

Minutes
AGA SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING
Sunday, August 22, 2010 - 8:00 PM EDT

Meeting called to order by: Roy Schmidt at 8:08 PM EDT
Type of meeting: Special Conference Call to finalize the
FY2011 budget

Attendees:

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

Absent:

Laura Kolb (Central Region)

Guest:

Lisa Scott (Board member-elect, Central Region)

1. **Approval of minutes**

Schmidt asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the last Board meeting. Castanza said that since this is a special meeting to discuss the budget, a vote would not be appropriate at this time. Minutes should be approved during regular Board meetings, not special meetings. Schmidt agreed to postpone this topic until the next meeting.

2. **FY 2011 Budget**

Robbins asked what month the yearbook came out this year. Li said he thinks it was June or July. Abramson said he thinks it was June. Robbins said the yearbook seems to get later and later each year. Since we have almost a year until

members expect the yearbook, we could prepare the members for an electronic yearbook. This would save a lot of money.

Abramson said he has spoken to Chris Garlock about it. Garlock said he would start with a survey of members. The issue was discussed at the assembly. The members in attendance were in favor of the change. Robbins said there is a rule in sales—don't ask a question if you may not be able to handle the answer. Rather than asking, we should tell members we are doing it and move forward. Polling may create an uprising. Abramson said he wants to focus this meeting on the budget and we need to discuss major changes at a regular meeting. Celmer said this is too big a change to make a decision on here. Schmidt agreed with Robbins that this is a major budget line item and it is crucial to balancing the budget.

Celmer asked about the loss of over \$61,000 from reserves over the past year. He noted that some had been spent per the budget, and some was tied to the Congress deficit, but there appeared to be about \$15,000 unaccounted for. Abramson said the balance sheet shows a drop of over \$60,000 in reserves, but \$30,000 is the advance to the Congress, \$22,000 was the use of the last of the Ing reserves to fund the 2009 Congress, about \$7,000 was the deficit for the year (pretty close to the drop in membership income for the year), and more than \$2,000 was to cover the deficits in two Go Camps, which accounts for the drop in reserves for the year.

Robbins said we can't continue spending our reserves and we need to get our expenses in line with revenues. Slashing the yearbook would go a long way. Garlock is in favor of covering the World Amateur Go Tournament which may be possible if we slash the budget for the yearbook. Celmer suggested cutting the size and cost of the yearbook and getting it out in January or February.

Abramson said as a matter of courtesy, Garlock should be included in this conversation. We are projecting using \$6,000 of reserves for operating expenses and \$4,000 for the World Amateur Go Tournament. Maybe we could take some money from the budget for the Yearbook to balance the budget and leave us more flexible.

Okun said he doesn't think we should reduce the budget for the Yearbook after already surprising Garlock by canceling coverage of the WAGC. Celmer asked how he would be surprised if Garlock was at the Assembly. Abramson agreed with Okun that Garlock would likely be surprised and disappointed if such a decision was made without his involvement.

Abramson suggested that we approve the budget with some placeholders for some line items tonight and work over the next month or so to come up with an extra \$10,000. Okun agreed that would be better. Robbins said he is uncomfortable approving the budget as it is. Abramson said he is uncomfortable dropping this on Garlock or on the membership so abruptly. He asked how the rest of the Board feels about the issue. Castanza said he thought the issue had been sent to the Board for a vote. Abramson said that issue that had been sent by the Assembly to the Board was whether or not to continue to show ratings of non-members on the website. Castanza said we need to reduce costs and balance the budget, but he agrees with Okun that we can't make a decision to change delivery method of the Yearbook without Garlock included. Okun suggested including Garlock in the September meeting.

Schmidt suggested reducing the amount for the yearbook by only putting it on CDs and mailing them to members. This would save money as well as continue to send something physically to members. Robbins said this would be a good compromise to do for a year and then transition from print to electronic format to save even more money.

Okun said he needs to leave the meeting shortly and wondered if there could be a vote soon.

Celmer said he doesn't want to make a major change without consulting Garlock. Li said he would like to get the yearbook earlier, so if that would be possible, he's in favor of an electronic format. Celmer agreed with Li that July is too late for the yearbook to be useful.

Abramson said another way to reduce the budget deficit would be to change from manual credit card number input to something more automatic. This could reduce our costs by \$1000 to \$2000 per year. If we only allow checks in the mail or credit cards on the website, we could eliminate manual input costs. He estimates 20 percent of members use the manual option. Robbins asked if the Treasurer could do manual input as a volunteer to save costs. Abramson said he didn't think that was an option.

Robbins said if 1 in 5 members use that method to pay, we may want to involve the members before making that change.

Schmidt said we need to make sure we are accounting for multi-year memberships properly. Abramson said Adam Bridges is drawing down the money for the memberships properly.

Castanza made a motion to table the budget vote until the next regular monthly Board conference call. Robbins seconded the motion.

Castanza said the reason for the special meeting was because we were waiting for concrete numbers on the Congress. Since we still don't have those, he is not willing to vote yet.

Okun left the meeting at this time. (8:45 PM EDT)

Schmidt asked if there was any more discussion required before voting on the motion to table the budget vote for now. Abramson said the reason we don't have Congress numbers is because the Congress Treasurer went on vacation and took the checkbook with him.

Castanza said he would like to discuss budget line 60102 (Casual labor) before voting on the budget.

Abramson said he would also like to consider getting rid of the conference call line item and moving to Skype. The current budget is \$900 per year for conference calls. Abramson suggested trying Skype for the next Board meeting as an experiment. The Board members agreed to try it next month.

Castanza called the question on the vote to table the budget until the next meeting. The vote was unanimous to table the vote on the budget until the next regular monthly conference call on Sunday, September 12, at 8 pm EDT.

3. **Adjourn**

Abramson said that before we adjourn, he wanted to thank Roy Schmidt for all of his years of valuable service to the AGA. The other Board members agreed that Schmidt has been a huge asset to the organization and that he will be missed. Schmidt said after some time off, he plans to call Abramson to volunteer for a new position. Abramson said he will welcome his call.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary