

AGA Board Meeting Sunday, September 17—7:00 PM EDT

Meeting called to order by: Roy Laird

Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Secretary: Pauline Pohl

Attendees:

Roy Laird (At Large)

Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)

Robert Barber (Central Region)

Roy Schmidt (Central Region)

Willard Haynes (Western Region)

Gordon Castanza (Western Region)

Mike Lash (President)

Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Agenda Topics:

Call to Order/Establish a Quorum

Roy Laird called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM EDT. A quorum was established. Roy welcomed the new members to the Board: Chuck Robbins, Roy Schmidt, and Gordon Castanza.

1. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Action items: Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting

Motion-Gordon

Second-Bob Barber

Approved unanimously

2. Election of Chairman of the Board

Motion- Willard Haynes nominated Roy Laird

Second- Bob Barber

Motion-Chuck Robbins nominated Willard Haynes

Second- Gordon Castanza

Motion to close nominations-Gordon Castanza

S- Chuck Robbins

A roll call vote was taken, and Roy Laird was elected Chairman of the Board by a vote of 6-1.

Roy Laird (At Large): Roy Laird

Paul Celmer (Eastern Region): Roy Laird

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region): Willard Haynes

Robert Barber (Central Region): Roy Laird

Roy Schmidt (Central Region): Roy Laird
Willard Haynes (Western Region): Roy Laird
Gordon Castanza (Western Region): Roy Laird

3. President's Report

a) Ing Funds

The AGA hasn't gotten any money from the Ing Foundation since February of 2005. The money then was a late payment for 2004. Mike Bull reported that \$51,000 is on the way via Ernest Brown of American Ing Goe. There's a new policy that grant applications need to be submitted before money will be sent. \$120,000 has been requested so far, and the \$51,000 is the part of that that has been approved.

Paul Celmer asked if the Ing Cup tournament is in danger of not being funded. President Mike Lash replied that all Ing events for next year are in danger as no funding is yet available nor has it been promised. The Ing tournaments at this year's Congress were paid for by the AGA. They may be reimbursed from Ing funds that have been recently promised but not yet received. Roy suggested the Board will have to set priorities of what the AGA will continue to fund if the Ing grants stop coming. Paul Celmer asked if getting a new person to take the Ing liaison position might make relations with the foundation run more smoothly? Mike Lash said that George Zhou is the current Ing Foundation liaison, and Mike doesn't believe that George Zhou has caused any of the problems, but a new person can be considered.

b) National Youth Tournament

Mike Lash presented a preliminary proposal for a National Youth Championship Tournament. There will be two divisions: senior and junior. The top 8 players in each division will travel to the tournament. There will be no cash prizes, but travel and accommodations for the top 16 players will be paid for and the winners will represent the U.S. in the World Youth Championship tournament. There will be trophies and possibly scholarships to Summer Go Camp. The estimated budget for the tournament and related expenses is \$10,000-12,000. An application will be made for Ing grant funding of the tournament. If that doesn't come through, we will have to look for corporate or private sponsors of the tournament. (possibly airlines or hotels for tickets or rooms) The idea was approved in concept and details will be developed.

c) Congress Surplus Policy

Mike Lash suggested giving Congress organizers 9 years to spend their portion of profits. Bob Barber said the dollar amount of surpluses being carried on the books isn't too significant. Mike Lash said that a good time to implement a change is when it won't be too much of a burden or look like one group is being

singled out. Chuck Robbins said he thinks 9 years is too short of a time, something like 20 years is more reasonable so the group could use until hosting a possible second Congress. Several Board members hadn't seen the proposal, so the topic was tabled until next meeting.

d) Certification of Amateur Players

Roy Laird presented a proposal for creating an AGA rank certification program. The Board agreed in principal to the program. A committee (Kevin Purvis, Mike Lash, Chris Kirschner, Paul Matthews, Andrew Okun, Chuck Robbins, and Roy Laird) has been authorized to continue to work on the program to:

-- Identify a Rank Certification Coordinator to begin the process of producing certificates, identifying suitable candidates, and to proceed in general managing the program. If no suitable volunteer is available, an estimate should be made of the cost to pay someone to do the work.

-- Propose a detailed fee structure for the Board's approval. Fees should be reasonable, no "gouging the members"; however the Board seems to favor more of a "revenue positive" budgeting process, with a comfortable margin above expenses.

-- The Board also feels that the minimum number of games should be higher than ten.

-- The Board feels that the highest rank we should certify is the highest rank commonly certified in Asia, 7D.

-- Some Board members felt that a progressive approach to setting fees, and perhaps to the minimum game requirement, might be in order. Maybe a 5D certificate is worth more than a 1D.

5. AGF Analysis of AGA-AGF Equipment Expenses

Terry Benson, of the American Go Foundation has the records, and hasn't delivered them yet, so this item was tabled until next meeting.

6. Fiscal transparency

Treasurer Ulo Tamm has asked for a replacement. There hasn't been a formal CPA audit of the AGA's finances before. It might be a good time. Mike Lash estimated that an audit may cost as much as \$5000. Chuck Robbins suggested the cost could be even higher. Roy Schmidt mentioned that the books should be in better shape before we invite an audit, and expressed doubt that an audit should be high priority. After some discussion, this issue was tabled until next meeting.

7. New business

a) Monthly or Bi-monthly Meetings

Mike Lash proposed having longer (2-hour) board meetings every other month instead of hour-long meetings every month. Roy Laird suggested maybe going to 1 ½ hours every month. Chuck Robbins said anything over 1.5 hours usually makes people's eyes glaze over. This topic was tabled for now.

b) Board Member Statements of Priorities

Roy Laird said he wants to hear what the Board members want to accomplish during their terms.

Willard Haynes: Would like a larger organization with paid staff in the long run. In the short term, he would like to get more volunteers and more members.

Chuck Robbins: 1) Improve Ing Foundation relationship, 2) New grants and donors and revenue generators, 3) wants the AGA to better leverage knowledge assets to grow membership, e.g. try to get some of the 8,000 non-member e-journal subscribers to join the AGA.

Gordon Castanza: 1) Long-term: get professional staff for the AGA, 2) Establish an AGA headquarters, not just a P.O. Box, 3) Audit & budget subcommittee review monthly budget and make recommendations, 4) Make electronic boards available to tournaments to automatically record and broadcast games, 5) encourage chapters to host visiting professionals, 6) Conduct and maintain asset inventory.

Roy Laird: 1) Long term goal to get paid professional staff for the organization, 2) Membership development by focusing on likely markets such as expired members, non-member EJ subscribers, game enthusiasts, and anime fans, 3) More services like rank certificates and chapter benefits to make membership more attractive, 4) Fiscal stability of the organization.

Paul Celmer: 1) Membership development, 2) Advertising campaign, 3) Enhance Ing Foundation relationship, 4) New sources of funding, including sponsorship.

Bob Barber: His job as Congress Liaison is most important to him.

Roy Schmidt: 1) Fiscal stability/ Cash flow/ Budget, 2) Increase value of AGA membership over non-membership—add something attractive like rank certification program.

The next meeting is set for October 15th at 7:00 PM EDT
The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM EDT.