

Route 66 Bridge Club

9-Mar-2020 Board Meeting #10

Start time: 1:05 pm	End time: 3:25 pm	Notes by Mary Heinking
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Board Members Present

President: Phil Wilner

Membership Liaison:

Secretary/Treasurer: Mary Heinking

Publicity/New Members: Carol Gammell

Facility: Ron Crowell

Guests Present: None

Board Members Absent

Bob Hanson

1.0 Roll Call/Approval of Meeting Minutes

Four out of the five Board members were in attendance. When this meeting was scheduled at the Feb-2020 Board meeting, it was known that Bob Hanson would be out of town and unable to attend. We were unable to find a date which worked for all 5 Board members.

The meeting minutes of 3-Feb-2020 (Board Meeting #9) were approved without additions, deletions, or changes.

2.0 President's Report

Pledge Status Update/Thank You Letters

Mary sent an updated list of cash donations and pledges to Phil on 8-Mar-2020.

Phil has already resent the letters which were sent back to the club as undeliverable by the Post Office.

There was discussion about if and how to recognize our donors. Later this spring, we will figure out the donor recognition signage and contact each donor to confirm if they would like to be acknowledged in this way or if they wish to remain anonymous.

Action Item: Phil to generate thank you letters for cash contributions and pledges using our already purchased letterhead.

Action Item: Later in the spring, Mary to research options for donor recognition signage.

Volunteers Needed

Mary must offload a significant portion of the work she has been doing as her current workload is not sustainable. Reducing her workload down to the normal Secretary/Treasurer role will enable her to cut back her (unpaid) hours to about 10 per week plus another 5-6 for Easybridge! Mary prepared a list of duties for 3 positions, each of which can be done in 1-2 hours per week:

- Webmaster/Calendar
- Prepaid Ticket Printing
- Director Oversight/Coordination/Scheduling

At this meeting, we agreed that Mary will prepare an email blast asking for volunteers for the first two positions along with requirements (e.g. computer, skill in a particular program, etc). Phil will discuss the director oversight/coordination issues at a meeting he will be calling shortly with our game directors.

Action Item: Mary to generate an email blast asking for volunteers

Action Item: Phil will schedule and chair a meeting with the directors.

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3.0 Club Operations

ACBL Reports

Greg Burton walked Mary through how to upload the game results and submit the monthly report and fees to the ACBL for January. This was a multi step process.

The ACBL changed the system for February (part of the move to ACBL Live). Mary went through the online tutorials and figured out how to do this for February. Going forward this should be a fairly quick and painless process (essentially validating the table counts and fees per game before paying the fees). Some table fees (e.g. for STaC, etc) are not billed directly by the ACBL but sent elsewhere (e.g. to the district). Once Mary is comfortable as to the accuracy of the table counts, she can set up the system for automatic billing.

Special Games/Monthly Calendar

Mary worked with the directors to schedule all the first quarter club championship games.

As previously discussed, we are confirmed to hold the following ACBL wide special games:

- ACBL Wide Charity 31-Mar (Tues)
- ACBL Wide Charity 29-Apr (Wed)

Mary created a monthly calendar in Excel using different colors to highlight regular games, extra point games, lessons, Easybridge!, and Unit 158 events. We needed to create a separate format because the calendar (event) function in Wild Apricot only offers a listing of events and does not put them in a graphic format. Our members had asked for a one page calendar view summary. At this meeting, Ron raised the issue that some members would prefer to have a Sunday start date for the calendar. Mary noted she is happy to send the files to anyone who would like to modify them to show a Sunday start day for the week.

Mary sent out the February and March calendars via the email blast feature in Wild Apricot. We have a high rate of emails being opened (greater than 75%) and attachment opened (more than 50%). The email blasts have been very effective.

Weekly Director Announcements

Mary generated weekly director announcements for 4 weeks but these were generally ignored by all of the directors. Accordingly, Mary discontinued due to lack of interest.

Mary did add both Dorothy Boyd and Henry Robin to our club's roster of approved directors with the ACBL.

7-Feb-2020 Grand Opening/3 City Inter Club Championship

We had 21.5 tables for this event. Unfortunately, we had some growing pains with the BridgeMates. Unknown to any of us, the new and repaired units were updated to a later version of the firmware compared with the existing BridgeMates units. The planned check of the BridgeMates before the game did not happen as the club was unexpectedly closed due to weather in the days preceding the grand opening. Regardless, the event was a huge success. This was a planned money loser as we spent almost a thousand dollars on the BBQ lunch provided at no extra charge to our members. Tulsa swept the overall standings earning both first and second place across all 3 cities. Mary has been talking with Don Davis of Fun & Games (the organizer) about having another inter club championship. Norman is not interested but Bella Vista might be. This might occur in late April.

