

Washington Bridge League – January 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Time: 7:00pm-8:30pm

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Submitted by Lena Maman (WBL Secretary)

Attendees

Hadi Abushakra, Bob Bell, Herb Schulken, Lena Maman, Lloyd Rawley, Mary Tenenbaum, Linda Marshall, Alex Stille, Alex Gretsinger, Kathy Kopnisky, Clyde Kruskal, Chris Miller (WBL Unit Game Manager), Brad Theurer (Tournament Chair) and Carole Banks (Guest). Georgette Weiss (NVBA President), Marty Bley (NVBA Past President), Ann Atcheson (NVBA Treasurer), Georgia Booker (NVBA Secretary), Joe Hertz (NVBA Board Member), Jason Carter (NVBA Board Member), and Kevin O'Brien (NVBA Board Member)

Highlights of Joint WBL/NVBA Board Meeting to Discuss Face-to-Face Resumption

Hadi invited the Northern Virginia Bridge Association (NVBA) Board members to discuss resumption of face-to-face unit games.

- At this time, ACBL does not have any formal guidance for clubs that are considering a hybrid (virtual and face-to-face) model. Both Boards agreed that an online game should remain, as long as it does not lose money.
- Georgette Weiss recently notified Beth El Hebrew Congregation (Alexandria, Virginia) that the NVBA is considering April 2022 as its tentative start date for face-to-face resumption. The synagogue currently requires masks and vaccinations for all visitors.
- Chris Miller suggested that the WBL and NVBA alternate virtual games and face-to-face games. In other words, on evenings that WBL runs a face-to-face game, NVBA will run a virtual game and vice versa. Both Boards agreed to implement this approach on a three-month trial basis, starting on Thursday, April 28. Both Boards agreed to revisit this plan regularly as they continue to monitor county policies as well as CDC and ACBL COVID-19 guidance.
- Kevin O'Brien (NVBA Board Member) shared the following websites, which provide up-to-date virtual club, in-person club, and in-person tournament table counts:
 - <http://cloud.bridgefinesse.com/VACBDashBoard.html>
 - https://medcitybridge.com/R_other%20pages/work/F2F%20Updates.html
- Multiple WBL and NVBA Board members expressed concern over the lack of new bridge players in the area as well as the challenges for non-life master players who

seek face-to-face resumption to have better opportunities to compete for gold, silver, and red points.

- The joint meeting of the two Boards concluded whereupon the WBL Board meeting commenced.

Secretary's Report

The Board approved the minutes of the December 2021 meeting.

Online Unit Game Report

Chris Miller provided an update on the unit game.

The 0-20 game remains inactive. With up-and-coming players moving up in masterpoint count over the past two years via BBO, the 199er game will head in the same direction as the 0-20 game. It no longer attracts enough players on a consistent basis.

Lastly, Chris reminded Board members that BBO's video chat feature is available to players who have a camera and microphone. Clyde suggested this might make the game friendlier.

Status of the 0-199 Game

Recently, a WBL member reached out to Hadi and requested a 199er section for the Monday night WBL virtual club game. Unfortunately, due to declining attendance in 199er games, the WBL does not believe that a Monday night 199er game would be viable. The East Coast 99er game, run by District 7 and available to District 6 members, may soon offer a 199er game as well, which would be the best option for local players who would like to play in that masterpoint bracket.

The Board then discussed the lack of new bridge players – *How do we attract new streams of beginners?*

- Prior to COVID-19, the 0-20 and 0-199 games relied heavily on word of mouth and bridge instructors. Lena, who has assumed the role of face-to-face 0-20 director, will reach out to local bridge instructors to get a sense of their class/lesson attendances since March 2020.
- Kathy recommended that we reach out to instructors (e.g. Leslie Schafer, other local instructors, & ACBL's Online Intro to Bridge course) of beginning-level bridge courses and request that they systematically inform their students about local competitive games [& BBO resources] for their level of play.

- The Board reiterated a suggestion made by Dick Wegman during the October 2021 meeting: “In addition to young people, Dick also discussed the possibility of introducing bridge to those at the cusp of retiring (50-55 year old cohort). Dick mentioned that many federal agencies and trade associations offer pre-retirement seminars that often include panel discussions on new activities to incorporate into retirement.”

October Meeting Minutes are available on the WBL website, here:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/unit147washingtonleague/2021-10%20Minutes.pdf>

- Linda suggested sending an email blast to all 0-20 WBL members about the return of face-to-face bridge on April 28.

Treasurer’s Report

- The WBL continues to maintain a strong financial foundation.
- Herb reported low attendance for December. Attendance has picked up in January with table counts in the high 40’s – low 50’s range.
- Doug Grove, District 6 Treasurer, notified Herb that District 6 owes WBL roughly \$3000 in past rebates for the East Coast 99er game.

Communications Committee Report

Linda Marshall received an updated Life Masters List from Doug Grove, the District 6 Treasurer. She uploaded it to the website – [click here to view](#).

Additional Discussions Added to the Agenda

- In response to a question by Carole, Herb confirmed that a face-to-face game requires a minimum of 21 tables in order for WBL to break even. His analysis factors in rental and director expenses – not food and beverages.
- Once local COVID conditions allow, Mary suggested the possibility of a team game at Ohr Kodesh on Sunday afternoons. The Board agreed that a team game would give local players an opportunity to develop new social connections and partnerships. The Board will revisit this idea once the regular face-to-face unit game is back in full swing.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 23 at 7:30pm.