

Minutes
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, February 27, 2011 – 8:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Andrew Okun at 8:04 PM EST
Type of meeting: Regular Monthly Conference Call

Attendees:

Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Lisa Scott (Central Region)
Andrew Okun (Western Region, Chairman)
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:

Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Jie Li (At Large)

1. Approval of January 12, 2011 minutes

Castanza made a motion to approve the minutes of the last regular monthly Board meeting from January 12, 2011. Lisa Scott seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Call for additional agenda items and new business

- a. Lisa Scott asked to discuss the report of complaints about the online YKNOT tournament
- b. Scott wants to check in with Abramson to find out about the search for a new webmaster
- c. Scott wants to talk about establishing a “go club day”.
- d. Paul Celmer said he’d like to talk about guest officials and attracting sponsors.

3. President’s Report

- a. **Discussion item: Budget Status**

- i. Abramson reported that there has been a surge in memberships since the end of December for both renewing and new members and there are some new clubs. He reports that there is at least a net increase of 75 members.
- ii. Abramson said his latest financial report shows that donations are lagging.
- iii. Interest income even lower than we expected.
- iv. Abramson is looking into the web advertising income. It seems low, but it may be simply that the data is a few months old and there haven't been updates recently.
- v. Congress tournament expenses were left out, but will be corrected in the next version of the budget report.
- vi. There is \$2000 of unassigned income. That will need to be clarified in the next report.
- vii. Okun asked if it is time to file a 990 form for last year. Abramson said that is done at the end of March for the year 2010.
- viii. Castanza urged Abramson to keep the Board informed more completely and promptly. The data he is sending is old and incomplete, so it is impossible to make good decisions based on bad data. Abramson said he has had difficulty getting timely budget information. Castanza said timeliness is an important part of quality financial reporting.
- ix. Okun said there had been talk of asking Roy Schmidt to fill in as a volunteer. He may be willing and able to help. Abramson said he has been waiting for Schmidt to write to say he is ready to volunteer, but he will write to Roy and ask if he's interested.
- x. Celmer asked if the AGF grant (line 42350 for \$2000) is income or an expense. Abramson said the AGF donated \$2000 for the Redmond Cup. It should be showing as an actual number rather than an expected one at this point because it was for the 2010 Congress. Abramson will try to find out what happened.

b. Information item: Membership database upgrades

- i. Abramson said Andrew Jackson announced that Justin Cramer finished the work on the membership database. This is a cause for celebration, but Abramson is not sure if all of the work is complete.
- ii. Recall that \$3000 was approved three years ago to pay Justin for the work to update the database. An hourly rate was agreed upon, but we are not yet sure how many hours he worked or whether it is within budget.
- iii. Scott reported that she discussed with Steve Colburn and Andrew Jackson what needs to be done and they gave her a list of what was done. She didn't know if all the promised work was complete.
- iv. Okun suggested that we schedule a brief demonstration for the next Board meeting which would accomplish both getting us up to speed on it and adding a target date for the work to be done.

c. Discussion Item: Services to Chapters

- i. David Whiteside sent a letter asking what value chapters get from joining the AGA. Abramson asked if the Board has anything to contribute to the discussion.
- ii. Scott said she heard similar questions throughout her visits with clubs during the summer.
- iii. Celmer asked what services chapters would like to see. Scott said they would like special content available only to Chapters such as podcasts and game review videos that could be accessed by clubs.
- iv. Scott said the Chapters appreciate that they get "The Way to Go" pamphlets and cheap plastic boards and stones to get started but they would like to see more continuing support.
- v. Okun asked who the Chapter services representative is. Scott reported it is Arnold Eudell. Okun asked Abramson to talk to Eudell about adding more chapter services to better serve our chapters.
- vi. Abramson said a long-running argument is whether to give our information and products to non members. One thing that we regularly give away is the e-

