

Approved Minutes for AGA Board Meeting

March 20, 2005

Present: Allan Abramson, Yuan Zhou, Roy Laird, Harold Lloyd; Mike Lash, AGA President; Lee Anne Bowie, Corporate Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM EST

Allan announced that the minutes were approved by email; they will be posted and sent to chapters.

Election Results: Yuan Zhou was elected to complete Bill Cobb's term. The Board officially welcomes Yuan Zhou to the board.

President's Report:

1. 2004 Congress: Terry Benson is investigating the problem. All questions seem to lead to a couple of things: (a) the expenses, while high, speak for themselves. (b) The big question is on the income side. Terry has identified about \$32,000 in apparent income that is not yet accounted for. Terry has called Rochester Technical Institute about this. We may have to review credit card records, etc., before this is settled. Perhaps there is not a loss after all. The Empty Sky Go Club is a student organization within RIT. Terry is making headway on a week-to-week basis.

Allan requested that Mike ask Terry for bi-weekly updates.

2. Staffing issues: National Tournament Coordinator: Bill Cobb; National Tournament Director may be Jon Boley (not firm); Treasurer: Both Ulo Tamm and Gordon Fraser are interested. (Allan: noted that this was on the agenda for later tonight.) Membership Coordinator: James Haney, a university professor in Pennsylvania has expressed interest. The Coordinator takes on role of answering what we get out of membership. Further discussion on the membership coordinator ensued.
3. Vendor policy – postponed to end.
4. Ing money. Thanks to Mike Bull, we have received \$40,000, which still is one cycle (about six months) behind the expected. Mike expressed that this is a new fiscal year, so he is hesitant at funding Ing events until we know how much money we will receive. Allan commented that we can plan on \$40k with zero risk, and urged Mike to plan on it. They have always sent the money eventually, but it is a delicate thing to remind them. The money is dependent on how their investment portfolio is handled

5. No Congress 05 major news. There will be a tournament for American Pros and other strong players. Mike reported a good meeting with Bill Cobb as National Tournament Director. Does the winner of this tournament lead to anything else other than the prize? Not yet resolved. Rules will go up on the website. Preliminary rounds will begin in May, if not June. There will be four amateur slots; they will be chosen on the same criteria, based on ratings. Criteria include: must be a citizen; have a Green card or be a permanent resident; and have lived in the US for six months of the year. We will look at top ratings and participation in AGA tournaments during year. This aspect of the criteria is under consideration. Allan suggested that a reasonable criterion would be participation in a minimum of four tournaments a year in which at least three other strong players participate (7-dan and up). Mike said that they would analyze all this to see if it is possible.

Lengthy discussion ensued about the intent to develop a new system for qualifying for the WAGC. Mike and Bill Cobb working on it. Allan asked that it be done in consultation with strong players before it comes to the board. Yuan requested that the current point standings be posted on the AGA web site, and Roy agreed to do this.

Old Business:

1. Reconsideration of Board Decision re winner's point retention.

Lengthy discussion continued about the concerns of top players as to the decision to allow a player to retain points after his participation in a world tournament. Several years ago, the president, after discussion with Board members, had given the player assurance that he would not lose his points. Last fall the Board said that was not an appropriate decision and that his points should be reset to zero. Chris Kirschner protested, and also said that the player indicated that he would agree not to be a candidate for this year if he could retain his points, but he would like to be eligible next year.

Yuan explained how concerned the other strong players had been over this issue.

The Board also discussed the probability that the point system will be changed in an as yet undetermined manner, possibly making the discussion about 2006 moot.

Allan suggested that the Board had three options:

1. Validate the decision that Chris, made allowing the player to retain his points.
2. Confirm again the decision made in the Fall that the points be reset to zero.

3. Agree to accept the player's statement that he will not go this year even if he has the most points, and that he will retain points for next year's tourney.

