

2024 FALL NATIONAL BOARD REPORT

The ACBL Board of Directors held its fall meetings face-to-face (F2F) Sunday, November 24 through Tuesday, November 26 in Las Vegas. The Board and Committees continue to meet regularly through Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

FINANCE

2025 operating and capital budgets were approved. Budgeted operational revenues total approximately \$18.5M; budgeted expenses of approximately \$18.2M lead to a projected net income of approximately \$300K from operations.

The 2025 capital budget totals \$770K, the majority of which will be applied to IT modernization and migration of BackOffice membership and financial functions to the Cloud from the AS400 platform. It's anticipated that Back Office roll out will be completed in the fall of 2025.

AUDIT

The Audit Committee reviewed the report of Forvis, the independent auditor, for fiscal year 2023. Committee comments and questions were addressed and resolved with Forvis representatives and the ACBL CFO. Forvis submitted an unqualified ("clean") audit.

Proposals were solicited from firms to conduct audit and tax services for ACBL for the years 2024 through 2027. Management and the Audit Committee reviewed and discussed the proposals. CBIZ was selected based on compliance with provisions of the request for proposal, pricing and experience with non-profits. The Board unanimously approved the selection.

MEMBERSHIP

As of November 1, there were 128,622 paid ACBL members; a decrease of 1,964 year over year. Member retention efforts have yielded significant results, increasing from 6.7 percent to 52.9 percent. Of the 4,386 players who became guest members, 1,181 have converted to full memberships. 1,578 remain active guest members.

As part of attracting new players, ACBL has launched BridgeWar, an online game that blends the strategic depth of bridge with the fast-paced simplicity of the game, War. It's easy and it's free: see <https://www.acbl.org/bridgewar> for details.

SUPPORTING F2F CLUBS

ACBL has launched ACBL Clubhouse to provide a quality online playing experience for members while providing financial rebates to F2F clubs. Clubhouse will become ACBL's main online platform, managing large-scale games while smaller, independent clubs retain local identify. See <https://www.acbl.org/portfolio/daily-online-games/> for details.

STRATEGIC

The Committee of the Full Board reaffirmed the priorities of the organization with focus on membership recruitment and retention, financial stability, combating cheating and modernization of Information Technology and software applications.

Task Forces for Membership Recruitment and Retention, Clubs, NABCs and Online Provider were formed in 2024 to identify and execute specific projects. Each was comprised of Board members and non-Board liaisons. Task Forces, with the exception of Online Provider, have concluded their projects and provided recommendations for the future.

Membership Recruitment and Retention Task Force is supporting launch of an ACBL Social Bridge Division and identifying pathways to participation in bridge and infrastructure and strategies for engagement. ACBL now holds a social bridge night online: <https://www.acbl.org/portfolio/social-bridge/>

Clubs Task Force developed and sent to all clubs a survey soliciting club best practices (“haves” and “needs”) as source data for sharing with all clubs. Initial responses were grouped/categorized and posted as content on the Club Corner area of the ACBL website. In addition, functionality of Club Corner was improved.

NABC Task Force gathered and reviewed data and performed statistical analysis of past NABCs in formulating concepts and candidate strategies to revitalize the NABC Model to improve attendance, customer satisfaction and financials of future NABCs. Experimental approaches and schedules were developed.

ACBL Online Provider Task Force is examining the online provider market and developing alternative operational and business approaches, and conducting trials, in order to meet current and future needs of members.

COMBATING ONLINE CHEATING

ACBL continues to use a Computer-Based Cheating Detection Program (CBCD), EDGAR (Everyone Deserves a Game Above Reproach), to detect cheating in ACBL Masterpoint (MP) games held on BBO.

ACBL submits monthly lists of players to The EDGAR Association (TEA). There was a two-month hiatus in this after Toronto while a revision to ACBL’s Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) was being coordinated. A total of 7,231 players have been submitted to TEA for screening since February 1; including partners of those submitted, 23,239 players have been examined. 347 players identified by EDGAR as cheating have been charged. Additionally, over 250 need further review. The rate of cheating of all players examined is currently running between two and three percent.

The CDR was revised, effective November 1, 2024. Key changes:

The Fast Track Discipline (FTD) disciplinary path, previously applicable only to players with up to 2500 Masterpoints®, was opened up to all Masterpoint® levels. Discipline imposed via FTD includes a Warning for lower level players with fewer than 500 Masterpoints® and no Platinum Points. Suspensions run from three months to five years, depending on Masterpoint® holding. An automatic reduction in discipline imposed is applied if the player completes the Ethics Certification/Fair Play Pledge and admits to the charge.

Eliminated automatic increase in disciplines for Unit/District officials. (This was done because of unevenness in Units' and Districts' recordkeeping of who has served on their boards.)

If the period of time of cheating is clear, the penalty is now based on the player's Masterpoint® holding at the time cheating ended rather than their current holding.

Players can be removed from eligibility for FTD in special situations (Office of National Recorder/Appeals & Charges Committee to coordinate).

Approximately 83,000 ACBL members have played in ACBL-sanctioned games on BBO since 2020; all players will be examined. The November 1 revision of the CDR will enable examination of all players more quickly, since the FTD process is more automated. It is now projected that all online players will be run by mid-2025 (a year sooner).

To date, 144 players have accepted Fast Track Discipline (FTD) based on EDGAR results. Forty-eight have agreed to Negotiated Resolutions (NR). Nine players had their cases resolved by Expedited Disciplinary Panels. EDPs are nominally used, in lieu of arbitration before The Institute for Bridge Arbitration (IBA), when players are non-responsive to the disciplinary process. Twelve players have had their cases resolved by IBA and 11 have resigned to avoid discipline. 27 cases are pending.

APPEALS AND CHARGES

The Appeals and Charges Committee Chair reported on the 14 Negotiated Resolutions (NRs) received between July and mid-November 2024. Ten, all approved, were for Ethical Violations identified by Computer-Based Cheating Detection (CBCD). Two were for Misuse of Hand Records (self-kibitzing by a playing director): one of these was approved, one rejected with a condition for acceptance. Two were for Conduct Violations: one of these was approved and the other was rejected with a condition for acceptance.

Hearing Reports and the Under Discipline List can be found on the Ethics & Discipline page of the ACBL website: <https://www.acbl.org/ethics/>.

Upholding ACBL Disciplinary Guidelines

The ACBL Board of Directors approved amendments to the ACBL Codification and ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) to preclude ACBL members Not in Good Standing from participating in United States Bridge Federation (USBF), Canadian Bridge Federation (CBF), and Federacion Mexicana de Bridge (FMB) Team Trials and

subsequent international bridge competitions. Both the Codification and the CDR state that members Not in Good Standing cannot represent any National Bridge Organization in world and zonal competitions and that the ACBL Board of Directors has the authority to withhold funding to these organizations for noncompliance.

GOVERNANCE/COMMUNICATIONS

Governance continues to streamline the ACBL Codification, the compilation of the rules and regulations passed by the Board. The goal is to create a user-friendly document that is less complex in language and in structure.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for ACBL regulations, policies and procedures are complete and include definitions, scope and positions responsible for enforcement. The SOPs are being used to identify ACBL regulations, policies and procedures that will be removed from the Codification and then “live” in an online document library for ease of access and scheduled/periodic review. Redundancies and outdated provisions and language will continue to be removed from the Codification.

Governance/Communications produces the *National Board Report* and provides content for the Board meeting page of the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin*. Board policies and protocols are being reviewed.

In preparation for the Las Vegas meetings, Governance put forth the following motions and discussion item:

Motion (Item 243-GV01) updates Chapter VI - Club Sanctioned Games - of the Codification adding Virtual Clubs and ACBL Clubhouse regulations and removing outdated information.

Carried: 13-0-0. Effective: January 1, 2025.

Motion (Item 243-GV02) removes references to life member/service fees from the Codification. Transitioning life members to regular members simplifies membership administration as well as standardizing applicability of arbitration for all members, reducing legal exposure. The elimination of this category of membership will go into effect January 1, 2025.

(Carried) On consent (i.e. passes in absence of an objection by any single Board member).

Motion (Item 243-GV03) elaborates on the process for nominating and selecting Board members to serve as Executive Committee members.

Carried: 12-0-1. Effective: Immediate.

Discussion Item DI243-GV01 focused on implementation of an ACBL Board Policy that prospective changes to bridge regulations and ACBL operations shall be discussed with

the ACBL Executive Director and the ACBL Board of Directors before formal motions are drafted and advanced. This provides a better opportunity for all to engage in discussion and formulation of motions earlier in the process.

Unanimous by straw poll vote. Effective: Immediately.

BYLAWS

Motion (Item 243-BY01) first reading, updates ACBL Bylaws, Article V through Article X that pertain to election of the ACBL Board of Directors and members of the Advisory Council. Outdated information was eliminated, language was simplified and provisions addressing a vacancy on the Board of Directors were generalized, providing the Board flexibility to proceed with established provisions.

Effective upon ratification of the Advisory Council after the second reading and approval of the Board.

BRIDGE

The Masterpoint Committee submitted a motion for ACBL Board approval amending the Codification to permit five- and six-player teams that participate in two-session Swiss and Round Robin events to receive full credit for the overall Masterpoint awards when playing in at least half of the matches.

The Masterpoint Committee believes this change would attract more client-led teams to regional tournaments, bolster regional attendance and minimize room attrition.

A majority of the Board believes this would detract from the overall player experience as most who participate in regional team events want to compete against those of their own caliber and to have increased opportunity to win and to earn Masterpoints.

Failed: 5-8-0.

Management solicited Board input on whether to charge entry fees for team events by team instead of by team member. ACBL currently charges entry fees per player for all multi-day NABC/NABC+ team events, applied uniformly regardless of team size or individual playing time. Concerns have been raised, particularly by teams with five or six players, that this structure is inequitable since they pay more but do not receive equal playing time, discouraging teams from fielding additional players.

Management recommended adopting a consistent fee model for these events as a proposed solution: either per player or per team. The proposal aimed to simplify fee structures, ensure fairness and enhance participant satisfaction.

After discussing pros and cons, a majority of the Board, through a straw poll vote, did not support changing the current fee structure as NABC/NABC+ events are more expensive

to run and the proposed change would cost the ACBL \$100,000 in revenue per year. If implemented, the increased cost would result in entry fee increases for all members.

ELECTIONS

Rebecca Brown, Region 9, Barbara Heller, Region 6, Darlene Scott, Region 1 and Tim White, Region 13 were certified as having been elected to the ACBL Board of Directors for three-year terms, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027.

Margot Hennings, Region 4, was elected as ACBL President for a one-year term, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

Cindy Shoemaker, Region 10, was elected as ACBL Vice President for a one-year term, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

David Lodge, Region 11, was elected as ACBL Treasurer for a one-year term, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

Lodge was also elected as 401K Trustee for a four-year term, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028.

Mark Aquino, Region 2, and Richard Beye, former ACBL employee and Tournament Director, were elected to the North American Bridge Federation Board for three-year terms, January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027.

APPOINTMENTS

Amber Lin, Region 10, was appointed by ACBL Management, and approved by the Board of Directors, as the 2025 ACBL Honorary Member of the Year. Lin was selected for her outstanding work as an ambassador and administrator for US junior bridge.

Sue Manning, District 4, was appointed by the ACBL President, and approved by the ACBL Board of Directors, as the 2025 Nadine Wood Volunteer Member of the Year. As a volunteer, Manning is an integral member of several bridge technology teams, contributing to EDGAR (online cheating detection program), Shark Bridge and The Common Game.

Lamya Agelidis, District 22, was nominated by ACBL President Hennings as the Aileen Osofsky ACBL Goodwill Committee Chair for a three-year term, January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2027.

Joan Murdoch, District 22, was recommended by the Aileen Osofsky ACBL Goodwill Committee, and approved by the Board of Directors, as the 2025 Aileen Osofsky Goodwill Member of the Year. Her unwavering support and care for aging and newer players made her an ideal candidate.

Joann Glasson, Region 3, was appointed as the Eastern Zone Executive Committee

Member for a three-year term, January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2027.

Jeff Overby, Region 8, was appointed as the Eastern Zone Executive Committee Alternate Member for a three-year term, January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2027.

Larry Sealy, Region 7, was appointed as the Central Zone Executive Committee Member, filling the vacancy for the remainder of the current three-year term that began January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2026.

Dennis Carman, Region 5, was appointed as the Central Zone Executive Committee Alternate, filling the vacancy for the remainder of the current three-year term that began January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2026.