- journal. Abramson thinks Garlock would not like to lose readers if we charge for the content or limit the circulation to just members.
- vii.** Scott said we should have a much pared down version of the e-journal for free with a teaser about what is included in the member version. The current free version is too close to the member version.
 - viii.** Abramson said a teaser idea might be to include only the headlines but a note saying for more you need to read the members version.
 - ix.** Celmer said chapters are valuable as a recruiting tool for new members.
 - x.** Scott said when she looked at Chapters and Clubs to visit over the summer, the main difference seemed to be tournament activity. Clubs that were too small to have meaningful tournaments remained Clubs rather than Chapters.
 - xi.** Scott said she thinks some clubs are mistakenly receiving Chapter mailings
 - xii.** Okun said Chapter memberships peaked at 150, bottomed out at about 70 and is back up to about 108 now.
 - xiii.** Okun asked if we want to try to attract more chapters, serve existing chapters better or not worry about chapters and focus on individual memberships.
 - xiv.** Scott said if we serve chapters better we will naturally attract more new chapters and members.
 - xv.** Castanza said in his area, some chapters are holding tournaments in which they allow non-AGA members to play. Castanza has a problem with it, but the tournament directors seem to want to attract more participants by not requiring membership. There is a tournament in Corvallis where non-AGA members can play, but if an AGA member plays a non-member the result won't count towards the member's rating. It actually has a depressive effect on attracting AGA members.
 - xvi.** Scott said if we can increase benefits toward kyu players, maybe we can attract more of the new

members to join. Increased chapter benefits and increased member benefits go hand-in-hand.

xvii.Castanza said there is a corridor of people in that area that just want everything for free.

xviii.Okun suggested continuing this discussion in e-mail because we won't reach an answer in this meeting. He asked if anyone wanted to make a motion and no motion was made.

d. Report and Discussion item: Fund-raising committee report by Andy Okun

- i.** Okun reported that with Paul Celmer's assistance, they recruited Peter Freedman who has a great deal of fundraising experience to get us on track. They have had three phone calls so far including Thomas Hsiang and Joanne Phipps. There is a lot of energy going into creating fundraising materials. They have some ideas of targets in China and elsewhere to try to get some corporate sponsors.
- ii.** Abramson suggested testing the new materials on one or two targets to see how it goes and make changes if needed. Okun said that is an excellent idea, because they would like to get some support before the next Congress this summer.
- iii.** One idea is to have a fundraising dinner at the Congress.
- iv.** Celmer said along with that they are considering linking the appointment of guest officials with recruiting sponsors.
- v.** Okun asked Abramson what major tournaments we should seek sponsorship for. Abramson said the US Open is our biggest tournament, and they can discuss others to seek support for.

4. New Business

a. YKNOT online tournament

- i.** The tournament started out poorly but got better over the next two weekends. A lot of people had trouble getting administrators to answer their questions.

They were told to send e-mails rather than get their questions answered in the chat rooms.

- ii. Okun said he knows one of the tournament directors and will ask him how it went in his opinion.
- iii. Abramson said he hasn't heard why there was such a large dropout rate. The rate was highest for high Dan level players who lost their first two games. There was a large dropout rate at the low end as well for players who lost early.
- iv. Okun asked if the online tournament was considered experimental. Abramson said it was an experiment and that participation was lower than expected. He would like to get participation up to 500 people in the next few years. He will work with Edward Zhang and others to create a survey to respond to issues.
- v. Scott said people between 2k to 2D had scheduling problems, because Dan and kyu players had different start times. When Dan players were paired with kyu players, one would forfeit by not showing up at the proper time.

b. New Volunteer Coordinator

- i. Scott said we need to publicize the fact that we have a volunteer coordinator, Nicholas Jhirad. Some potential volunteers are being lost because they don't know who to talk to.

c. New Webmaster

- i. James Schaefer has been appointed by Andrew Jackson as the new webmaster. He should start updating the webpage shortly.

d. Go Club Day

- i. Lisa Scott reported that Steve Colburn suggested establishing a national go club day where all clubs might celebrate a special day. Scott is looking for a date over a weekend between April and May to set this up.
- ii. Okun asked what the AGA's role would be. Scott said we would publicize the day and try to get large turnouts for all of the clubs. This could be a real benefit to Chapters.

iii. Abramson said that most clubs don't have access to their location on weekends, only on their reserved nights, so a Go Club week may be more appropriate where clubs try to boost attendance on their regular meeting nights.

e. Congress Deposits due in March

i. Castanza said that the only people on the Board who have paid the Congress deposit so far are himself and Abramson. He thinks it is important to show support for the Congress by sending their deposits in.

5. Establish time and date of next meeting

The next regular monthly Board meeting will be Sunday, April 10, 2011 at 8:00 EDT.

6. Adjourn

Castanza made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Celmer seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm EST.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary