

**Minutes**  
**AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Sunday, October 25, 2009 – 8:00 PM EDT**

Meeting called to order by: Roy Schmidt at 8:05 PM EDT

Type of meeting: Regular Monthly Conference Call

Attendees:

Jie Li (At Large)  
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)  
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)  
Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman  
Laura Kolb (Central Region)  
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)  
Andrew Okun (Western Region)  
Allan Abramson (President)  
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:

None

1. **Approval of minutes**

Gordon Castanza made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 27, 2009 Board meeting. Laura Kolb seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. **Call for additional agenda items**

There were no additional agenda items

3. **President's report**

a. **Information item: One year continuous membership policy**

The Assembly has been notified of our recommendation to create a “youth-time” membership category. They have been given 30 days to comment, then vote on the proposal. Abramson said he has received a few positive responses to his proposal for the “youth time” membership and no negative comments.

Jie Li said he would like to make a recommendation about adult memberships. He suggested allowing members to renew retroactively up to six months at a rate of \$10 per month penalty. He thinks this would show good will toward AGA members. Robbins said it is an idea worthy of consideration. Okun said he is also in favor of such a proposal. Kolb said it sounds like a creative way to handle the problem. Robbins said Sam Zimmerman should be consulted since he is the one who would have to implement the idea. Abramson said he is opposed to this idea, because the Board has already discussed grace periods at length and they decided that they wanted strong players to know that they need to maintain their memberships if they are interested in international competition. Li said that because there is an explicit financial penalty for a membership lapse, it should encourage serious players to maintain their memberships. Castanza said he thinks they should be allowed to pay a penalty but their membership should also be due again in another six months. Robbins suggested adding this proposal to the discussion of the youth time membership. He said the downside of the proposal is that it adds confusion to an already confused situation. Castanza agreed that another policy change so soon makes the Board look wishy-washy. Kolb said the 10-game requirement will still be in effect, so keeping the membership continuous is only a part of qualifying. Li said the steep financial penalty will make it so people will not be likely to make the mistake more than once. Abramson said this proposal might cause problems, because some invitations had already been issued by the tournament coordinator. Okun asked which tournament had already sent out the invitations. Li said it is the Fujitsu tournament in November, and suggested that the Board can specify that the new policy be in effect after the Fujitsu tournament. Robbins said before making changes Sam Zimmerman and the current or future Tournament Coordinator will need to be consulted to make sure implementation of such a policy won't place too many demands on the

volunteers. Abramson said he will discuss this proposal with Sam Zimmerman and Phil Waldron before sending it out for discussion with members.

b. **Discussion item: AGA-Congress MOA revised**

Abramson said he send out a changed agreement to the Board. The changes include: moving the conflict resolution clause to a general and independent place (paragraph 5), adding the words, “working within the approved budget” to the clause on dealing with pros, guaranteeing a minimum of \$2000 for local Congress organizers, and extending the deadlines for Congress submittal of financial reports, all per our discussion at the last meeting.

Schmidt said he disagrees with the guaranteed \$2000, because we already guarantee no personal loss. There should be an incentive to the Congress organizers to run things right. Schmidt thinks \$2000 is too much. Robbins said the Congress should earn much more than \$2000 if it is run correctly, so the guarantee is not necessary. Abramson said he included this clause as a result of Board discussions and he asked if the Board is in favor of the clause. Celmer said he thinks the guarantee is a good idea. Castanza agreed that he likes the guarantee, but he thinks \$2000 may not be enough considering how much work it is.

Robbins suggested a poll of the Board. Castanza clarified that we are voting on whether there should be a minimum guaranteed amount and not on the specific amount. The poll was five in favor and two against. (Robbins, Schmidt) Okun said he thinks \$2000 is not very much money for all of the effort, but we can not afford to pay a large sum. Castanza said he thinks \$10000 is a reasonable amount. Kolb and Celmer said a smaller amount like \$1000-2000 is reasonable. Abramson said he will move forward with the \$2000 amount.

Abramson asked if anyone had a comment on the conflict resolution paragraph or any of the other changes. There were no other Board comments on the MOU. Abramson said he will proceed with the MOU in its current form.

c. **Discussion item: Need for volunteers for key positions**

Abramson said he has been considering names for the new tournament coordinator. He asked the Board to supply him with suggestions for volunteers in that position and any others that are open.

Abramson said he will be sending a note to chapter leaders asking them to have discussions at their local meetings to look for new volunteers. Kolb asked which positions need filling. Abramson said tournament coordinator, volunteer coordinator, programmers, fundraisers among others.

d. **Information item: Our servers**

Chuck Robbins had a major server crash last week, but is catching up on service needs this week. Robbins said his DNS server and web server went down because of a hard drive failure. He has the ratings backed up so that won't be a problem.

e. **Pairing software**

Abramson said he had spoken before of offering a lifetime membership to a person who could write a program to run tournaments, and he will start looking for someone to write a good program that can be used by all of our tournament directors.

4. **Old Business**

a. **Volunteer recognition program**

Schmidt said Phil Waldron's comments in the e-journal about volunteers not being appreciated are true and we need to come up with ideas to remedy the situation. Abramson said he will come up with a list of options for discussion at the next Board meeting.

5. **New Business**

a. **Intellectual Property**

Last meeting, the issue of an intellectual property policy came up. Schmidt said we have had to pay people for products in the past. We should come up with an agreement that when people write something or do programming they do so for the benefit of the AGA. Okun said the main issue we would worry about is copyright. If we have a policy that lets us use what our volunteers do it gets us only part way there. We have to have a way of making volunteers know the policy. Someone who knows what they are doing should draft it. Robbins had also mentioned Congress designs should be owned by the AGA. Okun said he would try to find a copyright lawyer to help. Abramson said he would look for a boilerplate of a policy on the internet.

#### **b. PCI Compliance**

Schmidt said the issue of PCI compliance was raised in an e-mail by Roy Laird. Robbins said PCI compliance testing is more expensive than the fees the AGA is being fined. Robbins said his credit card authorizer doesn't charge the high fees the AGA is paying now. Schmidt said if we offer automatic renewal on memberships, we would have to comply with the security standards. Robbins said the credit card numbers would not be stored on our server. They would be encrypted and sent to Authorize.net where they could be stored. Schmidt asked if offering an automatic renewal option will raise our expenses with authorize.net. Robbins said he will look into that question.

#### **c. Board presence on GoDiscussions**

Schmidt said he thinks it's a good thing that the Board members monitor and participate in the discussion groups, but he is worried that some of the Board members' comments could be misconstrued as official policy or reflecting Board opinion. Abramson said in the past, officials of the AGA have not actively participated in discussions and there is some wisdom in refraining from heated discussions. It is difficult to cool down a heated discussion and comments are likely to fuel the fire rather than calm things down. Kolb and Li opined that clear expression of personal opinions and

canvassing for opinions of constituents were important to maintaining good communication between Board members and the general membership. All agreed to make it clear that they were speaking for themselves and not for the Board.

**6. Establish time and date of next meeting**

The next monthly conference call will be December 13, 2009 at 8:00 EST.

**7. Adjourn**

Schmidt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Okun seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary