

**Minutes**  
**AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Sunday, September 25, 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)  
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)  
Lisa Scott (Central Region)  
Daniel Smith (Central Region)  
Andrew Okun (Western Region, Chairman)  
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)  
Allan Abramson (President)  
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)  
Absent: none

**1. Report of Election results**

- a. Okun Reported that Castanza and Celmer won re-election to the Board and Daniel Smith is a new Director representing the Central Region.
- b. Robbins nominated Okun to continue as Chair. Scott seconded. The vote was unanimous (except Okun abstained.)

**2. Approval of August 4, 2011 minutes**

- a. Okun announced that he wanted to add to the minutes that by e-mail exchange the Board agreed to support the Redmond cup with a donation of \$1000.
- b. Okun said he wants to work a little more on the minutes and asked that the Board approve them by e-mail later.

**3. Call for additional agenda items and new business**

- a. Discuss the difficulty of establishing a quorum at the General Assembly at the Congress and what Lisa Scott needed to do to establish a quorum.
- b. Okun suggested that the Board may need to enter executive session to discuss financial issues relating to

the proposed establishment of a professional certification system.

#### **4. President's Report**

##### **a. Virtual Office**

- i. Abramson announced that he made an agreement with Earth Class Mail to set up a virtual office. The company is based in Beaverton, OR.
- ii. The Company address is: 15500 Southwest Jay St. #101:Beaverton, OR 97006-6018. Phone (866) 625-6245.

##### **b. Professional System**

- i. Abramson has been working with a committee to set up a US Professional certification program.
- ii. More will be discussed during executive session at the end of the regular Board meeting.

##### **c. Membership Renewals**

- i. Abramson said part of the problem is that he no longer gets a report on who is renewing or joining
- ii. He recently found out that 91 people have joined since the Congress, which is about 50% of what is needed to maintain the status quo.
- iii. Scott said the Board members should contact clubs to try to recruit new members and encourage expiring members to rejoin.
- iv. All Board members agreed to contact clubs in their regions to find out how to increase membership.

#### **5. Discussion of Overall AGA Goals from now until the North Carolina Congress**

- a. Okun suggested this is a good time of the year to set goals for the Board and the AGA to achieve over the next year.
- b. One thing that was started last year is fundraising
- c. Another that is underway is developing a professional system.
- d. Scott said she would like to get content on the website under the membership section.

- e. Okun asked if the others agree that it is a good idea to make a list of goals to achieve. Scott and Smith said they would like to do it.
- f. Abramson said that during the spring budget discussion would be a more logical time to set priorities.
- g. Okun said that since we didn't do it then, we should do it now and figure out if we need money to accomplish the goals.
- h. Jie Li said he thinks we can start now and if money is needed bring the ideas up again in the spring budget meeting.
- i. Castanza and Robbins agreed.
- j. Okun said one goal he has wanted to accomplish since joining the Board three years ago is to award members a rank.
- k. Okun said people can suggest ideas now, but think more and submit other ideas by e-mail later.

#### **6. Discussion of Castanza's proposal**

- a. Okun apologized for not doing more on the proposal before tonight's meeting. He asked if the Board members were ready to discuss the proposals.
- b. Scott said she is ready to discuss many of the proposals.
- c. Okun said they had already agreed to document Board decisions and get the Board meeting agenda out 7 days before the meeting. He hasn't been able to get it on the Chapters list yet. It is apparently not working.
- d. Abramson said he has made his own e-mail list of 93 Chapters that he has been using. Okun said he will ask Abramson to forward the agenda next month.
- e. Okun said he would like to finish discussion and action on Castanza's proposals by the next meeting.
- f. Okun said he will separate the proposals into separate agenda items for next month.

#### **7. Discussion of Executive Vice President Search**

- a. Celmer, Jie Li, Robbins, and Scott have formed a committee to find and Executive Vice President.

#### **8. Discussion of College Club Support and Equipment Program**

- a. Abramson said that the Board should know that Scott, Paul Barchillon and members of the AGF think the AGA should support a college clubs with \$500 to match the AGF's donation of \$500.
- b. Abramson said he thinks it's more important to support elementary and high school clubs and colleges are better able to take care of themselves.
- c. Scott said College Clubs have very few resources, and have to wait at least a semester before getting any support from the university.
- d. Smith asked Abramson to briefly describe the program.
- e. Abramson said the AGA and AGF would split a donation of up to \$100 per club to help them get started.
- f. Okun asked what the administrative burden would be. Abramson said all of it could be done easily through e-mail. It is more of a budget priority issue than an administrative issue.
- g. Robbins said we are always looking for things to fund but are never raising money. Maybe one time per year approaching a new school year, we could have a fundraiser to support college clubs. Then we could support the clubs at whatever level we are able to raise.
- h. Robbins said Greg Leffler was the biggest college club organizer of all time and we could follow that model.
- i. Okun said in the past we have budgeted \$500 and haven't always spent it. Announcing the fundraising effort could also publicize the availability of money to support clubs.
- j. Robbins said it could both grow go and increase fundraising at the same time.
- k. Scott said September and October are the best months for starting a club at colleges.
- l. Abramson said he likes the idea of linking fundraising and supporting the college clubs.
- m. Abramson said after looking at Roy Schmidt's financial reports, it appears that \$325 was spent under the college program in August. He plans to find out what that was for.
- n. Okun asked if any Board members are in favor of getting into the business of providing low cost go equipment.

- o. Scott said she is enthusiastic about providing low cost go equipment to clubs. In her travels to clubs in her region, many clubs were using equipment that they got from the Ing Foundation several years ago and they wish they could get more.
- p. Scott said the AGF gets a discount on equipment by buying large quantities and they could order more and share them with us. Those tend to be either 9x9 or 13x13 boards.
- q. Celmer said when he was running the equipment program he paid about \$3 per board for a 19x19 board. He said they are still available as far as he knows.
- r. Robbins said cardboard boards are cheap, but you have to pay for making a die up front which will be expensive and you need to order large quantities to get good prices.
- s. Celmer said he will find out what some options are to get cheap boards.

## **9. Further Discussion of Taps proposal**

- a. Abramson said there was a vigorous discussion at the Congress about the proposal to tap prize money and if it was implemented what rate the money would be tapped and after what threshold.
- b. Celmer said his gut instinct is that there is not enough money there to make up for the animosity such a program would stir up.
- c. Castanza said he agrees with Celmer.
- d. Okun said the proposal was brought up by Thomas Hsiang because there will be substantial playing fees at the Sport Accord Mind Games, and it would be in line with what Asian countries do.
- e. If we are successful at starting our own professional system, there may be real money to talk about, and if the program is in place it would make it easier to accept later.
- f. Robbins said everywhere else, professionals pay something to the pro association and in return the association works for the professionals.
- g. Robbins thinks the system should be implemented now and there should be no minimum threshold before there is a charge.

- h.** Scott said she thinks there should be a minimum threshold before the professional needs to pay anything to the AGA.
- i.** Jie Li said he thinks there is a question about whether it applies to both professionals and amateurs. Okun said both strong amateurs from the US and professionals certified from another country would be tapped.
- j.** Jie Li said although Asian countries take part of the winnings of their players, they also do a lot for their players. Maybe in a few years it would be time for us to do it. There is not enough there to be tapped yet.
- k.** Abramson said he thinks in the short term the Sport Accord Mind Games would probably come in at over \$2000 which is the minimum threshold he was thinking of.
- l.** Abramson said he would rather do more fundraising than taking from the small amount of money professionals in the US can earn.
- m.** Okun said we can make the minimum threshold at which it takes effect so high that it won't take effect until there is real money to be made.
- n.** Robbins said we should act like a professional organization and charge like a professional organization.
- o.** Abramson said we don't do as much for our professionals as Asian organizations do.
- p.** Scott said we do as much as the EGF does.
- q.** Robbins said we can keep track of the money that is collected from the professionals and use the money to pay for plane tickets for the professionals later. This way we are providing a real service.
- r.** Okun said that administratively, it would be part of the rules of US professional certification that they participate in the system. For other professionals, if they are paid a check and do not pay the AGA their share, they would be excluded from future competition. We would not pay for lawyers to pursue payment if someone refused to pay.
- s.** Jie Li said he believes that Thomas has done very successful diplomatic work for the AGA. However, he is not sure whether we can pass this tap proposal just based on Thomas' charisma and appeal in the International Go Community. If Thomas retires from the

AGA in the future and we are not able to find someone who can continue filling his role, the tap would be unjust for the players. Therefore, Jie doesn't like the idea of the Taps proposal until AGA can systematically provide similar services to the U.S. players like the Asian Organizations.

- t. Okun asked if anyone wants to do something before the Sport Accord Mind Games. No action will be taken now, but discussion will continue.

**10. Status of Treasurer Transition**

- a. Abramson said there are a few loose ends, but the transition to our new Treasurer is almost complete.

**11. New Business**

**a. Lisa Scott's discussion of the difficulty of establishing a quorum at the Congress**

- i. Last year, there was barely a quorum at the Congress General Assembly, and this year she had to go around talking people into renewing their memberships so a vote could be taken to approve the site of the Congress next year.
- ii. Abramson said part of the reason attendance was low may have been that there were no controversial topics on the agenda this year.
- iii. Abramson said Congress directors will have to publicize the Assembly time and place so more members will attend in the future.

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

- a. The next monthly Board conference call will be on October 23, 2011 at 8:00 EDT.

**13. Executive Session**

- a. Robbins made a motion to enter executive session to discuss elements of the proposed establishment of a US professional certification system that will affect AGA finances.
- b. Castanza seconded the motion.

- c. The Board voted unanimously to enter executive session at 9:18 PM EDT.

#### **14. Adjourn**

Castanza made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:47 PM EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary