

AGA Minutes 8/8/2013

Attending:

- Gurujeet Khalsa (Director, Eastern Region, Chair)
- (absent) Chris Kirschner (Director, Western Region)
- Lisa Scott (Director, Central Region)
- Bob Gilman (Director, Central Region)
- (by phone) Paul Celmer (Director, Eastern Region)
- Steve Burrall (Director, Western Region)
- Edward Zhang (Director at Large)
- Daniel Smith (Secretary)
- Andrew Okun (President)
- Ted Terpstra (Executive Vice President)

Guests:

- Terry Benson (President, AGF)
- Terri Schurter (observer)
- Martin Lebl (Board member elect)
- Paul Barchilon (Youth Coordinator)
- Greg Smith (Chapter Coordinator)

1. Meeting called to order at 1:34 PM PDT.
2. Approval of minutes
 - a. **Scott moves to approve the minutes, Gilman seconds. Unanimous.**
3. Election results.
 - a. Celmer, Kirschner return, and Martin Lebl is newly elected.
 - b. **Scott moves to accept the election results. Zhang seconds. Unanimous.**
 - c. The board thanks Lisa for her service and welcomes Martin Lebl.
4. President's report
 - a. Samsung Qualifier - Eric Lui defeated Ben Lockhart to land a seat in the final 32.
 - b. Pro system committee meeting: the calendar will be extended. The qualification tournament will be moved to January, one pro will be selected.
 - c. Chapter Survey
 - i. Greg Smith did a new survey of the chapters.
 - ii. Scott has categorized the responses of the survey and will distribute this among board members.
 1. Common requests: starter sets, and information on teaching go.
 2. Okun: Kirschner's new teaching workshops may help with this. Also, the "Go Expo" events may be a good additional thing for people to hear about.
 - iii. Not everyone knows about the new (ish) chapter membership manager.
5. Staffing Proposal (Appendix A)
 - a. Scott: There's so much stuff we want to do, it's hard to get people to do the little things. It makes a lot of sense for us as an organization to have someone to take the little things off of Andy's shoulders, to get things done. Two sorts of people

would be good for this; a young person looking for a resume-builder, or a retired experienced person. We have far more than a thousand players at clubs that aren't members; if this person can provide enough value to motivate them to become members, they would pay for themselves.

- b. Khalsa: first discussion; we are an all-volunteer organization at the moment; how do we feel about hiring someone? Will this make existing volunteers unhappy?
 - c. Okun: might be demotivational for some, but also might make congress organizers very happy to have someone to call.
 - d. Benson: From experience, it is demotivational for existing volunteers, and you'll have to be clear about what is expected of everybody, and sometimes you may have to shuffle some more work onto the paid employee to keep important volunteers satisfied.
 - e. Okun: Money is the big issue; \$30,000 is half of our voluntary expenditures.
 - f. Gilman: Is it realistic to hire an employee for only \$30,000?
 - g. Celmer: I'm a little concerned about the cost, but I'm willing to consider this proposal.
 - h. Zhang: We've been running at a surplus, and we have more in reserve than necessary. If we start with something small, like \$15,000-\$20,000 plus pay for increased membership or sponsorships, the money should really not be a big problem.
 - i. Khalsa: if we did hire a person, what kind of person would we hire?
 - j. Barchilon: Part time would be a good idea at first. Ideally you'd have someone who can take some burden off of volunteers.
 - k. Okun: Part time makes sense at first.
 - l. Scott: We can hire someone with the idea that if this works out, we can move to full time later.
 - m. Gilman: should the board approve this person, or would we leave that decision to Andy.
 - n. Okun, others: Leave it to Andy, it's administrative.
 - o. Okun: should I solicit feedback from current volunteers as to what they'd like to offload to a paid employee? (Lots of agreement.)
 - p. Burrall: we have the funds in reserve, I think we should do this as an experiment, to get quick feedback.
 - q. Okun: Is this a thing we should be OK with running a deficit for a year to try?
 - r. (Many seem to think "yes".)
 - s. Gilman: Skeptical of giving bonuses for performance.
6. Pair Go Funding
- a. Khalsa: We should consider putting some funds towards travel to increase attendance. (Since subsidies have been reduced since last year.)
 - b. Zhang: in pair-go, we might have more chances to win than individual events.
7. New Business
- a. Privacy Policy

- i. Gilman: We need to define what our privacy policy is with regards to member information. For example, I'd like for members to be able to provide their online handles or other information for others, if they wanted.
 - ii. Khalsa: We have a pending one that we should perhaps bring up and vote on at the next meeting.
 - b. Barchilon: We're planning on merging the USYGC and Redmond Cup; we'll call it the Redmond Youth Championship, it'll be open to Canadians.
8. Date and time of next meeting.
 - a. The next meeting will be on September 15, 2013.
9. Adjournment
 - a. Burrall moves to adjourn, Scott seconds. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM, PDT.

Appendix A

Proposal for Hiring Staff

The AGA is an organization of smart, talent, and dedicated players and volunteers. One of our greatest strengths is the ability to see an issue from many different angles, and to dream of the ways in which our organization could be improved. Unfortunately, our big-picture thinking and strong analytical skills do not make us best-suited for the daily minutia of running an organization, or of keeping the delicate records necessary for our organization to grow. Another fault is that, because we are a volunteer organization, we are at the mercy of the other commitments and responsibilities of our volunteers, many of whom have families and full-time jobs outside of their dedicated work for the AGA. Because of their dedication, our volunteers nonetheless work hard to make time for the AGA, and do their best to accomplish the work that, at other organizations, would be done by a team of employees.

Although we have managed to keep our organization afloat, we can all agree that the constant cry for the last few years has been for greater direction, organization, and growth. If we wish to accomplish these goals, it is my belief, and the belief of many members with whom I have spoken, that we need to begin the process of hiring staff who can take over many of the details of our plans, leaving the dedicated volunteers free to work on the "big-picture" ideas and to move the organization forward.

I believe that our best step forward would be to hire a full-time person. Ideally, this person would be technologically capable, although not necessarily a programmer, who is interested in non-profit work, particularly that associated with event-planning and marketing. I envision this position as one best-suited to a recent college graduate, largely because this person would be flexible concerning time demands and remuneration, and would be likely to have reasonable proficiency at the computer which would allow him or her to aid with things like website updates (those programmed in mark-down, an extremely simple language) and to work easily with excel and word processors. Such young people are in great supply in this economy, and are often interested in a job that can "pay the bills" while it allows them focus on those projects to which they would like to dedicate themselves, in part because they have not yet

figured out "what they would like to do with their lives." There has also been the suggestion that we could employ a part-time person, along with a number of interns. I believe that this plan has merit, and may be less expensive than a part-time person, but may require greater oversight and training, which could be difficult.

This proposal has resonated with the members with whom I have spoken, in part because it is necessary to have an employee who can, for example, answer the phone and respond to mundane email inquiries, in order for the AGA to be taken seriously as an organization. They, and I, do not believe that the organization can reach its goals without such an employee, particularly as we add new programs and tournaments, such as our own professionals.

I propose that the primary duty of such an employee, tentatively titled "office manager" or "operations coordinator" would be to support the president as he (or she) executes our many "priority" projects. The president would thus be free from depending solely on unreliable volunteer labor, and would be able to focus more directly on forging contacts and outlining projects, which the employee could then monitor and report on to the president.

The secondary duty of this person would be to serve as support staff for the US Go Congress. As many of the Board members know, the Congress requires a significant amount of volunteer work, which puts a terrible strain on some of our most dedicated volunteers. Depending on the details arranged between the Employee and the AGA, the Employee could be made available as a permanent Deputy Director or Registrar for the Congress. This would provide the stability and consistency between Congresses that we have previously discussed, and may reduce the burden on the Congress Director, making it more feasible for more interested people to volunteer to run the Congress.

The quarternary duty of this person would be to serve as support staff for the various officers of the organization, particularly for the Tournament Coordinator and the Pro Committee.

The quinary duty of this person could be to support the AGF, particularly with programs run jointly with the AGA.

I propose that we set aside approximately \$30,000 from reserves for the person of hiring a combination of full-time and part-time employees, as well as interns. I further propose that we authorize the President to investigate this possibility to further, and report back to the Board when and if he is prepared to hire someone.

The funds set aside for the purpose of hiring someone may easily be recouped, if we hire someone with the appropriate qualifications. The \$30,000 set aside to hire someone can be recouped from a growth in membership which would be likely were this hire to have marketing skills, and were we better able to provide the membership with requested benefits due to our greater ability to deal with issues. The \$30,000 would be the equivalent of 1,000 new adult members, 858 new chapters, or a combination thereof; I believe that we all agree that there are probably 1,000 non-AGA members playing in AGA chapters or lapsed chapters around the country, not to mention to dozens of clubs that know of the AGA or are listed on our website, but do not find the AGA relevant enough to their club to pay for membership. A full-time employee who is actually able to respond to the membership and to work on executing projects

while the President, Officers, and Board contend with larger issues and planning, would be likely to create the type of organization that would entice these go players to become AGA members.

An employee would also allow us to move forward on projects more quickly. There are a number of projects that Board Members and officers have considered, or have mentioned privately to friends, but are not realistic possibilities when we must depend on volunteers who are, generally, already donating as much time and energy as they are capable of giving. We should free up these volunteers to spearhead new projects, to work directly with new volunteers, members, and chapters, and to serve as less over-worked and more excited living advertisements for the AGA.

There are many details of this proposal that still need to be fully ironed out, but I believe that it is the best way for our organization to move forward. As Volunteer Coordinator, I will be only too happy to work with the president to learn how best to implement this proposal, as reviewed and amended by the Board.