

NATIONAL DIRECTORS REPORT SPRING 2022

The ACBL Board of Directors held its spring meetings face-to-face 8-11 March in Reno, NV. The Board, its committees and its work groups continue to meet regularly through Zoom and conference calls.

The information presented in this report has been sourced from the following:

- Spring Management Report.
- ACBL Board and staff members.
- Minutes: http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/about/2022/2022_March_minutes.pdf

FINANCE

As of year-end 2021, net assets totaled \$9.9M. Increase in net assets for the year was \$2.65M. This included a one-time COVID relief item from the US federal government of \$1.5M and \$450,000 in non-operating items. Thus, actual gain from operations was approximately \$700,000. Budgeted loss of \$858,000 for 2022 reflects substantial investment in technology as well as depreciation of \$302,000. Reno NABC operating loss has not yet been determined, but will adversely impact the actual loss for the year if all other items come in as budgeted.

AUDIT

The Audit Committee received the report of ACBL independent auditors Dixon, Hughes, Goodman (DHG). No significant issues were reported in the audit. DHG reviewed actuarial assumptions regarding post-retirement benefits and were satisfied with current calculations. DHG also audited procedures, focusing on payables and receivables related to BBO and clubs, as well as timing and confirmation of deferred revenues.

The 2021 audits of the ACBL Charity Foundation and the ACBL Educational Foundation are nearly complete. IRS Form 990 returns for these entities and the ACBL are being prepared.

MEMBERSHIP

According to the latest ACBL Quarterly Unit Improvement Package (QUIP) Report issued 3/31/22, ACBL membership totals 139,108; a decline of 1.54 percent since the report was last issued on 12/31/21.

STRATEGIC

The Board has established key goals and objectives for the organization that include a robust return to F2F club and tournament play, building and retaining membership and improving technology. Management is developing action plans and implementation strategies for established goals and objectives. The Strategic Committee is developing the long-range vision and setting quantified targets. Plans are to be delivered in Providence.

The Board held breakout sessions in Reno to discuss challenges facing the ACBL today and into the future. This gave Board members the opportunity to share concerns and ideas acquired from serving in bridge governance. A detailed report was prepared and delivered to Management as additional input into the planning process.

MARKETING

ACBL Marketing develops and implements initiatives to increase membership and member value.

The Intro to Bridge program has led to over 880 new bridge players, many of whom transition to the Guest Membership program. Over 2,500 guest members have come through this program since its launch in February of 2021. The ACBL will continue to build on these programs to support its mission to promote, grow and sustain the game of bridge while serving the bridge-related interests of its members.

Marketing has refreshed the ACBL website, streamlining content and improving functionality. It has refreshed the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin* and rolled out new logos and a tag line: Dealing Infinite Possibilities.

The first Member Appreciation event was held in October with more than 160 prizes awarded. The event produced strong engagement through ACBL social media channels, improving the ability to identify, target and attract bridge-playing audiences. Additional events are planned for 2022.

The *Speakeasy* newsletter electronically delivers updates and event reminders to membership twice monthly, reducing email overload. The *Speakeasy* is now posted on *BridgeFeed* and the ACBL Facebook page.

Long term, Marketing will embark on a research program that will help the ACBL better understand and meet the needs of prospective and current members. Through this process, Marketing has begun creating member/prospect personas and journey maps. Both will provide a clearer picture of each touchpoint and how to improve them, which in turn will lead to greater member retention and membership growth.

Supporting Alzheimer's Research

The ACBL has raised \$7.8 million for Alzheimer's patient care and research through participation in The Alzheimer's Association's The Longest Day fundraising event. During 2021, approximately 300 Units and Clubs raised \$917,000. All Virtual Club Games held the weekend of June 18 and 19 are designated Alzheimer's Association games, and the ACBL sanction fees will be donated to the Alzheimer's Association. Clubs that have returned to F2F play can choose any day during the week of June 19-26 to hold their events and offer upgraded games.

Marketing is working with The Alzheimer's Association to schedule informational webinars about the latest scientific research and caregiver/patient support opportunities for ACBL members.

Supporting the People of Ukraine

The United Nations World Food Program – designation for Ukraine – will receive net proceeds from the Hollywood Magic Online Regional held March 24-27, and additional proceeds from games held F2F and virtually March 28-31. BBO will donate \$10,000.

The ACBL Charity Foundation will donate up to \$25,000 of funds raised in virtual clubs, April 4-10, to UNICEF – Help Children in Ukraine.

COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

The Task Force Chair reported the accomplishments of improved communication within the Board, between the Board and ACBL Management, and the Board and ACBL membership. A review of the Codification as it relates to communications and communications protocols is complete along with recommendations for improvements to process and timelines. Motions will be put forth in Providence.

APPEALS AND CHARGES

In Reno, under Item C221-AC01, the Appeals & Charges Committee reported the outcome of its most recent hearing.

The Anti-Cheating Commission (not to be confused with the Anti-cheating Committee of the ACBL Advisory Council) was formally disbanded. The Commission was formed in the wake of high-level cheating scandals in 2015 and 2016, resulting from a recommendation of the Bridge Integrity Task Force. Over time, the committee made recommendations and reviewed players of concern. However, the committee and its members did not feel retaining the structure served any purpose. Discussion between the ACBL Executive Director and the National Recorder about possible reconstitution of the committee as a clearinghouse between bridge organizations resulted in action being taken in that direction apart from the committee. ACBL Management believes it is time to retire the formal committee. Many of those who generously served on the Anti-Cheating Commission remain available to consult as needed.

The ACBL Board was briefed and had the opportunity to discuss with its creators the recently-announced anti-cheating tool EDGAR.

Complete information about the ACBL Disciplinary Process can be found at <https://www.acbl.org/ethics/>. This includes an explanation of how the process works, Disciplinary Disposition Summary Charts, and various disciplinary committee hearing reports.

GOVERNANCE

Governance had a relatively light agenda for Reno: three motions, a non-agenda item and two discussion items:

Motion (Item 221-GV01) eliminates the National Charity Committee and recognizes outstanding members who participate, organize and/or promote charity endeavors in their respective communities through the receipt of a Charitable Recognition Award. It proposes that District Presidents make the future selections of those for recognition rather than Regional or District Directors. Details regarding process and timeline will be reported. Motion carried: Unanimous in Committee/Full Board.

Motion (Item 221-GV02) reorganizes, updates and clarifies the Codification relating to a Unit's relationship to the ACBL, Unit requirements and Unit responsibilities and privileges. It eliminates the requirement for Units to hold at least one sectional every two years, and clarifies that the 11 percent of full dues payments and life master service fees paid by their members is intended to supplement Unit funds for activities related to membership building and retention. Motion carried: 19/0/0.

Motion (Item 221-GV03) addresses a discrepancy in the election procedures for Board officials, non-Board committee members and representatives to international bridge organizations. Motion carried: Unanimous in Committee/Full Board.

Motion (NA221-01) was introduced as a non-agenda item (NAI), meaning it was not submitted in time to be included as part of the formal Reno agenda. NAIs are time-sensitive and require immediate Board attention. This NAI addresses the special election procedures that are needed to fill the vacancy left by the sudden passing of Region 6 Director, Mike Kovacich. The procedures adopted unanimously by the Board will govern the election of a successor to serve the remainder of Mike's term.

Mike Kovacich had just begun his second term on the ACBL Board as Region 6 Director, having previously been elected District 7 Director when he first ran in 2018 prior to the Board reorganization. A long-time volunteer for his District, Mike held countless official positions both in D7 and in the Mid-Atlantic Bridge Conference. He brought his legal expertise, his keen insight, and his old-fashioned common sense to bear on a vast array of bridge policy matters. He was most recently Vice-Chair of Governance, a member of the Bridge Committee, Board Liaison to the Masterpoint Committee, and an ardent supporter of finding incentives to encourage players to return to F2F bridge. He will be sorely missed.

Discussion Item (DI221-GV01) addresses a complex motion (213-GV04) having to do with the formation, transfer and dissolution of Units that had been submitted and then tabled in Austin last fall. A thorough discussion was held, both in Committee, and then again with the Full Board, where the Governance Committee made a number of recommendations concerning Unit formation, transfer, and dissolution; geographic boundaries; how to address administrative challenges borne by Units; and the processes whereby changes to a Unit's status may be made. Based on Board input, a motion will be submitted for consideration in Providence.

Discussion Item (DI221-GV02) addresses more extensive changes regarding election procedures, e.g., how notifying interested parties of upcoming vacant positions should be accomplished; declaring candidacy for these positions and a date by which this must be done; allowing nominations from the floor; the election procedures that govern them; and announcing the number of votes cast for whom. The Governance Committee met

virtually in advance of Reno and presented a detailed set of recommendations to the Full Board concerning these and other procedures related to elections of Board officials, non-Board Committee members, and representatives to international bridge organizations. Based on Board input, a motion will be submitted for consideration in Providence.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REVIEW

Executive Director Review (EDR) generally meets in executive session to protect the confidentiality. In Reno, there was one “public” motion (Item 221-ED01) which updated the Executive Director Succession Plan in the Codification Part 1 – Governance and Policy, Chapter II – Business Management, B. Employees and Consultants, Section 5. The wording in this section was significantly condensed and a new detailed Succession Plan was incorporated as Appendix 2-D. Motion carried: Unanimous in Committee/Full Board.

BRIDGE

As the National Board reduces in size to 13 members, non-core related functions continue to be transferred to outside Committees and to Management. This helps ensure a smaller Board can focus on the strategic and financial goals and objectives of the ACBL. This transfer of authority is reflected in the majority of motions and a discussion item brought forth by the Bridge Committee.

Motion (Item 221-BR01) was put forth to refine the structure of the Competition and Conventions Committee and to define lengths of service. Motion carried: 19/0/0.

Motion (Item 221-BR02) to strengthen the eligibility restrictions for limited Masterpoint events was deferred to the Competition and Conventions Committee.

