 16-1-0.

Effective date: November 21, 2023.

I co-sponsored this motion with Joann Glasson (District 4/2023 ACBL President) and voted in favor. It resulted from some issues we had earlier in the year with inconsistent application of unwritten rules for sanctioning tournaments close to other tournaments. Regional-to-Regional or Sectional-to-Regional of less than 425 miles (“as the crow flies”) would trigger an alert. Section-to-Sectional of less than 200 miles would, as well. This did not mean the tournament was not sanctioned – just that discussions would be needed with the relevant local parties, Districts, and Regional Directors.

After one month of implementation, it became apparent that this was requiring an onerous amount of new work by Management – mainly dealing with the Sectional thresholds. We agreed to put forward a new motion in January that repeals the thresholds related to Sectionals, leaving Management to implement as they had in the past until we develop a new proposal for the Louisville BOD meeting.

## ONLINE BRIDGE

The Board received a comprehensive overview of the initiatives undertaken by the Board and management from 2020 to the present, specifically in the context of online bridge. The presentation detailed reports highlighting players' preferred club venues and historical data on table counts. To foster a more focused development of a strategic plan for online bridge, the Board and management engaged in breakout groups where they discussed a series of topics and offered valuable input. Key topics included programs by FTF clubs, VACs, BBO and online providers in general that promote membership recruitment, retention and education; systematically promoting ways to embrace social bridge players; more targeted marketing programs to all types of games

players and how increasing and decreasing masterpoint awards and access to pigmented points online and in FTF games affects membership (if at all). This was one of many such management/Board discussions that will continue to be held in the coming months to help define strategic direction for ACBL.

## NABC SITE SELECTION

The Dallas (Texas) Hyatt Regency was approved as a non-agenda item by unanimous vote as the location for the 2027 spring NABC.

This was the site of the 2006 Spring NABC.

I also briefed on a possible return to Chicago for the Summer 2027 NABC. The proposal was from McCormick Place/Hyatt Regency/Marriott. We did not have financial projections ready to vote in Atlanta. At a Special BOD meeting in early December, we voted not to approve this site. The deal was a good one but the playing site was a good 15-minute walk from the hotels and restaurants (other than in the hotels) were at least four blocks away.

In late December, we considered a proposal from the Sheraton Riverwalk Chicago (site of the Summer 2023 NABC). The location was excellent, players seemed to like the hotel, but we could not get the room rates down to a reasonable level. A vote was held by the Executive Committee (with input from the full BOD) and it was also defeated. We are now considering other locations.

## CERTIFICATION OF ELECTIONS

Joann Glasson, District 4, was certified as having been duly elected to the Board to represent Region 3 for a three-year term, January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2026.

Margot Hennings, Region 4, was elected as ACBL President for a one-year term, January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

Cindy Shoemaker, Region 10, was elected as ACBL Vice President for a one-year term January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

David Lodge, Region 11, was elected by acclamation as ACBL Treasurer for a one-year term January 1, 2024.

Paul Cuneo, Region 9, was elected by acclamation as ACBL 401K Trustee for a one-year term January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 to complete the term of Carlos Munoz, former ACBL Board member.

Joann Glasson, Region 3, was elected by acclamation as ACBL 401K Trustee to complete the term of the vacant position immediately through December 31, 2026.

## APPOINTMENTS

Mitch Dunitz, Region 11, was appointed by ACBL President, Joann Glasson, as the 2024 Nadine Wood Volunteer Member of the Year.

Carried: Unanimous.

Danny Sprung, Region 10, was appointed by ACBL management as the 2024 ACBL Honorary Member of the Year.

Carried: Unanimous.

Judyann Schnorf, District 7, was recommended by the Goodwill Committee and approved by the Board as the 2024 Goodwill Member of the Year.

Carried: Unanimous.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at the email address above. I welcome hearing from you.

*Larry Sealy*