

**ACBL Advisory Council Fall Special Meeting**

**Attendance: 54**

**Quorum: Yes**

**Doug Couchman** Called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:00 PM Eastern Time.

**Brett Kunin D3** moved to approve the minutes from Chicago (seconded) – passed unanimously.

**The vote for the Bylaws amendment 22S2-S204 regarding the Office of Treasurer of the ACBL passed 18-0 confirming the bylaws change effective immediately.** This action affects the election of the Treasurer and aligns with the Treasurer being a member of the Board.

Steve asked that we confirm a quorum is present. Doug confirmed that a quorum was present. (25 members and at least half of the Districts present).

Motion for Reconsideration on 232-BR02 the issue of proctored sites for grass roots events failed unanimously. The provision put in place during the pandemic allowing remote play without proctoring was extended. Doug mentioned that no reconsideration motion has ever changed the Board’s vote.

EDGAR Agreement – ACBL will use the EDGAR tool to crack down on online cheating. Congratulations to Bronia and Management for getting the agreement done.

(Some members had difficulty attending this meeting – there was confusion about what link to use. The first link did not work as intended).

Doug mentioned that two pages of the .pdf file on Board Motions shared prior to this meeting were out of page order. Doug discussed the difficulty with having a clear agenda from the Board and their timeline not allowing us to have much time to consider their proposals. The Board now closes their agenda 10 days prior to their meeting instead of 30 days. Late changes to the agenda are happening. We have to think about how best to do this. When do we want to meet? What’s the best way for us to be effective? Board is now 17 people and will be 13 Jan 1, 2024.

**Board of Directors Motions:**

ID	Title	Action
233-BR01:	<p>Regional and Sectional Tournament Sanctioning</p> <p>Why not use attendance data – how many players played in both? Concerns about mileage in NE USA. Changes to the motion made in 24 hours prior to this meeting. Provides a process for screening new tournaments and potential schedule conflicts.</p> <p><b>Brett Kunin D3</b> – President Unit 140. Mileage limits are out of whack. Depends on where you are. Texas is different from the East Coast. In the East, no one travels more than an hour and fifteen minutes. ACBL is driving his unit crazy with Northern NY and South Jersey – places that don’t mix. Mileage is way too big.</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – Fast Results offers map of attendees – might be more prudent to look at number of players overlapping both tournaments.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> - Agreed with Brett. Mileage is outrageous for a densely populated area in the Northeast. Type of tournament matters.</p> <p><b>Richard Popper Past Chair</b> – These things get worked out. We have sectionals when Northern NJ has sectionals. There’s no problem here.</p>	

	<p><b>Len Fettig D16</b> – 500 and 200 mile radii were arbitrary. Footprint for a regional is 200 miles. Beyond 300 miles is not a conflict. Sectionals are 150 miles. We are in a low density area. Consider density of units and districts. 500 mile sis too much. This is just a flagging mechanism not a prohibition mechanism.</p> <p><b>Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.</b> – Main reason for using distance and not google Maps is to be consistent with how the tourney trax technology works.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hoglund D2</b> – How can we change this? Rule should be workable.</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – motion is to define what we are to do about a distance issue, not to manage the trigger distances.</p> <p><b>Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.</b> – 250 for sectionals is not changing. We are increasing the radius to 500 for regionals.</p> <p><b>Joann Glasson ACBL President</b> – This is a guideline to prompt discussion. There is no control in this motion.</p> <p><b>John Jones D23</b> – Disagrees with notion hat this always gets worked out. 4 Years ago we had a major issue with a long Beach and Palm Springs (about 130 miles apart). Anger remains. If we really mean 100 miles, make it 100 miles. Make the rule enforceable. People don’t always agree.</p> <p><b>Georgia Heth ACBL Past President</b> – In 1980 the distances were 500 and 250. 425 is good for regionals sectionals should be 150.</p> <p><b>Bob Heller ACBL Past Pres.</b> – Not understand why an intra-district dispute should ever surface. Work these out with the District tournament coordinator. The problem is when we deal with 2 Districts. People need to remember in the densely populated areas we have a lot of little towns and small cities – many players live between these small cities. They really are competing for the same people.</p> <p><b>Brett Kunin D3</b> – 7-week delay in approval for a new sanction. Somebody else got the sanction in the interim. The delay by ACBL caused my conflict.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – at the confluence of 4 Districts. As a practical matter Pennsylvania is barely a concern. Connecticut is a concern for sectionals. NYC collaborates. Distances create a huge problem because of our proximity.</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – we are taking no votes. I will pass along our feedback.</p>	
233-FN01:	<p><b>Junior Fund Money</b> Concern about Canadian contribution not getting an increase. Canada has \$240K on hand for youth bridge. Considering eliminating the CBF contribution until CBF participates fully in youth bridge.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hoglund D2</b> – Why ws the CBF fund not raised proportionally? USBF raised 15K. CBF stayed the same.</p> <p><b>David Lodge (Chair Finance Committee)</b> – The CBF contriubution is \$25K/year. They have a large stockpile due to no activity for juniors (exceeds \$240K). Will discuss not only not increasing the CBF contribution, but eliminating it until the</p>	

	CBF demonstrates active participation in Junior Bridge. They claim they are spending \$20K per year but have not spent that in the pas several years.	
233-FN02:	<p>Grass Roots Fund Distribution</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – Favors the cap. Strongly dislike the notion that the excess funds go to the general fund. Either create a fund for future GR games, or return the funds to the clubs and teachers who created them.</p> <p><b>John Dickenson D4</b> – Where Can I go to find out how a District gets GR Funds. We have to cut back on support for our teams unless we get more funds.</p> <p><b>Joann Glasson President ACBL</b> – GR Games collect monies sent to ACBL. ACBL sends a check every year for past year’s funds. Some Districts have been more active participating. D4 has not been so active. D4 needs to get more active running more GR games.</p> <p><b>David Lodge</b> – 15-20% is redistributed in a complicated formula to reward outsized contributions by small Districts. Money sent to District is offset by any entries paid for by the ACBL to GR Finals.</p> <p><b>Mike Cassell</b> – Best way to raise GR monies is to have all clubs run GR funds as often is possible. Monies are to be used for the special events, not for anything the District wants, as long as they build interest in NAP and GNT. Districts 6, 7, and 12 were bringing in more money than they can use. There is no accountability for use of GR Funds.</p>	
233-GV01:	<p>Removal of Audit Checklist from the Codification</p> <p>Consent Calendar (unanimous committee recommendation w/o objection by anyone on the Board – usually approved without discussion). Simplifying the codification regarding the audit committee. The Audit Committee is a Committee of the Board. Any change to the Codification requires a motion form the Board of Directors. This can interfere with Management decisions and leeway.</p>	
233-GV02:	<p>Modification of Audit Committee Responsibilities in the Codification</p> <p>Want no officers of the Board on the Audit Committee, but the Board is reducing to 13 members.</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> - Reject phrase in 1.2.1 "and other such duties as may be relegated to it by the Board of Directors." as too broad. The word "such" depends on context and could be easily misinterpreted. Please change the wording to limit the scope to the Audit Committee’s responsibilities.</p>	
233-GV03:	<p>Statement of ACBL Board Relationship to Executive Director and</p> <p>Revision of Appendix containing ACBL Executive Director Employment Agreement in the Codification</p> <p>Consent Calendar.</p>	
233-GV04:	<p>Goodwill Committee</p> <p>Honorific awards to be held in the Spring.</p>	
233-GV05:	<p>Employee and Consultants Codification Amendment</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> - Any employee policy that impacts Districts, Units, Clubs, or Teachers should be in the view of and subject to comment by the Advisory Council, Units and Clubs. Concerned that the Employee Handbook is not visible to these parties.</p>	
233-GV06:	<p>Good Standing</p> <p>What if you are not a member? Resigned to avoid discipline? Differentiates between lapsed payment and ethical or behavioral violations.</p>	
233-GV07:	CDR Good Standing re: Club Officers	

233-GV08:

**Unit Rebate Allocation**

Belief that 11% rebate to Units not being used for building members. Membership Committee Task Force recommends this change. Changes rebate to 5% with potential to earn up to 10% more with proof of recruiting and retention.

Accountability is necessary, but this isn't the way to do it. This proposal makes assumptions about the control points for recruiting and retention that are not real. Whether the Units deserve the 11% rebate is a different issue. The ACBL removed its Membership Committee Handbook in 2018 and has not provided an update. How can one expect this to work without proper training?

Do not cut Unit Allocation unless and until the Board and Management can prove that Unit activities can possibly achieve the results requested. Also prove that Units have a major impact on recruiting and retention beyond what teachers and club managers do before requiring year after year better results. This creates futility not accountability.

Instead, invest in clubs and teachers. Create them and train them. Then require that Units create the social environment that fosters retention. Teachers are a first experience and clubs the second. For many newbies, clubs represent the ACBL. Units and their boards are far removed from direct contact with prospects. Newbies don't know who they are.

**Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.** – We call it the 5-5-5 plan. Units get 5%. Requires some measure of retention and recruiting. (Measures and capability not discussed).

**Brett Kunin D3** – I have voiced strong objections to this proposal. We have a strong Youth Program in our Unit. This proposal will kill out Youth Program.

**Len Fettig D16** – Not new – our committee has been working on best practices for units. Very slow process. Unclear how Units would implement improvements. Wide range of Unit Capabilities limits what can be done. Monies are a small amount. Need small, medium and large Unit Standards. Timing for implementation is unrealistically short. Don't like this approach to recruitment and retention. We need positive incentives. We need a better tone and a more thought our process. Get standards and process in place before implementing the change.

**Jay Apfelbaum D4** (via Doug Couchman)– Effective date March 31, 2024 is for taking away funds, and not the additional funds. Also the motion needs to add the word additional to emphasize the 10% is indeed additional.

**Steve Moese D11** – Supports Len Fettig's comments. Asking for accountability on Unit rebate funds is a good idea. Using retention and recruitment data as the qualifying metric is a bad idea. Unit Boards do not control retention and recruiting – that's done by others – teachers and club managers. Units have a great deal of work to ensure player socialization and the membership ask happen at the right time. Less necessary if teachers and club managers had an incentive to do just that. Cutting the payment to Units and requiring objectives that Units have no levers to control is a wrong ask. The last Membership Committee was published in 2013. It was taken down several years ago. It addresses how to interpret the I/O monthly report and lists the special events Units are to sponsor. It does nothing to help Units manage player socialization, keeping newbies engaged, when is the right

	<p>time to ask new players to join the ACBL. These tools need to be in place before the change in payments happens.</p> <p><b>John Dickenson D4</b> – Discussed with Jay Apfelbaum. Happy to hear that the 10% figure is indeed incremental. Metrics and mechanisms need to be in place before the change is implemented. We need to know the goals and metrics before the cut is implemented.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – We got the old ACBL Membership Handbook in the prework. A Unit spends money how the ACBL wants. On Recruitment, youth bridge, etc. What happens if we spend but get no results? Snowbird behavior changes retention. Not under our control. I see definitional problems in setting goals and defining what a Unit is supposed to do. Success can't be guaranteed and results cannot be fairly judged.</p> <p><b>Georgia Heth Past President</b> – Worked on the original proposal. First 5% would be easy to earn. Based on % of Unit population. Procedures must be in place before implementation. This issue has been raised on the Board for more than 5 years. This is the first motion that is fair, workable and something to be done.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Heglund D2</b> – This year we had many members pass away. We don't control deaths. How much is spent on education. In our Unit we subsidize education by the Clubs. Subsidies should be considered too. Might not be successful. More than one goal should support the incremental 10%.</p> <p><b>Georgia Heth</b> – Units will need to report deaths in a timely fashion. This will adjust Unit goals.</p> <p>Doug mentioned supporting comments in the chat. The Board cares very much about how to make this work.</p>	
233-GV01:	AI Committee Meetings Transcription Action Item	
AC233-01	<p><b><u>Motion-Create-Teacher-and-Club-Manager-Committee-of-the-Corporation</u></b>  By Steve Moese D11 for the AC Teacher &amp; Club Manager Committee  Move the ACBL from a cohort of separate businesses to the ACBL as the leader of the bridge ecosystem.  We urge the AC to vote yes to establish a Committee of the Corporation that will be staffed with teachers and club managers that have a proven track record of growing prospects members and tournament players.  (Seconded)</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – questioned the authority to act.  <b>Steve Moese D11</b> – a Committee of the Corporation cannot act on the behalf of the board but must present proposals to the Board and Management.  <b>Wybrand Heglund D2</b> – Nothing in place for Clubs and Teachers right now? What about membership clubs?  <b>Steve Moese D11</b> – The sanction holder is the Club Manager in ACBL language. Doug focused everyone on the simple language of the motion. The discussion is only in support of that language.  <b>Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.</b> – We have Monthly Teacher and Unit President and quarterly District President meetings now. Communication is a challenge we are constantly working on.</p>	17-10 Passed

	<p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – These zoom conversations are very welcomed. Most of the meetings are for operations and immediate decisions. What we offer here is a vehicle for policy deliberations on issued that materially affect Clubs and Teachers</p> <p><b>Martin Hirschman D12</b> - Bronia – Do you want this Committee?</p> <p><b>Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.</b> – I do not have a strong feeling on this committee. I talk to Steve Moese and Patty Tucker often. If this committee will give us input, that’s OK. People can best help us by DOING the things that need done. We have lots of ideas and are working to bring the ideas into doable pieces to get them done. Not always as easy doing things form the inside. We are partners with the Clubs, VACBs, BBO, ABTA, other NBO’s. We are always trying to make things better for each other. We work together we are all in the same boat. This concept that the ACBL is against clubs or VACBS or others is anathema to me. I understand we are competing for the same people. That’s why we want to grow the membership and improve retention.</p> <p><b>Martin Hirschman D12</b> – Not want to saddle Bronia with more work than what she has already.</p> <p><b>Len Fetting D16</b> – We already have a Teacher and Club Committee and a Teacher’s roundtable, what is missing? Do we need to add a few voices</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – The real need is to have a voice in policy. The AC Committee has had limited success in the past 5 years. By having the Board control the Committee and appoint members they will listen to should help all clubs and teachers. We want to provide a forum where discernment will happen</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – Membership of our AC Committee if we are not effective we can appoint new members. Will look into the constitution of the membership next year.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hوجلund D2</b> – Never heard of the Teacher and Club Manager Committee.</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – Our committee does not have a way to communicate to our stakeholders except through our AC meetings.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hوجلund D2</b> – How many know about this committee?</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – Steve brings something to the meetings every time. Everyone is aware of the committee.</p>	
AC233-02	<p><b><u>Proposal-Restructure-VACB-Sanctions.</u></b>  By Steve Moese D11 for the AC Teacher &amp; Club Manager Committee  Important that this be a discussion item for our discernment that informs management and leadership about what matters. Management must make the final choice based on organization capability, contract requirements, and other considerations not in our view.</p> <p>What should we do now with VACB sanctions? Is it OK that 5-6 alliances earn most of the profits? Is it OK that small games some run by teachers for their students, cannot run in the current environment because everyone is chasing large games and masterpoints? The Teacher and Club manager committee recommends all these steps as an interim condition to stabilize the online black point games. We believe the real issue is the BBO Contract, which we deal with separately.</p>	

	<p>This is purposely a discussion item because the issues are complex and the solution has many facets. We need to hear your inputs, and want the AC to work toward a collective direction to help guide Management and the Board.</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – The proposal is a way to limit VACBs in favor of face-to-face. I hear from members around the country who need the VACBs. They would be hurt by any limitations on VACBs. There are many folks who are in favor of face to face. Online bridge is important to the eco-system. Any further limitations on online play will be bad for bridge. I want more online opportunities not fewer. I oppose every limitation in the proposal.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – I play almost exclusively online bridge. I am fully supportive of putting limits on VACBs to get people back to clubs. This doesn't address what BBO does. What BBO does is important because clubs in my area are not offering what I need. How does this proposal affect teachers?</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – We are unable to affect BBO in any material way until the contract ends in 2025. We are providing guidelines as they approach the new contract for online bridge. Teachers will be able to run teaching games online. Many teachers report losing players because they move to bigger VACB games.</p> <p>Doug clarified that the BBO contract ends June 30, 2025.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hoglund D2</b> – Discussed the proposal to limit VACBs to one sanction managing all weekly games.</p>	
AC233-03	<p><b><u>Proposal-Future-BBO Online-Contracts</u></b>  By Steve Moese D11 for the AC Teacher &amp; Club Manager Committee  This is the most important discussion topic – we have 19 months before the ACBL takes action. Reviews the key actions and highlights the errors made in the current contract.</p> <p>The Teacher and Club Manger Committee wants an open online market that enables all club managers to run online games without risk of monopoly/Oligopoly or hyper share concentration, and competition for club game business among all BSPs who meet minimum performance standards.</p> <p><b>Martin Hirschman D12</b> – Great we are addressing this now. I could add other problems we have with BBO. Virtual bridge has blossomed into something big and real and very popular. We need online bridge. We need to take a broad look than this proposal. Maybe ACBL should be running all of online bridge. Perhaps we can Buy BBO and run it as we see fit. It's a big idea. We need to look at the overall picture.</p> <p><b>Georgia Heth District 8</b> – Financial implications cost \$550K perhaps \$750K to \$1MM.</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – If we talk financial impact, we have to include how many new members have been created by BBO over the past 2 years. What is our membership record over the same period? What is the income impact to the ACBL for the loss of 30-40K members? What is the impact of the loss of 1000 bridge clubs had the</p>	

	<p>combination of online bridge and the pandemic had not happened. Focusing on the \$550K fee to the ACBL is short sighted and will cause us to fail.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – Part of the proposal deals with the player experience online. Improving the communication with directors and managing the clock to discuss issues. The players need communication too.</p> <p><b>Wybrand Hoglund D2</b> – ACBL should be talking t the Dutch Bridge Association. They have their own program and can do whatever they want. I play online often. Can talk directly to the director. Time can be managed according to need. 100-fold better than BBO ever will be.</p> <p><b>Bronia Jenkins Exec. Dir.</b> – Love the concept of better IT and better user interfaces. We run 12 different systems in 8 different languages. Talked with the Australians who have great IT. BBO is stable and steady. They do some recruiting and retention (a campaign this year yielding good results). It is a complex landscape, but do not want to underestimate that BBO has been a good partner to us. When the pandemic came, BBO stepped in to help. Online bridge and face to face bridge are different</p> <p><b>Richard Popper Past Chair</b> – Details about IT are not proper for a motion. Trust management to get this right.</p> <p><b>Martin Hirschman</b> – Even though we are thankful to BBO for hat they have done we need to look at the broad future. If we buy our own system we get all the money. Also we would control the details of the system. What competes with face to face? Maybe we don't want games every hour? We would return to the monopoly on masterpoints that we use to have.</p> <p><b>Hugh McSheffry D19</b> – Very impressed with this presentation to our Council. If the ACBL had its own platform, we could use it for teaching.</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – I love article 12 D – Really important that BBO bridge does not conform to the laws of bridge. We've been saying for 4 years that artificially adjusted scores would be introduced. BBO has no incentive to follow Bridge laws.</p>	
AC233-04	<p><b><u>Proposal-Update-ACBL-Membership-Committee-Handbook</u></b>  By Steve Moese D11 for the AC Teacher &amp; Club Manager Committee  We need a guidebook before any action is taken on the Unit Rebate. We need standards for membership activities.</p> <p>This is a discussion topic and a proposed guideline toward a solution that can be crafted and implemented by ACBL Management. We believe that a list of thoughtful questions focused on what we know works regarding recruiting and member retention is the best start, and we are sure many more creative people can provide a compelling finish. We do not believe that a handbook based on how to read the I/O Monthly Report or what the Unit special game offerings are is effective.</p> <p>Do you agree that the ACBL should publish new guidelines ASAP to assist Units with their membership duties?</p> <p><b><u>Deprecated Handbook</u></b></p>	



AC233-05	<p><b><u>Proposal-For-Regional-TD-Costs</u></b></p> <p>On behalf of District 11 by Steve Moese</p> <p>Proposed new pricing scheme to share attendance risks for the weak third session of regionals that run 3 sessions per day. Tournaments must select pricing prior to start of tournament. Actual prices TBD by Management.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – Is this limiting this to 2-session games?</p> <p><b>Steve Moese D11</b> – No – This is a proposal to mitigate the risk of low attendance.</p> <p><b>Jason Fuhrman D3</b> – recommends a larger table count for the price break.</p> <p><b>Doug Couchman</b> – This is a request for lower pricing. Management should determine what they think they should charge for our tournaments.</p>	
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Doug mentioned that there will be elections and honorary appointments in these Board Meetings.

Steve Moese moved the meeting adjourn. Steve Gaynor seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Steve Moese K082411  
Vice Chair, Advisory Council  
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DH	D19 Hugh McSheffrey		D5 Dian Petrov	
DM	D20 Merle Stetser		David D22 REP Sizemore	
DA	D21, Anne Hollingsworth		Dennis Carman	
DGEU	D5 Dian Petrov		Donald Mamula	
DD	David D22 REP Sizemore		Georgia Heth, D8	
	Dennis Carman		Jackie Zayac R12 Director	
DM	Donald Mamula		Jeff Chapman	
GH	Georgia Heth, D8		Joann Glasson	
JZ	Jackie Zayac R12 Director		johndjones44@yahoo.com	
JC	Jeff Chapman		Jonathan Steinberg Region One	
JG	Joann Glasson		Kyle Rockoff	
J	johndjones44@yahoo.com		Larry Sealy - Region 7 Director	
JS	Jonathan Steinberg Region One		Lawrence Sunser	
KR	Kyle Rockoff		Len Fettig D-15	
MH	Margot Hennings			
MA	Mark Aquino			
	Monica D/17			
PC	past chair Richard Popper			
PH	past prez-Bob Heller			
RT	R13D Tim White			
R1	region 10 director			
SG	Sabrina Goley			
SS	Shawn Stringer - D6			
	Steven Gaynor D14			
SG	Stu Goodgold DD21			
	Susan Bailey-Carman			