Motion (Item 221-BR03) to permit the use of robots to continue without over-inflating Masterpoint awards was deferred to the Masterpoint Committee.

Motion (Item 221-BR05) was put forth to streamline the process of Masterpoint modifications. Motion carried: 19/0/0.

Extended Timelines for NABC Hospitality Fundraising

The pandemic has impacted the ability of Districts to hold all allowed NABC fundraising weeks (for hospitality) in local clubs. A motion (Item 221-BR06) clarifies the current regulation that applies to F2F clubs, allows weeks that were missed in one (or two) of the three years before the NABC to be moved into the last year and adds one week of NABC fundraising in Virtual Clubs (only those run by clubs within the District).

Due to IT constraints, NABC fundraising in virtual clubs was removed from the motion. Management will report timeline, schedule and cost to run said games during Board meetings in Providence. Motion then carried: 19/0/0.

Also, a clean up motion (Item 221-BR08) was put forth to eliminate the redundancy in NABC hospitality requirements. Motion carried: Unanimous in Committee/Full Board.

Updated Electronic Device Policy

Players rely on their electronic devices to check scores and pre-register for events. Therefore, (Item 221-BR04) moves that electronic devices (phones, tablets and watches) be allowed to be visible in and out of the playing area. Devices must be turned off during the play of the hand, but can be used between rounds. Penalties will continue to be assessed for disruptions due to devices that “ring” during play. Motion carried: 17/2/0.

Discussion Item (DI 221-BR01), reviewing opportunities for expanding hybrid online and F2F bridge, was deferred to the Strategic Committee. Current technical constraints are impeding immediate developmental activities. The longer-term vision is to optimize the combined features and benefits of both online and F2F bridge capabilities.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In 2022, the ACBL will invest heavily in Information Technology. In Reno, IT reported progress and timelines for building a reliable, streamlined and cost-effective infrastructure.

IT will rely on support of third-party vendors and staff to continue architectural changes to the website, complete migration of the AS/400, update and finalize the Masterpoint Engine and improve ACBL Cloud. In addition, TRAX will be moved to a cloud-based application while ACBLScore® will be moved to a web-based application.

The Board liaison will to communicate progress and challenges.

Masterpoint Engine

Improvements have been made to the Masterpoint Engine special events calendar, allowing for queueing of special events months in advance. In addition, IT fixed AWS scaling rules to better handle additional load. It created new application workflows to process large games files previously restricted due to maximum file size limitations.

Report Migration

IT continues the substantial effort required to migrate from the AS400 platform. It is building the pipeline to deliver reports and graphics through email distributions as well as the triggering and scheduling elements needed to deliver these emails in a purely automated manner.

Pre-registration Platform

IT has made significant progress toward completing the tournament registration platform. In Reno, members had the option of pre-paying and pre-registering for various events through the ACBL Express Entry application. In the future, data

analytics and reporting information will be provided to help tournament sponsors refine tournament schedules and reduce hospitality and director costs. A partnership “desk” component for those seeking partners for pair and team games will be provided.

APPOINTMENTS

Franco Baseggio, D25, Doug Doub, D25, Jeff Ford, D19, David Grainger, D2, and Jeff Meckstroth, D9, were appointed to the Competition and Conventions Committee for a three-year term from the end of the Spring 2022 NABC through the end of the Spring 2025 NABC.

Kevin Bathurst, D9, Jon Brissman, D11, Bruce Ferguson, D17, Hendrik Sharples, D20, and Eddie Wold, D16, were appointed to the Ethical Oversight Committee for a three-year term from the end of the Spring 2022 NABC through the end of the Spring 2025 NABC.

Chris Benson, D8, Mark Friedlander, D13, Jan Martel, D21, and Chris Moll, D7, were appointed to the ACBL Disciplinary Committee for a three-year term from the end of the Spring 2022 NABC through the end of the Spring 2025 NABC.

Appointments to the Hall of Fame Committee:

David Grainger, D2, Adam Grossack, D25, and Joe Grue, D24, were appointed for three-year terms from the end of the Spring 2022 NABC through the end of the Spring 2025 NABC.

Iftikhar Baqai, D23, was appointed to complete the remaining term of Neil Chambers, D3, through the end of the Spring 2023 NABC.

Lisa Berkowitz, D9, was appointed to complete the remaining term of David Berkowitz, D9, through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Josh Donn, D17, was appointed to complete the vacant term through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Appointments to the Laws Commission:

Bart Bramley, D16, Allan Falk, D12, and Aaron Silverstein, D24, were appointed for a five-year term from the end of the Spring 2022 NABC through the end of the Spring 2027 NABC.

Oren Kriegel, D13, was appointed to complete the remaining term of Jeff Goldsmith, D23, through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Doug Couchman, D17, was appointed to complete the remaining term of A.J. Stephani, D11, through the end of 2026.

ELECTIONS

Paul Cuneo, R9, and Doug Couchman, D17, were elected as North American Bridge Federation (NABF) Board members for a three-year term beginning March 9, 2022 to December 31, 2024.

David Lodge, R11, was elected as ACBL Treasurer for a one-year term beginning May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023.