After considerable discussion, the Board formed a consensus around option 3. Allan was to poll the absent directors for their views of this issue, as well as confirm that the player's suggestion was firm.

Allan asked the president to start on a revised system for selecting players for international tournaments, and have a report in six months." At Roy's request Mike agreed that he would have it by August for the Congress.

2. Treasurer Appointment

Roy nominated Ulo Tamm as Treasurer. Harold seconded. Gordon Fraser is the other person interested in the position.

Discussion. Mike explained that Ben Bernstein has expressed his desire to leave the position. It was noted that Ulo had once been the AGA Treasurer, and had performed well in that capacity. We may soon need audited financial statements and will have to go to outside accounting firm for this, so Mike is not expecting the Treasurer to serve as auditor. This is a two-year appointment. This must be voted on by the board, and Mike suggested a transition period, so that Ben can step down on June 1, 2005.

Roy called question. Harold seconded. The Board proceeded to vote on the appointment of Ulo Tamm as Treasurer.

Roy: Aye

Yuan: No

Harold: Aye

Allan: Aye

Motion carries three to one.

3. Vendor Policy

Allan asked if all had a chance to review Gordon's comments. Mike said he thought all comments were helpful and favorable to vendors. Roy asked if there were a document. Mike promised to send a clean draft around for final Board comments.

Allan commented that in the first paragraph fourth sentence it says that when the AGA puts info on its website it implies AGA approval. Allan does not think it does.

Roy would support deleting that statement. Mike said to consider it deleted. Harold asked if a disreputable company could request placement if we disallow approval. Allan suggested the AGA list “at its discretion” and that should work.

No further discussion. Allan said that the draft would be sent to the Board with a ten-day period for examination and comment. If no objections, it would be approved.

4. Marketing Funds.

Allan stated that we have a \$28k fund without guidelines for people to use the money. At some point we need to get started. Would it be fair to give people two weeks for written comments on this? The second draft is attached to the agenda.

Roy wants guidelines, not an ironclad rule, and others agreed.

5. TD School

Allan proposed that we carry this over to next time as it is not critical. No objections.

6. Open Discussion:

a) Mike said he received email from Chinese Satellite TV, which is USA based, about sponsoring a tournament that they could broadcast. They are based in New York and are called New Day TV.

b) Harold has contacted Feng Yun re process of developing US-certified pros. So it's under way. Other pros will be contacted for input. Allan commented that we would like real progress on this by the Congress. Yuan said that AGA should develop on system for pros. He was assured that this was the first step in that process.

c) Yuan wished to talk about reformatting the Congress Tournament. He believes that there is too much activity in the Congress. People get distracted. Times conflicting. Not much attention for the Ing. We should combine the US Open and Ing Cup events; make it ten rounds—two per day. Most strong players would like to play more.

Mike assured Yuan that his comments were thoughtful and that we are looking at this. We cannot do it for this Congress, but possibly for the next. The Board would need to see a specific proposal.

Allan is in favor of calling it the US Pro-Am Open and sees no reason that it couldn't be done this time. His view, not the Board's. The Ing Foundation would have to be consulted. In any case, if Ing money was involved, Ing rules would apply. Roy mentioned that the Ing Foundation was at one time very interested in the North American Ing Cup, an event they funded before their general contributions began.

Further discussion ensued on expanding the tournament to ten rounds, the conflict with workshops, the possibility of having the stronger players play ten and the others play six. Yuan commented that only the lower players are interested in Pro lessons; top players wish to play with the pros. Roy stated that we have organized special small-group workshops for strong players. Yuan responded that while these still were available, some of the top players would prefer to play the pros in a tournament setting.

Mike commented that under current plans, there will be a round robin for the pros, seven rounds, most taking place prior to the Congress; just two Pros will be playing during the Congress, so they would be available for other things.

There were no further comments.

Harold moved to adjourn; Roy seconded; passed unanimously.

Board adjourned at 8:58 PM EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Anne Bowie
Secretary