

# Route 66 Bridge Club

## 26-Oct-2021 Board Meeting #16

Start time: 3:17

End time: 4:40

Notes by Mary Heinking

### **Board Members Present**

President: Phil Wilner

Membership Liaison: Bob Hanson

Secretary/Treasurer: Mary Heinking

Publicity/New Members: Carol Gammell

Facility (acting): Jack Lindley

Senior Advisor: Greg Burton

**Guests Present:** Peggy Gaffke and Karen Young (part time)

### **Board Members Absent**

## 1.0 Roll Call/Approval of Meeting Minutes

All four Board members were in attendance.

The meeting minutes of 23-Aug-2021 (Board Meeting #15) were approved with one typo which was fixed prior to the meeting.

## 2.0 Financials

### *Financial Statements*

Mary sent out updated financial statements to the Board on 3-Oct-2021. These were briefly reviewed at the meeting and accepted without changes. Of note:

- We have over \$40K in the bank.
- We are current with all our bills.
- Year to date we are showing a positive net income of \$8,514 but this figure is distorted by donations (\$10,637) and sprinkler cost repairs (\$2815). Without either one we would be about \$700 to the good.
- We lost approximately \$1100 in September.
- Our current table count is not enough to pay all of our monthly bills without dipping into our financial reserves.
- Since our last meeting, there have been rate increases in web hosting costs.
- Our utility costs remain way above the historical average and we need to remain vigilant in watching the thermostat

As of 26-Oct-2021, we have \$41,459 in the bank (October director fees and table fees have not yet been paid).

# Route 66 Bridge Club

## *Updated Operating Budget*

Mary updated our annual budget (revenue and expenses) based on current data. This updated budget was emailed out to the Board on 24-Oct-2021.

1. Revenue is down both for face to face play and for the Oklahoma Collective.
2. To keep our doors open without running any games costs us about \$43K per year. The Board agreed that this current amount is not sustainable.

Action Item: Phil to work with Greg to develop a strategy to present a request for a rent reduction to our landlord before our current lease expires in Jun-2022.

3. Utility costs remain high (e.g. electric bills have been averaging \$380 per month). Jack thinks the only long term solution would be to install insulation above the dropped ceiling but this would be extremely expensive.
4. The ACBL table fees are higher than previously (averaging \$1.64 per table compared with \$1.1 in 2020) reflecting the extra point games. However, we think these are helping to drive table count higher than it might be otherwise.
5. The budget reflects the generosity of Henry Robin who has not been charging us to direct.
6. Break even is about 200 tables per month.
7. The budget assumed no donations, but our players continue to be extremely generous (including an unsolicited donation from one of our Easybridgers).

## 3.0 Club Operations

### *Table Count*

Mary distributed a copy of her face to face game tracking report. Since our last Board meeting in August, weekly table count has increased slightly to 38 per week (up from 35). We have callers for all of our games (Greg for the Friday game which he directs); Greg suggested that Board members thank the game organizers for their work. Break even is about 45-47 tables per week (it depends somewhat on how many games we don't host due to Unit 158 events and holidays).

Greg Burton has continued to create the monthly schedule of extra point games. Mary has continued to send out weekly emails to highlight the extra point games and the consensus was to continue this. Both of these efforts will continue.

Mary noted that virtual club table count remains down. Many players are apparently opting to play in the much cheaper (\$1.35 and \$1.75) games offered almost every hour by the ACBL on BBO. Apparently, Henry is addressing this with the ACBL. Many of the Oklahoma Collective games are not making and we are going to be eliminating one game per week in November with more likely to be eliminated in December.

There was discussion as to how to increase face to face table count. Several suggestions were discussed:

- The group talked about increasing the MP limit for the Thursday game to attract more players, but we agreed to wait until the end of the year. We need to have games for our Easybridgers to transition to. Some of them are already starting to play in the Monday afternoon and Thursday morning games.
- Peggy Gaffke suggested that we run a NLM tournament as a club.
- Bob Hanson suggested that we have higher dollar priced games a few times a month. The more experienced players would play with less experienced players. The Unit Pro Am held in 2019 was a huge success and it was thought we could replicate this on a smaller scale and with a slightly different procedure.

Action Item: Bob to develop the details to implement this.

# Route 66 Bridge Club

## *Covid Protocol*

The action items from our last meeting were implemented.

Effective 23-Aug, the club implemented a requirement for proof of covid vaccination. This status is being tracked in one of the unit directories (with separate lists for our Easybridgers). The City of Tulsa did not implement a mask mandate (as had been speculated at our last board meeting) and so we are continuing with our policy of optional face covering.

## *Director Policies*

Greg Burton is going to create a set of director policies. The document will include:

- Movements to be used (which will max the number of sit stills which is an issue). Part of the problem is that the movement is generally not known until the game start time when all players have arrived.
- Start time for game
- Penalizing continued slow play with average minus boards/clock for open games
- Etc

In general, the Wed and Sun games are not being run on the clock although most of players seem to prefer this.

Action Item: Greg to create a set of director policies.

## *Facility*

Action Item: Jack Lindley to follow up on HVAC filter replacements.

## *Supplies*

Rex has been doing a good job with the supplies. He does not want to serve on the Board.

## **4.0 Easybridge!**

### *Update*

In late September /early October, we made multiple phone calls to our list of more than 160 potential Easybridgers. Our callers were unable to reach many of them but left messages.

We began with (2) Easybridge! workshops on Saturday mornings (2 and 9-Oct). Attendance was lower than we had hoped (14 and 10) but the players seem to be committed. Most of them bought prepaid tickets and some of them have started to play in our restricted games. Several have either joined the ACBL or noted their plans to do so; Mary found the ACBL member number for an Easybridger who is returning to bridge and looking to rejoin. So there seems to be a real interest in the game. Originally, the plan was to host a 0-50 game starting 16-Oct. However, the ACBL declined to add this sanction based on the email Mary sent out on 5-Oct from our official Route 66 email address. They replied that the request had to come from Carol Gammell's email. This was despite the fact that all previous game additions and changes over the past 2 years have been requested and accepted using the club email address. Because Mary was out of town, she didn't receive the reply from the ACBL until she returned to town on 14-Oct. Carol Gammell jumped through hoops to contact the ACBL who gave us the sanction late on Friday, 15-Oct. But because we didn't know if we would have a sanction or not we made plans to host another workshop. As it turned out, we didn't have enough players to make a game and the players indicated that they were loving the workshops and preferred that we continue with them. So we hosted workshops on 16 and 23-Oct. We will conduct another workshop on 30-Oct.

We began with Easybridge! lesson #1 on Saturday, 9-Oct. We had 17, 22, and 20 attendees at the first three lessons (all of which are FREE). We will conduct lesson #4 on 30-Oct.

# Route 66 Bridge Club

## *Path Forward*

Given the low numbers, the plan is to combine the existing morning and afternoon sessions into one morning session starting Saturday, 6-Nov. Based on historical metrics about half of those who attend the initial FREE sessions will continue. So that should give us enough to host 3-5 tables per week. We will resume with Easybridge! lesson #5. The morning attendees are good with this approach; some of the afternoon players would prefer the afternoon timeslot. Mary and Barbara will be the teaching team; Mary needs to arrange for a game director and to figure out the MP limit for the game relative to the min number of boards needed for MP awards and current MP levels of our players.

Action Item: Mary to arrange for Sat am game director and figure out MP limit.

We all agreed that we need to essentially start over to build a new list of potential Easybridgers and to conduct a brand new publicity campaign. We think Easybridge! remains our best way to build new players and increase our table count. Many of those on our existing list are no longer available (e.g. death, illness, family issues, etc) or who have decided to pursue other activities.

We talked about how to publicize a brand new session of Easybridge! starting on Saturday afternoons in the Jan/Feb timeframe.

- Carol believes that our 2019 ad in Life's Vintage magazine was effective and she recommended that we consider running another. Mary noted that if we send in the proposed ad along with a request for approval to the ACBL before publication, that they will reimburse us for 50% of the cost of the ad up to \$500. Carol noted that Life's Vintage magazine has a long timeline for publication and that she will follow up immediately. Timing for publication of the ad may set the start date for the classes e.g. in early February rather than January.
- Carol noted that the ad costs for the Tulsa World are prohibitive. And no one was sure how effective they might be.
- Mary noted that Gayle Long has been our most effective recruiter for Easybridge! and suggested that we include her as part of our publicity campaign.
- We also need to update our flyer and post it in libraries, grocery stores, community centers, churches, etc. We can also post the flyer and advertise it to our current players at our games.

Action Item: Carol to conduct Life Vintage magazine and confirm cost and timing.

Action Item: Carol/Mary to look at how to cost effectively update our flyer.

Action Item: Carol to work on an overall Publicity Campaign.

## **5.0 Board Composition**

### *Background*

We have been talking about the need to expand the Board and distribute the workload for over a year. That discussion continued at this meeting.

# Route 66 Bridge Club

## *Board Composition (Current)*

President: Phil Wilner (officer)

Membership Liaison: Bob Hanson (officer)

Secretary/Treasurer/Webmaster/Education: Mary Heinking (officer)

New Member/Publicity: Carol Gammell

Facilities/Purchasing: Jack Lindley for Facilities and Rex Smith for Purchasing. However, Rex does not want to serve on the Board. The positions will be separated.

## *Board Composition (Future Option)*

President: Phil Wilner.

Membership Liaison: Bob Hanson

Secretary: TBD

Treasurer: Mary Heinking

Webmaster: TBD

Education: TBD

Publicity: Carol Gammell

New Members: TBD

Facilities: Jack Lindley

Purchasing: Rex Smith he does not want to be on a Board; so not sure if we keep as possible Board position.

Senior Advisor: Greg Burton (not a Board member currently per bylaws but could be)

Mary checked with Rick Snyder but he does not want to serve on the Board.

Phil Wilner has not yet checked with Karen Goodson about serving on the Board.

We really need to expand the Board and distribute the workload. And we will have to figure out the composition of the Board before Mary can draft revised bylaws.

Action Item: Phil to see if Karen Goodson wants to serve on the Board.

Action Item: Carol Gammell to see if Gayle Long wants to serve on the Board.

Action Item: Phil to see if can recruit others to serve on the Board.

## **6.0 Other New Business**

Bob noted that he is not going to be playing bridge for a while but will remain on the Board.

### *ACBL Membership*

We discussed the fact that many of our players are not ACBL members. These include players who used to belong but whose membership has lapsed as well as those who have never joined. We aren't sure how to address; one suggestion was to offer a free game play to those who join/rejoin but that would potentially penalize those who have maintained their membership. But we all agreed that we need to encourage our players to join the ACBL.

## **7.0 Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, 30-Nov-2021, at 3 pm (after the Tuesday game). Carol will be out of town.

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

## **8.0 List of Meeting Minute Attachments**

None.