

AGA Minutes 7/7/2013

Attending:

- Gurujeet Khalsa (Director, Eastern Region, Chair)
- Chris Kirschner (Director, Western Region)
- Lisa Scott (Director, Central Region)
- Bob Gilman (Director, Central Region)
- Paul Celmer (Director, Eastern Region)
- (absent, traveling) Steve Burrall (Director, Western Region)
- Edward Zhang (Director at Large)
- Daniel Smith (Secretary)
- Andrew Okun (President)
- Ted Terpstra (Executive Vice President)
- Thomas Hsiang (V.P., International Relations)

Meeting called to order at 8:05 EDT, 7/7/2013

1. Approval of minutes
 - a. **Scott moves to approve the minutes, Celmer seconds. Minutes approved 5-1** (Burrall absent).
 - b. Discussion of how much detail should be in the minutes.
2. Approval of budget
 - a. Pro Tournament proposal
 - i. Kirschner moves, **"We instruct the president to have a pro tournament this year, as budgeted."** Celmer seconds.
 - ii. Scott: Understand desirability of it. Concerned about timing of tournament (many conflicts). Also, we need to let the KBA know of the timing in advance, as per our MOU.
 - iii. Gilman: Would like to hear current plan from the pro committee.
 - iv. **Motion passes unanimously.**
 - b. Approval of the budget
 - i. Okun will see that the budget is annotated properly before wide distribution, in response to Zhang's email concerns.
 - ii. Zhang: Would like to increase the president's discretionary fund.
 - iii. **Kirshner moves to approve the budget, Zhang seconds. Budget is approved unanimously.**
3. Cuba investigatory proposal
 - a. Gilman would like an official statement of support from the board.
 - b. **Gilman moved to accept Gilman's proposal to investigate assisting players from Cuba attending the 2014 congress. Kirschner seconds. Motion passes unanimously.** (Proposal text appears in appendix A)
4. Online ratings proposal
 - a. **Scott moves that the board approve the online ratings proposal, Gilman seconds.** (Proposal text appears in appendix B)

- b. Kirschner believes a different algorithm is necessary.
 - c. Khalsa thinks it would be confusing and probably not necessary to use a different algorithm.
 - d. Okun: this is just an investigation.
 - e. Khalsa: if we make this a precondition, we'll be having this conversation forever.
 - f. Kirschner moves the **motion be amended to implement only a six month trial.**
Motion amended unanimously.
 - g. **Motion passes unanimously.**
5. President's report/Thomas Hsiang report (NYGC and EGF)
- a. Kirschner moves to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues, Celmer seconds. Unanimous.
 - b. **Entered executive session at 8:44 EDT.**
 - c. **Left executive session at 9:58 EDT.**
6. New Business
- a. **Kirschner moves that Peter Kron be added as a signer to the congress funds account, Celmer seconds. Passed unanimously.**
 - b. Due to time, the board agrees to discuss Scott's proposal for the AGA to hire an employee over email. (Proposal text in Appendix C.)
 - c. The board requested that the president continue with the implementation of the rank certification program, including issuing the first certificates at congress.
7. Date and time of next meeting
- a. Next meeting will be at go congress, 1 PM local time, Thursday.
8. Adjournment
- a. **Celmer moves to adjourn, Zhang seconds. Unanimous.**
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 EDT.

Appendix A:

Proposal to Investigate Bringing a Cuban Player or Players to the 2014 U.S. Go Congress

In February 2013 a group of 11 U.S. go players visited the Academia Cubana de Go in Havana, Cuba for a two day competition. The trip built upon a visit in 2000 by a group of U.S. players and upon scattered visits to the Academia by individual U. S. players in succeeding years. The 2013 visit was a great success for all – U.S. visitors and Cubans alike – and even received good coverage on Cuban television. The AGA would like to grow a continuing friendly relationship between the U.S. and Cuban go communities; and, to that end, designates Bob Gilman and Royce Chen, both participants in the recent trip to Havana, to investigate the possibilities for bringing a Cuban player or players to the 2014 U.S. Go Congress and to report back to the Board with an analysis of possible scenarios with their pros and cons, obstacles and means to overcome them, and resources – money and volunteer efforts – required for each. This authorization is for the investigation of possibilities only. The team is not authorized to make any

expenditure or make any definite commitments on behalf of the AGA at this time.

The following will come within the scope of this investigation:

US Government Requirements: Find out what the US government requirements would be for getting Visas for the Cubans. These requirements are likely to be a major hurdle, and may be prohibitive. The first step will be to determine just what the official visa requirements are. Even after we know what the technical requirements are, there may need to be a public relations campaign to gain government approval. Such a campaign is not within the scope of this initial investigation which will just find out what the situation is and report back to the Board.

Contact the Academia Cubana de Go: Contact Rafael Torres Miranda, Presidente of the Academia, let them know that, if possible we'd like to bring some number of Cubans to the 2014 Congress – at least the Cuban champion – and see whether this is something they want to do and what confidence they have in clearing the travel at their end.

Estimate costs for various options. This would be a special project outside the AGA budget and a volunteer group would be responsible for raising the necessary funds at the U.S. end. There are going to be a number of what if scenarios here:

Number of Cubans

- For our February trip, the Cubans listed 4 players at 5 dan strength (no players above 5d). Of these one has a Japanese name, and I'm guessing he may be with the Japanese Embassy in Havana. I understand that there is a new national champion in Cuba just recently. The Presidente of the Academia, Rafael Torres Miranda put a great deal of work into organizing the February trip at their end and would certainly need to put forth as much or more for a trip to the U.S. On that ground it would be good to include him in the invitation if possible. Of course, it may not be practical in terms of travel permissions or money to invite this many, but I would like at least to see what the possibilities are. The Cuban Champion, if he can make the trip, would be the choice if we could only bring one.

Can they get any backing on costs from their government? This is something they would have to explore their end, but I would think it may be a possibility. There were ranking officials from their sports organization present for the kick-off of our tournament, and I think Cuba might value the prestige sufficiently to put some backing into it.

Will the Congress waive registration fees for these guests? (Room and board I think would need to be covered in the project budget.) As these are people who couldn't attend the Congress otherwise, I don't see any loss to the Congress by waiving registration fees.

Explore producing an e-book with commentary on the games played, and pictures. If possible, translate it into Spanish as well. If an e-book, who can we line up for commentary? (Such a "book" certainly need not be large – perhaps more on the order of the tournament articles Go World used to do. If the Board is willing to have the team explore this, we can talk to Anders Kierulf, the author of Smart Go, who is doing Smart Go books for the iPad. There are also Kindle go books available for Android, and it might be possible to do both. Brian Olive has translated some English go books into

Spanish for Slate and Shell, and could be approached about a Spanish translation. He was interested in the recent Cuba trip though in the end couldn't come. Look at fund raising possibilities. Kickstarter may be one. The team can brainstorm others.

Appendix B

In keeping with the priority established by the Board for greater online AGA presence, it is proposed that the AGA implement a rating system to rate online games. This system should meet the following minimum requirements:

- It should use the same rating algorithm as is used by the AGA tournament rating system for face-to-face games. The two rating systems should not be comingled, however.
- Players must know that a game will be rated before play begins.
- Games must be played without assistance from other players, books, computers, notes, etc.
- Games must be played within the same time parameters established for an AGA rated face-to-face tournament game.
- Players must be current AGA members to play an online rated game.
- Online ratings will be reported on the AGA website in a fashion similar to the reporting of face-to-face tournament ratings.

Appendix C

Proposal for Hiring Staff

The AGA is an organization of smart, talent, and dedicated players and volunteers. One of our greatest strengths is the ability to see an issue from many different angles, and to dream of the ways in which our organization could be improved. Unfortunately, our big-picture thinking and strong analytical skills do not make us best-suited for the daily minutia of running an organization, or of keeping the delicate records necessary for our organization to grow. Another fault is that, because we are a volunteer organization, we are at the mercy of the other commitments and responsibilities of our volunteers, many of whom have families and full-time jobs outside of their dedicated work for the AGA. Because of their dedication, our volunteers nonetheless work hard to make time for the AGA, and do their best to accomplish the work that, at other organizations, would be done by a team of employees.

Although we have managed to keep our organization afloat, we can all agree that the constant cry for the last few years has been for greater direction, organization, and growth. If we wish to accomplish these goals, it is my belief, and the belief of many members with whom I have spoken, that we need to begin the process of hiring staff who can take over many of the details of our plans, leaving the dedicated volunteers free to work on the "big-picture" ideas and to move the organization forward.

I believe that our best step forward would be to hire a full-time person. Ideally, this person would be technologically capable, although not necessarily a programmer, who is interested in non-profit work, particularly that associated with event-planning and marketing. I envision this position as one best-suited to a recent college graduate, largely because this person would be flexible concerning time demands and remuneration, and would be likely to have reasonable proficiency at the computer which would allow him or her to aid with things like website updates (those programmed in mark-down, an extremely simple language) and to work easily with excel and word processors. Such young people are in great supply in this economy, and are often interested in a job that can "pay the bills" while it allows them focus on those projects to which they would like to dedicate themselves, in part because they have not yet figured out "what they would like to do with their lives." There has also been the suggestion that we could employ a part-time person, along with a number of interns. I believe that this plan has merit, and may be less expensive than a part-time person, but may require greater oversight and training, which could be difficult.

This proposal has resonated with the members with whom I have spoken, in part because it is necessary to have an employee who can, for example, answer the phone and respond to mundane email inquiries, in order for the AGA to be taken seriously as an organization. They, and I, do not believe that the organization can reach its goals without such an employee, particularly as we add new programs and tournaments, such as our own professionals.

I propose that the primary duty of such an employee, tentatively titled "office manager" or "operations coordinator" would be to support the president as he (or she) executes our many "priority" projects. The president would thus be free from depending solely on unreliable volunteer labor, and would be able to focus more directly on forging contacts and outlining projects, which the employee could then monitor and report on to the president.

The secondary duty of this person would be to serve as support staff for the US Go Congress. As many of the Board members know, the Congress requires a significant amount of volunteer work, which puts a terrible strain on some of our most dedicated volunteers. Depending on the details arranged between the Employee and the AGA, the Employee could be made available as a permanent Deputy Director or Registrar for the Congress. This would provide the stability and consistency between Congresses that we have previously discussed, and may reduce the burden on the Congress Director, making it more feasible for more interested people to volunteer to run the Congress.

The quarternary duty of this person would be to serve as support staff for the various officers of the organization, particularly for the Tournament Coordinator and the Pro Committee.

The quinary duty of this person could be to support the AGF, particularly with programs run jointly with the AGA.

I propose that we set aside approximately \$30,000 from reserves for the person of hiring a combination of full-time and part-time employees, as well as interns. I further propose that we authorize the President to investigate this possibility to further, and report back to the Board

when and if he is prepared to hire someone.

The funds set aside for the purpose of hiring someone may easily be recouped, if we hire someone with the appropriate qualifications. The \$30,000 set aside to hire someone can be recouped from a growth in membership which would be likely were this hire to have marketing skills, and were we better able to provide the membership with requested benefits due to our greater ability to deal with issues. The \$30,000 would be the equivalent of 1,000 new adult members, 858 new chapters, or a combination thereof; I believe that we all agree that there are probably 1,000 non-AGA members playing in AGA chapters or lapsed chapters around the country, not to mention to dozens of clubs that know of the AGA or are listed on our website, but do not find the AGA relevant enough to their club to pay for membership. A full-time employee who is actually able to respond to the membership and to work on executing projects while the President, Officers, and Board contend with larger issues and planning, would be likely to create the type of organization that would entice these go players to become AGA members.

An employee would also allow us to move forward on projects more quickly. There are a number of projects that Board Members and officers have considered, or have mentioned privately to friends, but are not realistic possibilities when we must depend on volunteers who are, generally, already donating as much time and energy as they are capable of giving. We should free up these volunteers to spearhead new projects, to work directly with new volunteers, members, and chapters, and to serve as less over-worked and more excited living advertisements for the AGA.

There are many details of this proposal that still need to be fully ironed out, but I believe that it is the best way for our organization to move forward. As Volunteer Coordinator, I will be only too happy to work with the president to learn how best to implement this proposal, as reviewed and amended by the Board.