

Executive Summary - Advisory Council Meeting – Video Conference.**Membership:**

130,614 down **4416** vs October 1YrAgo (135,030). However, the good news is that **2,759** P10mo net change due to increased recruitment and recovered members is the smallest net change in 4 years. Nov 2023 showed no lapsed members. (Working projection is -5% YoY membership decline for the near future).

Online Bridge:

Shows stable strong preferences among members. Active players 82,879 up slightly from 80,868 one year ago. Face-to-Face players 62,691 up from 56,801 one year ago. VACB Players 17,716 are down from 22,936 One Year Ago. Note that the sum of F2F and VACB 80,407 changed little from 1YrAgo 79,737. BBO Only players 12,083 are down little vs 1YrAgo 12,352. Online Bridge is a good teaching tool. Online offers access to bridge for many people.

Finance:

Change in Net Assets at **\$237K** YTD October 2023 is ahead of 2023 Budget **\$109K**

- Revenues are **\$616K** above Budget and **\$817K** above 1YrAgo. NABCs are **\$289K** above budget. Regionals and Sectionals are **\$201K** above Budget. Club Table fees are below budget by **(\$278K)**. Membership revenue up **2.2%** vs Budget.
- Expenses are **(\$526K)** over budget led by field operations **(\$470K)**. Marketing savings **\$225K** cancels Executive expense overrun **(\$225K)**. Facilities are **(\$159K)** over budget.

Capital spending YTD: \$552K of \$625K budget spent to date. Masterpoint Engine overspent \$261K vs \$125K Budget. AS400 Modernization \$290 lags vs. \$500 K budget.

2024 Budget: \$16,387K Revenue \$16,700K Expenses net **(\$313K)** projected loss. Flat membership but dues increase **\$10** per person. Projecting **3%** increase in tournament and **5%** increase in club tables. Expenses increase **(1,497K)** led by Field Operations **(\$742K)** and Meeting Services **(\$660K)**.

2024 Budget Gap Plan: 3rd Silver Lining Week \$45K; Add 2 Stardust Weeks \$100K; Restore Max MP online to 4 \$115K; Monthly weekend pop up events \$15K.

Management:

New **5%/5%/5% Unit Rebate** replaces flat 11%. Units are incentivized to provide data on lapsed members, reduce member lapses, and increase recruiting new members. Goal is for Units to earn 15% of Member dues.

Member Retention at zero loss in November due to new lapsed member spreadsheet developed by Jay Whipple and implemented by Clubs and Units.

IT (Director Marcin Waslowicz) continues infrastructure modernization. Plan in place to simplify and harmonize 16 work systems using 8 different languages. Interoperability is essential.

NABC Costs impacted by room attrition – players need to stay at the site hotel to make tournaments affordable. EDGAR Agreement in hand – work to ensure efficient implementation is underway.

(Table counts for club games by F2F, VACB, and BBO, and table counts for sectionals and Regionals, were not shared with the Advisory Council). Unofficial table count data is available at:

https://medcitybridge.com/R_other%20pages/work/F2F%20Updates.html

Submitted Respectfully,
Stephen Moese K082411,
Vice Chair ACBL Advisory Council

[AUDIO RECORDING](#)

AGENDA

Doug called the meeting to order at 7 PM ET. He reviewed our last meeting and suggested several ways for us to improve how we communicate. We can improve by avoiding talking for talking's sake, by knowing what we are talking about, and by not talking unless we are on topic and have something new to add. The recording started 4 minutes after the meeting was called to order.

A quorum was confirmed present for the AC Meeting.

Doug Couchman suspended the agenda order and called on Nancy Strohmer who moved that the Advisory Council recognize all new Life Masters seconded by Doug Couchman – carried by acclamation. Nancy also moved to thank Region 5, volunteers and tournament chairs. Doug Couchman Seconded – carried by acclamation.

Minutes from the November 12, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes. Steve Moese motion Steve Gaynor Second. Minutes approved.

Doug thanked Joann Glasson for her 2- year service as President of the ACBL. Joann was not able to attend.

Doug mentioned that Jennifer Webster – ACBL Director of Finance – was unable to attend this meeting as she is moving into her new home.

Management Report – Bronia Jenkins

Will send the presentation she gave to the Board of Directors to the Advisory Council soon. Toplines:

- 1) New director of IT Marcin Wasłowicz understands IT, understands ACBL IT, and understands bridge operations. He is working really well and will move us forward.
- 2) We are running on 16 different critical systems in 8 different languages.
- 3) EBL software does not do stratification and they do not plan to rewrite their software. Software is not our solution.
- 4) Swiss Teams run on BridgeMates is important. This won't help with retention and recruitment but will help with player experience at the NABCs. We need to do it ourselves.
- 5) Marcin Wasłowicz (IT Director) has a plan to harmonize key software on one interconnected platform, and it will take time.
- 6) Evening entertainment was well received. Helps bring the community together.
- 7) Spades event was excellent – but disappointing from an attendance perspective. (Alabama – Georgia game was a conflict) Got no HS nor college kids. We did get 35-50-year-olds.
- 8) Lots of problems with people not staying at the host hotel – causing attrition payments (penalties for not meeting room quotas) to the hotel. We all need to be aware that we want players to stay at the host hotel
- 9) Membership growth initiatives:
 - a. Social bridge
 - b. Come play cards with us, and
 - c. Marketing to pickle ball clubs.
- 10) Retention – did not lose any members in November because Jay Whipple's tool provides a dynamic collaborative spreadsheet used at the Unit and club level.
- 11) The Board passed the new 5/5/5 Unit Rebate plan. Units get 5% automatically then incremental results in retention and in recruiting. 2.5% incremental just for filling out the spread sheet. Metrics are achievable. Goal is to pay the 15% to every unit.

Questions –

Bronia: We have an agreement to use EDGAR. We are working to determine how best to use it. When should there be warnings, when should there be fast track discipline. How do we partner with BBO and EDGAR to be effective. Working on changes to the CDR for best impact. Working with Appeals & Charges Committee to improve the CDR. Separated the CDR into 2 parts –

- Hugh:** – Does the discussion with BBO allow access to records of suspects outside of ACBL sanctioned games?

Anne Hollingsworth D21 – How did the overall attendance in Atlanta turn out?

Peter Marcus D25 – When does the 5/5/5 plan go into effect. Units are planning for 2024 already. Would hope that 11% happens in 2024, then 5/5/5 in 2025. Concern Units will not have time to plan for success. Also, I'm interested in the litigation report.

Doug Couchman requested that all meeting attendees remain muted unless recognized by the chair.

Bronia: November was the first month where we didn't lose any members. Due to the hard work being done in Units and clubs, we turned the trend around. See link to data from the spreadsheet

Proposed 5/5/5 Profile as of 2023-09																							
Summary Stats (388 Units)																							
Retained by ACBE: 5,42,792.19 / Pct of old 11% paid to state: 63.37%																							
Units Exceeding 11%: 35,51,166.73																							
Retention Awards: 114,80,139.87																							
Escrowing Awards: 120,825,146.78																							
Achieving 15% for all units ==> 3499 Additional New Members and 4327 Less Lost Members for a net change of: 8017																							
Performance Drivers: (on top of Base: 5%)																							
2.5% Retention: (product awards)			2.5% Retention: (relative to unit membership)			5% Recruit: (relative to geographic footprint)																	
Target: 1.5% of Unit membership awards			Quip 12 Month Losses as Pct of Attendance			Quip 12 Month New Members as Pct of Pre-Covid																	
Grade Per 5 Pay			Grade Per Covid Pay			Grade Per Covid Pay																	
A=	100	100	A=	0	100	A=	100	100															
A	90	90	A	5	90	A	90	90															
B	80	80	B	5.5	80	B	80	80															
C	75	75	C	6	70	C	75	85															
D	70	80	D	6.5	25	D	70	70															
	0	0		7	0		85	0															
Top Ten Dollar Retention Awards:																							
Quar	Dist	Unit	Act/Me	OldQDol	NewQDol	BaseQDol	ActGrade	ActPerDol	RetGrade	RetPerDol	RecGrade	RecPerDol	Quar	Dist	Unit	Act/Me	OldQDol	NewQDol	BaseQDol	ActGrade	ActPerDol	RetGrade	RetPerDol
202309 04		141	2316	3,120.81	3,262.67	1,418.55	0	B	567.42	A	1276.7	202309 04		141	2316	3,120.81	3,262.67	1,418.55	0	B			
202309 13		123	2534	3,414.87	3,181.76	1,552.08	0	C	388.82	B	1241.66	202309 13		123	2534	3,414.87	3,181.76	1,552.08	0	C			
202309 12		256	1085	1,866.29	1230.03	848.31	0	A	361.74	0		202309 28		256	1085	1,866.29	1230.03	848.31	0	A			
202309 01		192	1158	1,829.91	1164.49	831.78	0	B	352.71	0		202309 16		297	967	1,303.89	1184.36	792.29	0				
202309 04		112	928	1,250.48	852.60	568.49	0	A*	284.2	0		202309 10		179	878	1,183.11	1317.56	537.78	0	A			
202309 12		189	892	1,201.87	829.53	546.35	0	A*	273.18	0		202309 07		233	1745	2,351.19	1892.22	1,098.81	0				
202309 10		179	878	1,183.11	1317.56	537.78	0	A	242	A*	837.78	202309 07		214	832	1,255.87	1084.62	570.65	0				

Will discuss with Unit and District Presidents how to use this tool. Will provide video tutorials. ACBL will support the broad application of this spreadsheet. We need answers to: Why are people elapsing? Why are they leaving the ACBL? Who is dying?

Doug Couchman: 2.5% goes to the Units for simply updating the data base.

Finance Report

[YTD 2023 Budget](#) (← link)

[2024 Budget](#) (← link)

Finance Director **Jennifer Webster** not able to attend. See the two slide sets. No questions

Litigation Report (Bronia Jenkins)

- 1) Labor issue. Still awaiting final determination. We think we have agreement but not the final judgment. Case is not closed. Directors will go to hourly pay except for area managers who manage people and those working at HQ.
- 2) Federal Court Case by Gary Hann suing for emotional distress from discipline from a zoom call.
- 3) Phoenix Sheraton – problems arose from the room attrition during the 2022 Phoenix NABCs.

Peter Marcus D25 – We are not in agreement on the labor dispute.

No further questions

Doug thanked Bronia for everything she is doing for bridge.

Doug Couchman – Chair Report to the Advisory Council

Board of Director (BoD) Minutes are not available for this meeting. Doug-reviewed Board of Directors actions –

[BOARD MOTIONS](#)

Doug congratulated Margot Hennings as the new ACBL President starting Jan 2024. Cindy Shoemaker is VP, Treasurer David Lodge; Paul Cuneo and Joann Glasson are 401K Trustees. Mitch Dunitz is the Honorary Member of the year and Danny Sprung is the Volunteer of the year.

The CDR revisions necessary to make EDGAR work optimally are extensive. Matter is under work based on BoD input to Management.

ID	Title	BoD Action
233 AC03	CDR Revision (EDGAR)	Withdrawn
233-BR01:	Regional and Sectional Tournament Sanctioning Peter Marcus – were there any changes in how the events are sanctioned? Doug: no, no changes in the sanction process itself.	Passed 16-1-0-0
233-FN01:	Junior Fund Money	Passed 14-0-0-3
233-FN02:	Grass Roots Fund Distribution	Failed 2-13-1-1
233-FN03	Annual Budget	Passed 17-0-0-0
233-GV01:	Removal of Audit Checklist from the Codification	Passed on consent
233-GV02:	Modification of Audit Committee Responsibilities in the Codification	Passed on consent
233-GV03:	Statement of ACBL Board Relationship to Executive Director and Revision of Appendix containing ACBL Executive Director Employment Agreement in the Codification	Passed on consent
233-GV04:	Goodwill Committee Altered – placed meeting in the Summer. Biggest NABC	10-5-1-1
233-GV05:	Employee and Consultants Codification Amendment	Passed 16-0-0-1
233-GV06:	Good Standing	Withdrawn
233-GV07:	CDR Good Standing re: Club Officers	Withdrawn
233-GV08:	Unit Rebate Allocation (aka MTF01)	Passed 15-2-0-0

Steve Moese D11 – Discussed the need for communicating key management documents one week prior to this meeting. We got them only hours before today.

Doug Couchman mentioned extenuating circumstances and changes in approach for the timing of the documents. Doug suggested the timing of our meetings impeded sharing.

Bob Heller – Past President – Asked if mileage limits were defined? No mileage limit constraints were instituted. What is the ballpark cost of a Goodwill Meeting? No data available. Summer tournaments are in the large metro areas. The spring tournaments are smaller and in smaller cities. I expect costs will be less in the spring. They serve different audiences. How much more would it be if we had both meetings to appeal to different members.

(From Margot Hennings Chat: 2022 and 2023 ACBL budgets for the Goodwill Committee were both right around \$43+K for three GW receptions).

Georgia Heth D8 – A motion to reconsider does not accomplish what Bob wants. The AC would have to propose a new motion to do 2 Goodwill Meetings per year. Opposes reconsideration because it doesn't do what Bob H. wants done.

Peter Marcus D25 – Sanctioning rules apply to Districts with a shared border. The new rule had a mileage limit that might affect Districts not direct neighbors. Concern that there was an enforced limit applied by the new motion.

Doug Couchman: There is a conflict resolution mechanism for non-contiguous Districts.

MOTIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION – None.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Bob Heller Past President – Wants to consider how we can best use online meetings to improve our AC meetings. Why can't we meet when all the documentation and meeting minutes are available? Who schedules these AC meetings? Because we no longer meet face-to-face, I can't understand why the meetings are tied to the final Sunday of the NABC. We need the BoD Minutes to conduct our meeting. Why can't we run our meeting when they become available.

Doug Couchman – the bylaws state that the meeting must be held in conjunction with the NABCs. Members have pushed back threatening litigation if the meeting occurs after the NABC ends. We might need a bylaws change.

Richard Popper Past Chair – We should go back to having live meetings at the NABCs. Let's look into a hybrid meeting. Should be no additional cost to the league.

Doug Couchman: Bylaws state that all meetings will be virtual. Holding hybrid meetings is really expensive. Hoping we can do one last year. Reno showed us it is not trivial.

Bronia Jenkins: We are not doing any hybrid meetings. Just not happening. If everyone was going to the NABC we could do in-person meetings. If we need to change the bylaws to have the meetings after the NABC, we should do that.

Doug Couchman asked AC members to contact him directly by email to volunteer for a group to work on improving the AC meeting and work process.

David Sizemore – Subcommittee of one person from each district to meet at the NABC so we can work face to face.

Jay Apfelbaum – Exact language is: in conjunction with" This allows us to have the meeting after the information is available. The language of the bylaws is subject to interpretation. We need the documents in our hands so that we can

discuss intelligently. Jay volunteered to be on this Committee. People who make decisions based on fear of litigation should rethink how they are making decisions. Make the right choice and let them sue.

Steve Moese D11 – Puzzled why documents available in the past in advance of the first Sunday meeting wasn't ready for this meeting. Perhaps we can avoid the language concern from the bylaws and meet on the second Sunday with documents in hand in advance. Steve read the language in the bylaws.

Doug Couchman: The timing of the documents is on me. We simply do not have the minutes from the Board meeting.

Steve Moese: The Management Report and Litigation Report are key for our deliberations.

Bronia Jenkins: I didn't share my presentation with the Board with the AC. I do not write reports as seen in the past. I make presentations. I am happy to give this group a presentation with details. Sabrina has been working nonstop in matters with pressing deadlines. I cannot ask Sabrina nor myself to do more work than I am doing.

Jay Apfelbaum – Not appropriate to blame anyone about what we have and don't have. We are in uncharted waters with the changes in BoD and AC. The solution is to get the information we want without burdening Management or interfering with the BoD. That's the project. Recriminations and apologies are unnecessary.

Bronia: I view us all as working together. We have to look upon each other with kind eyes. We have to work together as a team. We should be happy with where we are going.

Martin Hirschman D12 – About 35 years ago I was sued by Gary Hann and a since deceased tournament director in Michigan Courts. I want more details (link sent).

Doug Couchman – write to me to volunteer to work on:

- 1) Changes to the bylaws for our meetings
- 2) Procedures for our body
- 3) Sequencing the meetings in step with the Board of Directors.

Steve Moese D11 – Would the AC accept a motion that would require all voting AC members to have paid dues (or LM sustaining fees) in order to have voting rights on this council.

Doug Couchman: This is a good idea and something we might be able to do already. I want us to consider this as part of the overall review of procedures by the committee.

Peter Marcus D25 – Motion to reconsider the motion 233-BR01 failed for lack of a second.

Bronia: Within a District the District Coordinator resolves the issue. Across 2 Districts if sectionals are closer than 150 miles and Regionals closer than 425 miles then the two leaders resolve the issue. This identifies the criteria to flag a potential conflict for further discussion.

Doug Couchman read the motion and identified that there is new language outlining the procedure to resolve disputes.

Jay Apfelbaum – The litigation report has to be carefully worded so as not to divulge matters currently under litigation that don't belong in a publicly released document. It does need an attorney to review prior to publication.

Bronia will get a Litigation Report for us from Chris Sloan – ACBL Counsel.

Doug Couchman - Competition and Conventions Committee will be considering changes to NAP and GNT. Considering a new flight to NAP to match the GNT. Will also consider whether to alter the flights. Very, very difficult to produce data that shows who participates in grass roots events. How many people participated in district finals in each flight.

- 1) Volunteer to define the spreadsheet, and
- 2) Volunteers to fill it in.

Peter Marcus D25 volunteered to create an online spreadsheet for compiling the data.
How many people participated in the District Finals in each flight.

Doug thanked everyone for their role and contribution to bridge.

Steve Moese motioned to adjourn. Jason Fuhrman seconded.
With no further business before the board Doug adjourned the meeting at 8:37 ET.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Moese K082411
Advisory Council Vice Chair
Chair, AC Teachers and Club Manager's Committee
D11 AC Representative

Appendix 1 – Zoom Attendance 43 attendees

Participants (40)

Q Find a participant

	D21, Anne Hollingsworth	Jon Jefferson Overby's iPhone (2)
	D23 Gene White	Larry Sealy - R7 Director
	D24 Lee Lin	Len Fettig D15
	D25 - Peter Marcus	Margot Hennings
Brett Kunin, Prez, U140, D3	D25 Brenda Montague	Martin Hirschman-D12
		R13D Tim White
D 2 Wybren Hoogland	D6 - Barbara Doran	Region 10 Director
D10 AC Patrick Williams	D8 - Debbie Romero D	Richard Popper past chair
D11 Tom Bishel		Ryan Schultz
D14 Steven Gaynor	iPhone	stephannie
D15 Henry Robin	Jackie Zayac - R12 Director	Terry D8
D16 Betty Starec	Jay Whipple	
	Jeff Chapman, D11	
	johndjones44@yahoo.com D23 Pre	
D19 Hugh McSheffrey		
D21, Anne Hollingsworth		

Meeting Chat Record

19:05:33 From D10 AC Patrick Williams to Everyone:

This is not a great time for anyone driving/traveling from Atlanta. Maybe I am the only one

19:14:23 From Len Fettig D15 to Everyone:

excellent

19:15:34 From Len Fettig D15 to Everyone:

social bridge is an excellent addition

19:16:11 From D6 - Barbara Doran to Everyone:

Indeed.

19:16:18 From stephannie to Everyone:

Kudos to Bronia -- she was exceptionally visible and accessible during my time at Atlanta. It was great to see this level of approachability.

19:16:29 From Jeff Chapman, D11 to Everyone:

Empty nesters seem to be a group to target, but I am unsure how to pinpoint that group.

19:20:40 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

Replying to "Empty nesters seem t..."

Pickleball!!

19:28:20 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

<https://cloud.bridgefinesse.com/555DashBoard.html>

19:56:09 From Len Fettig D15 to Everyone:

just one per year.

19:57:05 From d16 Tomi Storey to Everyone:

I agree

19:58:07 From D6 - Barbara Doran to Everyone:

Yeah...

20:03:14 From Margot Hennings to Everyone:

Replying to "Yeah..."

2022 and 2023 ACBL budgets for the Goodwill Committee were both right around \$43+K for three GW receptions

20:13:28 From D 2 Wybren Hoogland to Everyone:

unbelievable what US law does to a small organization of the ACBL

20:14:14 From D25 - Peter Marcus to Everyone:

Bylaws are not advisory, they are mandatory, if they no longer fit, they need to be changed, not ignored

20:16:54 From D 2 Wybren Hoogland to Everyone:

why is management slacking in writing these reports?

20:17:28 From D 2 Wybren Hoogland to Everyone:

agree 100% with Steve

20:19:51 From D25 - Peter Marcus to Everyone:

I agree with Doug...Bronia is being too nice about it

20:23:16 From Another XPrez Ken Monzingo to Everyone:

Bravo, Bronia!

20:23:32 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

Replying to "Bravo, Bronia!"



20:24:44 From d16 Tomi Storey to Everyone:

Replying to "Bravo, Bronia!"

I particularly liked "look at each other with kind eyes" Thanks, Bronia!

20:25:28 From D6 - Barbara Doran to Everyone:

I'm pretty sure it is.

20:25:57 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

Replying to "Bravo, Bronia!"

@d16 Tomi Storey 😊

20:26:41 From D6 - Barbara Doran to Everyone:

Replying to "Bravo, Bronia!"

I agree completely. Well said, Bronia.

20:26:41 From D11 Steve Moese to Martin Hirschman-D12(Direct Message):

Gary Hann Lawsuit

20:31:47 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

I must leave for the airport

20:31:50 From Bronia Jenkins to Everyone:

I thank you all

20:32:56 From David D22 REP Sizemore to Everyone:

Thank you- I love your management style of being accessible and directly involved by walking around