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Easybridge! Update

We transitioned the Easybridge! sessions into an ACBL sanctioned 0 to 20 game on week 5 (29-Feb) as planned. We had 11 tables of paying players at our first game and 9.5 at our second! This is an outstanding percentage of retained players; the highest table count that Fun & Games achieved after starting Easybridge! was 8. Mary expects that the count will reduce more as the players begin to have a glimmer that this is a challenging game. Half of our Easybridgers are now using prepaid game tickets and seem incredibly committed to the program.

Our Easybridgers are having fun but it is taking about 2.5 hours to go through a 15-20 minute mini lesson and playing of 6 boards. This presents a challenge in terms of giving them opportunities to play more bridge as most of them are not quite ready for the Monday or Thursday games. At the next few Easybridge! Sessions Mary will poll the group to see if there is interest in adding another 0-20 game to the calendar. This could be a sanctioned game or a mentor game (Phil volunteered to mentor a table) depending upon interest. Hopefully Mary passes the ACBL Director test next week and will be able to direct.

Mary has sent out lessons learned from our sessions to prepare for the second wave of sessions starting Saturday afternoons on 14-Mar. She also created a tracking system for attendees.

In accordance with the EB philosophy, we reduced the number of helpers in week 4 and should have started this in week 3. This allows the students to bond and have the planned experiential learning which is a core part of EB.

We are using replicated boards (not a typical part of the EB curriculum) so that the students get to practice the concepts presented in the mini lesson. This is much appreciated by the players. We received some game files for specific EB sessions from F&G but mostly James has been developing our own set of game files. Mary figured out the duplicate boards needed for EB replication and ordered more along with cases. These are now labelled and stored in the office (on the newly purchased and installed metal shelving). We have 12 sets of boards 1-8 (for am and pm sessions) and 8 sets of boards 11-16 and 21 to 26 for workshops. The boards are a combo of just boards 1-4/5-8 and complete sets of 1-32 or 1-36. (Not every color and type of board is available to purchase in small sets.) We have 4 extra cases for transport of boards for EB sessions and workshops.

Based on our experience from the first session (over 75% of the students purchased the workbook), Mary ordered more EB books from Ed Scanlon (the ACBL contact for Easybridge!).

We have a second set of Easybridge! sessions starting Saturday, 14-Mar-2020, at 1 pm. James Tyner is now certified leaving only Peggy Gaffke to become certified. At this meeting, the Board agreed that anyone who presents Easybridge! on behalf of our club needs to be certified. Non certified personal can be helpers.

Carol contacted everyone who expressed interest in attending these second set of classes. She believes we have 78 signed up. We don't all expect them to actually come (57 out of the 70 who signed up the first set of classes on 1-Feb attended).

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Easybridge! Workshops

We held our first Easybridge! Workshop on 3-Mar. We had 25 people in attendance. We had lessons learned which we will be implementing and Mary also solicited feedback from the Easybridge! Students last Saturday. Much to her credit, Carol followed up with the 2 students who had feedback.

We are going to implement the following changes:

- Move the start time up to 9 am so that the students are not as rushed to finish by 11:30
- Make the actual declarer intended for the lesson hand clear (they were frequently different from the declarer shown on the boards used given that we replicated boards due to lack of time for the students to generate themselves)
- Consider reducing the price from \$15 to \$10 especially if we reduce the number of boards covered from 6 to 4. There is a huge amount of prework required to put on each workshop.

We are repeating workshop #1 in the evening, assuming that it makes (we need at least 2 tables).

Those taking the EB sessions starting 14-Mar can just join the workshops as they are given. The material is stand alone and besides, as the workshops are every other week, the second group will be caught up by workshop #6.

BridgeMate II Status

We had a firmware issue with our new and repaired units as noted above.

Mary subsequently labelled each BridgeMate with our club name and a unique number so we can keep track of them. Unit #24 needs to be sent back to BridgeMate USA for repair. Mary is waiting until closer to May tournament to see if any others need to be sent back.

Action Item: Mary to send back any BridgeMates to be repaired so that they can be back in time to support the Unit 158 tournament at Cascia Hall.

Policies

With input from James Tyner, Mary created our policy on scoring corrections. She posted this online and on our club bulletin board.

We need to develop a policy regarding fill in players. Mary is not sure why we gave free play to 2 fill ins in recent games as there was no explanation on the game tracking sheets. Phil will bring this up at the director meeting.

Action Item: Phil to raise issue of fill ins at director meeting.

Club Phone

Mary noted that several people have emailed to indicate that their phone messages are not being returned.

Action Item: Ron to change our message to direct people to our website where they can send us an email and note that messages left on this phone are not being monitored. He will also leave Carol's name and phone number as the contact person for Easybridge!

Action Item: After Carol gets through with her travel plans, she will take over monitoring the club email account. Mary will send her details as to how to do this.

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Issues

We are experiencing some issues with our games:

- Players are leaving trash and cups at their tables expecting that a cleanup fairy is going to pick up behind them. We need the directors to make announcements at the end of each game requesting that players clean up after themselves. It was particularly dirty last Friday.
- Both burners of our coffee maker were left on Friday night. They were smoking and the glass pots were totally fried when the EB team came in on Saturday morning. Luckily we the smoke detector did not go off and there was no fire. But we need a machine with auto shut off and to remind the directors to turn the burners off! **Post Meeting Note:** we have not been able to find a coffee machine with auto shutoff.
- At least half the time, the locking file cabinet is being left open. It was open Saturday morning and there was over three thousand dollars in cash and checks left in the cabinet (due to robust sales of prepaid tickets). The directors need to be reminded to please lock up before they leave. This includes the cabinet and the door!
- We need to enforce running the open games on the clock. This is particularly critical for the Tuesday game.

Action Item: Phil to raise these issues at the director meeting.

Longest Day Game Planning

We have had some discussion about participating this year. There is only club in Oklahoma currently signed up with the ACBL. We can choose any one day in the week starting 17-Jun. The purpose of the Longest Day is to honor the strength, heart and endurance of those suffering from and their caretakers. The ACBL would like clubs to run non stop games from sunrise to sunset (about 16 hours). Their fundraising goal is \$100 per hour per club. Money can be donated online or sent in by mail. All games feature upgraded master points. There is an extra charge of \$1 per person which the ACBL sends directly to the Alzheimer's Association. We agreed we need someone to spearhead this effort (a non Board member).

Action Item: Phil to talk with Angela Reed about chairing this effort.

Action Item: Carol to contact the local Alzheimer's Association chapter for info on how we can help.

Action item: Carol to figure out publicity for the event once we know what we are doing.

4.0 Membership Liaison Report

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Update

Bob sent in a brief email update in advance of the meeting.

Although the members voted overwhelming to change the start time for the Tuesday game from 10 am to noon, there was some complaining at the first game with the noon start. Going forward it is essential that the game be on a clock and complete no later than 3:30 pm. Phil will address this before the game tomorrow.

Bob had lined up a person to chair Hospitality for the open games but she later backed out indicating that some members think they may be gaining weight from eating all the snacks.

The bathroom remodel is underway right now but will likely not be 100% done before the Tuesday game. The toilets will be functional.

At this meeting we agreed to drop the idea of a custom newsletter and template unless someone volunteers to handle this. Mary did solicit pricing for this.

Action Item: Phil to confirm that the Tuesday games will be on the clock and raise this with the director on 10-Mar-2020.

5.0 Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Legal Update

Since our last meeting, the lease assignment was completed. The gift letter from Duplicate Bridge of Tulsa was signed. The promissory note between the club and Phil Wilner was executed. All 3 items were required before the F1023 package could be sent to the IRS.

The F1023 package was sent to the IRS on 26-Feb-2020. The IRS has cashed the check for the application fee which was sent along with the application. Based on experience from other non profits, we are hoping for approval in 4-6 months (June through August).

The legal costs to prepare the package are at \$3,500 to date plus filing fees of \$600. This was despite the fact we developed the vast majority of the package.

Transition with the Studio for Utilities and Insurance

With the completion of the lease assignment, the facility insurance is now in our name and the bill has been paid.

We did receive a call purporting to be from PSO stating that our electricity would be turned off shortly if we didn't pay the bill, but Mary confirmed that this was a known scam.

The transition for utilities and insurance is complete.

In response to a question from Ron, Mary stated that the check for the Feb-2020 CAM (common area maintenance) was not cashed by mid month and that she called the property management company. They directed her to their accountant (John) who was able to confirm several days later that they never received the check. Mary subsequently sent in checks for both the Feb and Mar CAM and both have been cashed. Mary has requested an email bill be sent monthly (there is a code which must go on the check) similar to what was sent each month to Greg, but this has not happened despite 2 letters.

Pledge Status Update

Total \$83,250

Received to Date \$49,600

Remaining \$33,650 (40.4%)

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Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report as of 7-Mar was reviewed. Major conclusions:

- We remain in good shape financially due to Phil Wilner's loan, the generosity of a major donor, and positive cash flow from prepaid ticket sales
- We are doing OK relative to the budget
- Per Jack Lindley, we are going to have a 10+% increase in the forecasted cost for the bathroom remodel but we should still be OK financially. Mary is estimating a cost overrun of at least 20%.
- We should be able to pay Phil back after we receive our pledges (many are expected after we get 501 c 3 status)

Table Count

Mary presented the final numbers for February. We had 242 tables compared to 203 in 2019 (a 19% increase). Feb-2019 included (8) tables from Wednesday evening games (that game was cancelled in Apr-2020). Our Feb-2020 table count was up despite 2 games cancelled due to weather and one Monday game which did not make. The loss from these 3 games was offset by increased attendance at our 7-Feb grand opening and by the Wed 12-Feb special celebration in honor of our 2 new life masters. But the real reason for the increased table count is that all of our standing games (except for Thursday) are experiencing a small increase in average table count compared with 2020 combined with the added tables from Easybridge!. As a reminder, our financial health is dependent on table count.

2019 Tax Returns

Mary indicated that we need to prepare and send in our 2019 tax returns. Mary has reviewed the requirements and believes that she can make a first pass of Form 990 EZ. At this meeting it was agreed that she will prepare and then send (along with the 2019 accounting transactions) to the CPA used by Phil's firm (and who previously provided guidance to Mary). Most of the financial data for 2019 was sent to the IRS as part of the F1023 package.

Mary noted that we will need to generate 1099 MISC statements for any directors who receive annual payments totaling \$600 or more. Barbara Holloway and Ted Meyers have already exceeded these amounts for 2020. Mary will generate a form for them to complete with their name, address, and social security number. Mary advised the directors of this when she sent out the Feb-2020 summary of director fees.

Action Item: Mary to prepare first pass of our tax return and get to the accountant for review and submission.

Action Item: Mary to generate a form for directors to complete with info needed to generate the 2020 tax forms.

Coverage While Mary is Away the Week of 16-Mar

Mary will be out of town the week of 16-Mar (in Columbus, OH) to attend ACBL director certification training (held as part of the nationals). Assuming she passes the test, this will enable her to direct the Saturday morning Easybridge! Game.

Action Item: While Mary is away, Phil will make sure the file cabinet is locked each night as there will be no mid week bank deposits.

6.0 Publicity/New Member Report

Membership/New Member Plan

As noted, Carol worked last week to confirm attendance for the 14-Mar set of Easybridge! classes. She made well over 80 phone calls.

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Publicity

Carol is working to see if she can get us added to calendar of events in the Tulsa World and Life's Vintage Magazine.

7.0 Facility Report

Maintenance

Ron has worked with Rick on lights for our parking light. Right now the action is with the landlord who is trying to work this out. We can't do anything until that happens. We can't add lights ourselves (permit issue).

Security

There was significant discussion around security. As the door hinges are mounted on the exterior of the building, merely changing the locks will have limited usefulness. Henry Robin and Peggy Gaffke (Unit 158 Board) want the door from the inside of the club to the storage room (a portion of which they occupy and for which they pay a weekly fee to the club) to have a lock. At this meeting, we agreed to:

- Add a lock to the door from the club into the storage room. People like Ron and our cleaning lady will need access.
- Solicit pricing to go from keyed locks to combo locks for the front and side exterior doors.

Action Item: Ron to follow up on both items above. The Board can vote on a path forward via email as we want to deal with this before the next Board meeting.

Supplies

We need a significant amount of space to store supplies such as water, soda, and paper products. There is now some storage in the office area which can be used to handle near term requirements with bulk quantities of these items stored in the storage area we share with Unit 158.

At this meeting, Ron also raised the issue of other items (e.g. punch bowls, large cooler, etc.) which are stored in that closet and which were owned by the Bridge Studio and which no longer have usefulness for our club. Ron will see if Greg Burton wants them and if not, put them out for members to take. Else they will be disposed of.

Action Item: Ron to talk with Greg about old items left in storage closet and determine if he wants them before disposing of them.

8.0 New Business

Questions

There were no visitors in attendance and no questions.

Etiquette

Ron had previously sent out a short and well written summary on bridge etiquette (reviewed by the Board at one of our first meetings). We would like to post this document on our bulletin board and website. But we need to make sure that this is consistent with the policies being developed by our newly formed Conduct and Ethics committee. The Board feels a short document such as this one would be more user friendly and likely to be read as compared with the lengthy document written by the ACBL.

Action Item: Ron to forward the bridge etiquette summary to Bob Hanson to review with the newly formed Conduct and Ethics Committee. If they have no objection, Mary will post on the website and bulletin board.

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Corona Virus

As this is the topic du jour, the Board discussed the current situation. It was agreed that we will ask the directors to please remind everyone of the need to wash their hands frequently and to practice good hygiene. Carol suggested putting bottles of hand sanitizer at each table, but there is a shortage of sanitizer in the US right now.

In the hopefully unlikely event that one of our members contracts the virus, we will conduct an emergency Board meeting to deal with the issue.

9.0 Next Meeting

Due to Board member travel plans, our next meeting will be Monday, 20-Apr, at 1 pm, at the club.

Mary will develop an agenda in advance of the meeting and review with Phil.

10.0 List of Meeting Minute Attachments

None.