

Minutes
AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunday, April 10, 2011 – 8:00 PM EDT

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

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)
Lisa Scott (Central Region)
Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Andrew Okun (Western Region, Chairman)
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)
Allan Abramson (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)

1. Roll Call

- a. Chuck Robbins said he can't stay on the call, but he would like the Board to discuss writing explicit job descriptions for volunteers so they can know what to do and we can measure their performance. He said he would try to get back before the end of the call, and he returned just in time to enter executive session at the end of the meeting.

2. Approval of February 27, 2011 minutes

- a. Castanza made a motion to approve the minutes of the last regular monthly Board meeting from February 27, 2011. Lisa Scott seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Call for additional agenda items and new business

- a. Okun said he will treat Robbins' item under one of the agenda items already scheduled.

- b. Okun said we will discuss the issue of certification of American professionals under new business.
- c. Abramson said he would like to discuss Thomas Hsiang's idea that we collect tax on overseas winners to add to the AGA budget.
- d. Scott said she would like to make sure that we follow up on all of the unresolved issues from last meeting, including a demonstration of the membership database and the volunteer coordinator position.

4. President's Report

a. Information item: Budget Status

- i. Abramson said he got a new report from the Treasurer, and noted membership renewals are behind anticipated levels. He is talking to Chris Garlock about starting a new promotion to help us catch up on membership income which should get us back on track.
- ii. The next budget update is scheduled for mid April, and Abramson will forward it to the Board and send a draft of next year's budget shortly after.

b. Information item: By-laws

- i. Abramson said there are two versions of the by-laws on the website and he wants to make sure everyone is using the same ones.

c. Discussion YKNOT survey

- i. Abramson reported the results of a survey he conducted among participants of the YKNOT tournament to decide what changes need to be made to future internet tournaments.
- ii. Several players dropped out of the tournament. Most dropped out because they had no chance of winning a prize. This might be prevented by having a double elimination, where after two losses the player is out of the tournament.
- iii. Others dropped out because of scheduling conflicts. The tournament was held on a particularly busy weekend for students. Scott suggested a system she

uses when running the Women's tournament at the Congress. She requires the players to play at a set time unless both players agree to play at a different time.

- iv. A large number of players did not want to use the webcam, saying if the tournament is unrated why bother? Abramson said the reason for the webcam rule was that there was significant prize money for the winners.
- v. Some players said they would prefer if the games were rated. Abramson said that we intend to have an online rating, separate from face-to-face ratings. Scott asked when online ratings would be initiated, and he said it would probably happen right after the new membership database is fully operational.
- vi. One of the biggest complaints was that there were not enough on-line tournament directors. People were expected to e-mail questions rather than get immediate answers. Players were unhappy with that.

5. Old Business

a. Form 990 Update (if needed)

- i. To be discussed in executive session.

6. New Business

a. American Professional Certification

- i. Celmer said that there are some strong American players who would like and who deserve special recognition so they could be considered a teaching professional and so they can be included in the group of invited guests to the Congress.
- ii. Jie Li said he didn't know whether the existing professionals would be in favor of such a thing.
- iii. Abramson said he has discussed the idea with some professionals including Yi-lun Yang who said he would be willing to help come up with a plan. Okun asked how many professionals we would certify per year.
- iv. Celmer said he would like to start with one per year.

- v. Abramson said first we need to find a strong player who has the ability to work with people of various cultures to work on the project. Okun asked if one volunteer is enough and Abramson said he doesn't want a big committee, but if there are one or two volunteers who are willing to work on the idea, that would be best.
- vi. Jie Li said he thinks some strong players would be willing to work on it, and that the plan should be presented to some pros for their comments.

b. Thomas Hsiang's idea about taxing overseas winnings

- i. There are some upcoming tournaments with substantial winnings coming out of Asia over the next year or two. The AGA goes through a lot of effort to come up with ratings and a selection process, and it would be reasonable to ask for a 20% tax to the AGA to compensate us for the efforts.
- ii. Abramson said this is a perfect idea to send to the policy and governance committee. Scott asked who currently makes up the committee. Abramson said there isn't currently a chairman, but there are some members with good experience to draw upon. He will seek a leader now that there is an issue to consider.
- iii. Abramson asked whether the Board agrees with his plan. All Board members support his effort.
- iv. Jie Li said the amount of prize money varies according to several variables such as the economy and the exchange rate. It is difficult to decide the amount of money to expect.
- v. Abramson said that Hsiang is talking about a percentage, so the actual amount wouldn't matter, but if the winning are a couple of hundred dollars it wouldn't be right to pursue a tax, but there should be a threshold above which the AGA takes a percentage.

c. Volunteer coordinator

- i. Scott said she wants to make sure members are aware of our new volunteer coordinator. Abramson said he will start a round of publicity.

7. Establish time and date of next meeting

- a. The next regular monthly Board meeting will be Sunday, May 22, 2011 at 8:00 EDT.

8. Executive session

- a. A motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters was made by Scott.
- b. Castanza said that before moving into executive session to discuss a personnel matter, the person being discussed needs to be contacted and given the option of having the discussion in open session.
- c. Okun said the rule seems too restrictive, because if you are considering several candidates for a position, you may say pluses and minuses of each candidate that you probably wouldn't want on the record, and asking multiple people whether to go into executive session or open session is too cumbersome.
- d. Castanza said the by-laws are clear that the person needs to be contacted to ask if they would prefer the session to be open. Okun asked if we could instead go into executive session to discuss filling a high level position in the organization.
- e. Castanza said if the position is currently filled, you are talking about a certain individual and they need to be contacted first.
- f. Abramson said in his version of the by-laws there is a provision for removing individuals from positions for reason of performance. Castanza said his version is clear that you need to contact the person before discussing them.
- g. Castanza made a motion to table the motion to enter executive session until the next meeting.
- h. Celmer seconded the motion to table the subject until the next meeting. There was a vote on whether to table the motion: Jie Li no, Paul Celmer yes, Chuck Robbins abstain, Lisa Scott no, Laura Kolb abstain, Andrew Okun, yes, Gordon Castanza yes
- i. The motion was tabled until the next meeting.

9. Executive session to discuss the AGA's finances

- a. Jie Li made a motion to go into executive session to discuss finances and the AGA's form 990. Scott seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Board entered executive session at 9:10 EDT.

10. Adjourn

- a. Castanza made a motion to adjourn. Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary