

Minutes

AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Sunday, December 16, 2007 – 8:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Roy Laird at 8:02 EST
Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

Roy Laird (At Large) Chairman
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)
Laura Kolb (Central Region)
Roy Schmidt (Central Region)
Willard Haynes (Western Region)
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)
Mike Lash (President)
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:
None

1. Approval of minutes

Gordon Castanza made a motion to accept the minutes from the November Board meeting. Willard Haynes seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. President's report

Mike Lash presented his monthly report:

a) Tournaments

Ing Cup – Ming Jiu will represent the AGA in the World Ing Cup, a quadrennial tournament with \$1 million in prizes.. He beat Feng Yun by one point. Lash said that as an outcome of negotiation with the Ing Foundation, this is the first time the AGA has selected the US representative to the tournament. This means that fair, open and inclusive methods can be used to offer this valuable seat to professional players who contribute actively to American go.

World Mind Sports Games (WMSG) – Rules and guidelines for the WMSG team selection process have been drafted and will be posted for public review, then formalized. There will be a minimum rating in the open section, but any tournament with enough strong players can be a qualifier where top finishers will

earn WMSG points. The qualifying season will go until July with the playoffs being held at the Congress. 24 player positions will be available with 11 spots for males, 9 for females, and two for players of either sex because of complex factors, women will not be required to earn points. Female players will be seeded directly into the trials at the Congress

Lash reported that a core team (Lash, Roy Laird, Chris Kirschner, and Thomas Hsiang) is working to define how the qualifying events will work to determine who will be on the U.S. team.

b) Financial Status

Adam Bridges delivered a financial report covering the first half of the fiscal year. Lash will forward it to the Board for review. Lash said on first review it appears that we are on track with the budget.

c) Congress Policy

Lash said we need to set standards for financial reporting for future Congresses. He has been happy with the results he has gotten, but it has been taking too long of a time to get reports.

Laird said the document should also detail what organizers can expect from the AGA, such as money for deposits, etc. Also, the AGA should protect the organizers in the case of a financial loss.

Lash said he would update his proposed policy based on the discussion and the Board can discuss it and vote on-line.

d) Summer Go Camp

We have two camps set up already. Karen Jordan and David Dinhofer will run the east coast camp, and Brian Allen will run the west coast camp again. Walter Knox will be the AGA Go Camp Coordinator again this year. Since the camp organizers are doing the jobs for the second time, Lash has asked Knox to focus on marketing this year to try to attract more attendees, to make it possible for the camps to succeed without help from the AGF.

e) Web Site Upgrade

Lash reviewed the process the Web Upgrade committee has gone through over the past six months. He said Mark Rubenstein had volunteered to coordinate the search for a new web site developer. After reviewing bids, it became clear to the committee that it may be more desirable and less expensive to use a pre-packaged web design. It became clear that we could save a lot of time and money if we use an existing platform. Rubenstein identified two providers,

Tendenci.com and Internet4Associations.com, who seemed especially suitable. and the group decided that either would probably work, but Internet4Associations seems best.

The projected cost of I4A will probably be less than what we are spending, but that is not the reason for switching. The reason is to have a better web site that can do what we have been doing and more with less work from volunteers.

Paul Celmer asked if the new web site would allow us to have a web store. Laird said the feature is available at no additional cost if we subscribe to the Office Manager package as proposed.

Willard Haynes said he went to both proposed web sites and he agreed that Internet4Associations is better.

Lash said one of the reasons driving the change was a desire for an improved data base. The Internet4Associations site will be able to automate member services and efficiently handle membership tasks, automating some of the work that we currently pay Mary Laird and Karen Zimmerman to do.

The biggest downside of Internet4Associations is that there is a three-year commitment. Tendenci has a month-to-month commitment only.

Gordon Castanza asked if we would still be able to get chapter hosting. Laird said that feature will actually be improved, with a special e-mail address for each club, on-line registration for tournaments, and more. Castanza asked if a regional web site might be available, for example, a western region. Laird said that would be possible, too.

Lash said there would also be a "members only" section, which could add an incentive for people to join the AGA.

Tendenci had some desirable features, such as an automatic renewal reminder. It would automatically send e-mails to members as their membership nears expiration. Lash said Tendenci seems set up for a network of sales people, which isn't as suited to our needs as the Internet4Associations site.

The committee reviewing the possible web service providers included, Mike Lash, Roy Laird, Sam Zimmerman, Ryan Grant, Chris Garlock, Chris Kirschner, Paul Matthews, and Mark Rubenstein. The committee recommends Internet4Associations.

Laird added that Garlock said he has access to much more information than can currently be included in the e-journal. This information, such as translations of professional commentary on games could be included in the members only section of the web site.

Paul Celmer asked if all of the members of the committee agree that I4A is the best choice. He was particularly interested in Sam Zimmerman's opinion. Chuck Robbins said he has talked to Sam, and he has some reservations about changing the way the database is handled, but he didn't get the impression that Sam had any problems with I4A in particular.

Laird said that if we move forward with I4A, we need to sign a three-year contract, so if there are any reservations or concerns, they should be brought up before we sign a contract. Lash said that there is a huge amount of content on the current web site, and not all of it needs to be transferred, but popular content will have a high priority. Lash said he will be looking for volunteers to help with the change.

Laird said there have been several volunteers who want to be involved in building the new web site, and finding people to help with the conversion will be key in the next phase.

Lash asked if he has authorization from the Board to move ahead.

Gordon made a motion to accept Lash's proposal. Willard Haynes seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all votes in favor except for one abstention. (Chuck Robbins)
(End of President's report)

3. Presidential Search Committee

Laird asked Lash if he was interested in continuing as President. Lash said that after two terms, he is ready to stop. Laird said we should form a search committee. Celmer suggested that the Board function as the search committee. He wondered whether asking former Presidents to help would be a good idea. Lash said he is willing to help, but it may not be appropriate for him to be on the committee, because candidates would probably want to talk to him before proceeding.

Laird said there used to be a leadership committee, but it dissolved after the last presidential search. He recalled that Steve Burrall and Robert Cordingly were on the last committee. Laird said that the involvement of the current President on a committee could be perceived as a conflict of interest, but since he isn't considering running, there may not be a problem. Celmer said there may be value to having Lash off the committee and reserve his involvement for later in the process. Robbins said he thinks the current President should not be involved, but he favors past Presidents involvement. Robbins thinks past Presidents should have the most input, because they know best what is needed for the job.

Laird said he thinks the consensus is that the committee should be made up of the current Board and past presidents. Willard Haynes said he wonders whether the current President's job is different from what former Presidents have done. Lash said his job is defined by the by-laws of the organization, so it should be similar. He said his volume of work has exploded in the past two years because of the increase in programs and events.

Laird said that as a volunteer position, the amount of work involved should allow a person to continue to "have a life". Lash agreed that the ideal President would probably be a retired person, because the amount of work can easily be 35 hours a week. If the membership does go drastically up to 5,000 or 10,000 members, the job could become even more demanding. Laird said if the membership does increase drastically, we may be able to pay people to support the volunteer President to ease the workload.

Roy Schmidt said the size of the committee may be too large and unwieldy. Haynes said the past Presidents may only need to be consultants to the committee. He also suggested publicizing the need for candidates in the e-journal. Lash said he's not sure that's the best way to search for Presidents. Haynes said we need to expand the workforce beyond the existing volunteers. Robbins said there is no risk of publicizing the vacancy, because we can reject any candidate who doesn't have enough experience for the job.

Laird said he would prepare an article for the e-journal and send it to the Board before publishing it.

4. New business

None

7. Set time for next meeting:

The next monthly conference call of the Board will be held Sunday, January 27, 2008 at 8:00 EST.

8. Adjournment:

Willard Haynes made a motion to adjourn.

Roy Schmidt seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous to adjourn at 9:13 PM EST.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary